

Small Business, Big Purpose:
A guide to skills-based volunteerism



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A guide to skills-based volunteerism

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launching a skills-based
volunteerism initiative
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Preface

In his proclamation declaring National Small Business Week last May, President Obama said, “**Small businesses represent an ideal at the heart of our nation’s promise—that with ingenuity and hard work, anyone can build a better life.**” What’s exciting, and what you’ll read about in this e-book, is that today’s small business owners and employees aren’t just building a better life for themselves, they’re engaging in skills-based and pro bono volunteering to make life better for the people living in their cities and towns across the country. What makes skill-based volunteering such a good fit for our nation’s small businesses?

It’s good business, especially from the HR perspective. There’s a bottom-line benefit to skills-based volunteering, especially for small businesses. Small businesses have long understood that being a good corporate citizen is good for business, and small businesses have often been important philanthropic donors across our communities. But the positive benefits extend beyond good public relations. Skills-based volunteering is increasingly touted for its multiple HR benefits. Small businesses will do well to leverage the opportunities for skills development,

the boost to employee morale and the overall uptick in productivity that comes with happy, healthy, engaged employees.

It’s a growing trend. Skills-based and pro bono volunteering is an innovative trend gathering strength throughout corporate America. According to CECP’s 2014 Giving in Numbers report, the number of businesses reporting having some kind of pro bono program has increased from 30% to just over 50% in six years. It’s the fastest growing trend in corporate employee engagement, and small businesses are part of this trend.

It’s for everyone—regardless of sector, size or industry. A Billion + Change has inspired more than 2,000 companies—including more than 1,000 small businesses—to leverage their employees’ skills for good. Skills-based and pro bono volunteering isn’t just for big companies, lawyers and accountants. Everyone has skills to share, and the examples in this book reflect the diversity of sectors and skills that can be tapped through skills-based volunteering.

A Billion + Change looks forward to seeing the number of small businesses building a better life for themselves and their communities grow, and we know that skills-based volunteering will be part of that trend. We hope this guide will help you get started!

Georgia Gillette
Lead Catalyst, A Billion + Change



Skills-Based Volunteerism: What it is and why it matters

Helping out is a part of human nature.

From our earliest days on the planet, we seek to be involved. At first, this help comes in the form of play, where we imitate what the people around us are doing—simple tasks that are the building blocks of our young lives. We pretend to shop, cook, drive, even take care of other people.

As we grow, we see service all around us, at home, at church, in the community, at school. We are surrounded by people helping other people. How do we respond? We get involved. We model the behavior, following our natural instincts. We learn about the roots of volunteerism at a young age, before “real life” takes over. Although the decision to volunteer later in life is a choice, not a requirement, it’s pretty hard-wired into who we are as people, so the instinct remains. That’s true for most of us, which means it’s true for the people who work alongside you.



Sometimes called pro bono, skills-based volunteerism is voluntary service that makes use of a person’s skill instead of relying on manual labor or tasks that require no training.

For some businesses, the idea of getting involved in service beyond what you do for a living seems a stretch. For some employees you possibly make the time given all the things you’re already doing to serve your customers and make a profit? For others, volunteerism may already be naturally appearing as a part of your firm’s growth, with individual people or opportunities cropping up and taking root.

Regardless of where you fall on the spectrum, a discussion about volunteerism is worthwhile. Giving back through service is fun, rewarding and good for team-building. On the flip side, it can be difficult to manage if you don’t stop to think about it strategically. So when you pause for reflection, we hope you’ll consider adopting not only a passion for service, but also a focus on skills-based volunteerism as part of your program.

INTRODUCTION

What do we mean by skills-based volunteerism? Sometimes called pro bono, skills-based volunteerism is voluntary service that makes use of a person's skill instead of relying on manual labor or tasks that require no training. It's fair to say that most people begin their journey as volunteers on the opposite end of the spectrum, doing something that's relatively "unskilled." For example, volunteers sort donations at a food bank, serve food at homeless shelters, pick up trash on the beach... you get the idea. With a few minutes of orientation, anyone can do the job.

Skills-based volunteerism is an ideal point each of us reaches over time, offering the unique skills we have as professionals or experts in certain areas. The form of service varies with each person, depending on what you have to offer and what a nonprofit needs. A human resources professional might help a nonprofit develop an employee handbook, an accountant might help streamline an organization's billing practices, and a programmer might work with disadvantaged kids to teach them the basics of coding. There are thousands of examples.



Why it matters to your small business

So why does skills-based volunteerism matter, especially when compared to the more traditional type of service? There are two big reasons:

- 1 Your contribution to the nonprofit is more meaningful, often providing a service that is lasting in its impact.**
- 2 The work is more meaningful to you, tapping into skills you are uniquely qualified to offer.**

Every year, an organization called Independent Sector issues data on the value of a volunteer hour. The latest report tells us that each hour of traditional volunteerism is worth \$22.14 to the nonprofit. If you are contributing skills to a nonprofit, however, the value literally skyrockets. How much would a nonprofit pay for a qualified human resources or accounting consultant to help them, or perhaps someone to do standard but necessary legal work? In these instances, the value of one person's skilled service can range from something relatively modest to hundreds of dollars an hour.

What's more, the lasting impact of the work they contribute is a truly meaningful gift. This is important because as more people are looking to help, they are also seeking meaning out of the work itself. Looking at the Millennial generation specifically, the *Millennial Impact Report* paints a very clear picture of the importance this segment of the workforce places on giving back—both the employer's role in serving and the way

individuals are able to connect with causes through work. This report, published annually by Derrick Feldmann and his team at Achieve with support from The Case Foundation, calls for businesses to “build relationships with Millennial employees from the beginning to spark their passions and create opportunities to engage both their professional and personal interests.” Here's a snapshot of the data that supports exactly why they issued this call to action.

5:1

The impact of skills-based volunteerism over traditional, hands-on volunteerism

The company's involvement with causes was the 3rd most important factor to Millennials when applying for a job.

55% were influenced to take a job after cause work was discussed in their job interviews.

Of those, 55% had volunteered 10-20 hours in the previous month.

97% of all Millennials in the study preferred using their individual skills to help a cause.

INTRODUCTION

Although Millennials in the workplace are certainly helping to drive change, this trend is not only about younger workers. Employees in general are seeking meaning in work and life in a post-9/11 world, maintaining their identity through all they do and selecting jobs and careers that provide personal fulfillment. Businesses, on the flip side, are trying to attract and retain the best people, keeping them engaged and happy.

Again, why should small business care? According to the US Small Business Administration, almost half of the U.S. workforce is employed by small firms (those with less than 500 employees). That's an estimated 70.2 million people working in almost 6 million firms. When you add mid-sized businesses (those with up to 5,000 employees), the number jumps to 95.4 million people, or two-thirds of the total US workforce. These numbers are staggering, as is the impact that these businesses—organizations like yours—make as they function within communities every day.

Finally, as you consider why you should make the leap into skills-based volunteerism, think about your customers. Businesses like yours rely on people who are increasingly looking to spend money with others who care and who show they aren't just in it for the buck. Sure, your product or service really matters. But in a competitive market, many products are commodities, and what your brand stands for—how you engage to do good—also matters.

For all these reasons, we think skills-based volunteerism is for you. Embracing this highly meaningful way of serving others is fast becoming a way good businesses are differentiating themselves and helping both their organizations and their people make a difference in the community and the world.

Join the movement!

49%

U.S. workforce employed
by small businesses

67%

U.S. workforce employed
by small to mid-sized
businesses

Source: U.S. Small Business
Administration

BetterWorld Wireless is a national voice and data provider that leverages the power of people and mobile for making positive change in the world.

BetterWorld Wireless

Voice and data mobile provider

www.betterworldwireless.com

San Francisco, CA

Matthew Bauer, CEO

11 employees

1 year in business

Our story

In 2002, James Kenefick's mom asked him a question. Sitting across from Jim at her kitchen table, she asked, "Jim, how about starting a company that does something good for the world?" Kenefick and Matthew Bauer did just that, creating BetterWorld Telecom, which works with businesses and nonprofits. Flash forward to 2013 and a conversation with TechSoup Global's Gayle Carpentier about delivering mobile services for the nonprofit community, and the idea for BetterWorld Wireless was born. The company's formal launch was announced at the United Nation's Changing Worlds Through Wireless conference that same year.

Why we're unique

Mobile devices allow people around the world to access information and opportunities that can empower them to create pathways out of poverty. BetterWorld Wireless is the first firm of its kind to apply the thriving buy-one-give-one business model popularized by brands like TOMS Shoes and Warby Parker to the U.S. mobile market through a program called Phone for Phone™. A full-service national voice and data mobile provider, the company is focused on meeting the needs of nonprofits and socially conscious consumers who want to use their purchasing power for good.

Our skills-based volunteerism

BetterWorld Wireless looks at skills-based volunteerism as core to its business and its business model. As a start-up technology company, the firm leverages its employees' IT skills as a way to give back. One example is the company's work with Black Girls Code, a nonprofit devoted to showing the world that African American



girls can not only learn to code, but also be the "programmers of tomorrow." The nonprofit accomplishes this work through workshops and afterschool programs for girls from underrepresented communities. BetterWorld Wireless employees participated in a day-long workshop for girls of color ages 8-17. The company also donated 100 android devices used in workshops that teach girls how to make mobile apps.

Our challenges

Although there are now more cell phones in the United States than people, bridging the digital divide is still a problem. Working with the Community Technology Alliance and Downtown Streets, BetterWorld Wireless provides mobile services to unhoused adults as a way to connect people with family, services, housing and job skills. When training participants in this Mobile 4 All program, the

company saw firsthand that, although everyone had used a phone, many had never had a smart phone. BetterWorld Wireless addresses this learning curve by training the trainer, teaching participants to develop new skills and help each other.

How serving helps our business

BetterWorld Wireless wants people to love their mobile company. That means the company needs to provide more than a fair price and high quality service. The firm must offer a service that connects with customers' personal values. In addition, volunteerism makes the company's Phone for Phone impact that much more meaningful and real for everyone at the company. Employees get to meet amazing people, get valuable feedback and witness the impact.

Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Volunteerism not only inspires your employees, it also helps them understand the impact they can truly make in the world. When they see it first-hand, they channel new enthusiasm back into how they serve customers.

Want to learn more?

Amy Tucker
Chief Impact Officer
amy@betterwireless.com



Photo: BetterWorld Wireless



Photo: BetterWorld Wireless

Your passion. Our purpose.

Blackbaud, Inc.

Technology and data solutions that power the world of philanthropy

www.blackbaud.com

Charleston, SC

Mike Gianoni, CEO

2,800 employees

33 years in business

Our story

It all started with a philanthropist who knew how to use technology to help nonprofits do more, and do it better. Today, we develop the most advanced software and services that help more than 30,000 nonprofits, foundations and corporate giving programs take their missions further than they thought possible. We continue Blackbaud's 30-year tradition of community service, spreading good and giving back as a company and as the individual people proud to be part of it.

Why we're unique

Giving back isn't something we do on the side. It's a part of the entire ethos of the company, which provides various solutions including many that help nonprofits raise more money. The culture of Blackbaud revolves around a value that service to others makes the world a better place. More than 81% of Blackbaud employees volunteer, and 84% say the fact that we work with nonprofits as customers was important to them when they joined the company. They spend time, both on the job and personally, giving back and leveraging the unique knowledge they have gained about the nonprofit sector through their work.

Our skills-based volunteerism

Blackbaud's two-person corporate citizenship and philanthropy team works hard to provide volunteer opportunities to employees, both through company-wide service days and specific, individual projects. We strongly believe in skills-based volunteerism as a way to leverage the skills our people use every day and invest time championing the effort in the broader nonprofit community (so nonprofits understand how to ask for volunteers to do skilled work) and the company (so employees understand they can give back by deploying their professional and personal skills). We cultivate our own people through the Nonprofit Leadership Circle, an internal educational program designed for any employee who serves—or wants to serve—on a nonprofit board or committee.



We are also proud of Camp Blackbaud, which was designed and implemented in collaboration with our product development team. Camp Blackbaud is a two-day program designed to help kids attending Title 1 schools see for themselves what jobs at a technology company would be like and to inspire them to attend college. The camp is run in conjunction with Charleston Promise Neighborhood, a nonprofit seeking to change the lives of disadvantaged youth in a very low-income community within a generation. Elementary school children are selected by the nonprofit to spend two days with programmers, usability engineers, software designers and technical documentation experts learning how to develop their own mobile app from start to finish. They learn the entire process in a hands-on model, making “programming and technology” come to life.



On #GivingTuesday 2013, we launched Business Doing Good (www.businessdoinggood.com), a website offering free advice to small-to-mid-sized businesses about how to build give back programs. The site is another way we give back, sharing our expertise with others who want to do good through their work.

Our challenges

Working with nonprofits, we are very aware of the importance of impact (providing measurable data about how the work done truly made a difference). Camp Blackbaud is designed to provide a meaningful experience to about 20 students at a time, and we struggle with how to scale it while continuing to make a difference to individual children. We are also painfully aware that we are not in a position to affect the other factors in these children’s lives. Another challenge is how to replicate the program at other

Blackbaud offices. As we welcome new camp groups, we work hard not to jeopardize the high quality of the experience (for students and employees) with our desire to do more good.

How serving helps our business

Given our large nonprofit customer base and the fact that employees come to Blackbaud because of our focus on these organizations, service is an essential part of our business. Our giving and volunteerism programs help us to recruit and retain good people, build engagement within the company so employees feel connected with the overall brand, and tell our story in the community about how we care (putting a face to the brand). Most importantly, everything an employee does to volunteer with a nonprofit makes that person better equipped to help our customers. We are constantly learning and growing, which helps us better serve the people who rely on us every day.

Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Make sure you really know your employees, and the skills they have and want to use, before you develop a program. Otherwise, you can end up designing something that employees don’t want to do. Also, make sure you understand what needs the nonprofit you are partnering with has so you make a good match between those needs and the work your people want to do.

Want to learn more?

Rachel Hutchisson
 Director of Corporate Citizenship and Philanthropy
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Chegg is a student-first connected learning platform that makes higher education more affordable, more accessible and more successful for students.

Chegg

Educational technology

www.chegg.com

Santa Clara, CA

Dan Rosensweig, CEO

750 employees

8 years in business

Our story

Chegg helps students save time, save money and get smarter. Students in today's world are used to doing things their own way. The school says you need a textbook; the student finds it cheaper online. The professor gives you a strict class time; the student makes her own course hours. The college says it can't help with funding; the student earns the money. Chegg is founded on the concept that today's students need something better than yesterday's rules.

Why we're unique

Chegg is all about putting students first. The company keeps the student perspective at the heart of every decision, action, product and service it makes. Everything the company does is aimed at improving outcomes for students and making their time more fulfilling and enriching and their lives easier. We do this by serving as an all-encompassing hub and as an online advocate for students.

Our skills-based volunteerism

Chegg employees participate in a wide variety of volunteer events, making personal decisions about how and where to serve. Examples of popular skills-based service include volunteering in STEM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) mentorship programs with middle school students and participating in hackathons for local nonprofits. Chegg employees worked with TechBridge, a nonprofit that inspires girls to discover a passion for STEM, coordinating a full day of learning in the Chegg offices.



This project, which was led by two Chegg interns, brought a dozen middle school girls to the office and provided them a chance to meet talented women working in different departments while getting a general sense of what a career in technology might be like.

Our challenges

Primarily designed for high school and college students, Chegg's technology platform benefitted from the exposure it received from the inquisitive minds of middle schoolers. Through this interaction, Chegg gained some new perspectives on how students see and use its technology and ultimately made some positive changes as a result of this project.

How serving helps our business

Chegg is a mission-driven company committed to helping students be more successful. Employees cite the company's mission and values as reasons why they come to work and why they stay at Chegg. Part of being mission driven is building the collective sense that the employee base is all working toward something more important than any one person or even the company as a whole. Chegg has a sense of obligation to give back to the community, serving with pride and eagerness because it's central to both employees and the brand.

Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Providing time for employees to give back during work hours is a fabulous way to encourage service and build pride in the company. Chegg encourages employees to invest 40 hours of company time each year in volunteer service.

Want to learn more?

Heather Hatlo Porter
VP of Marketing
heather@chegg.com

COTTON7 Global Enterprises builds alliances and partnerships for a better world.

COTTON7 Global Enterprises

Security and high risk management consulting, clean technology environmental security and infrastructure development.

www.cot7global.com

New York, NY

Dr. Gregory L. Cotton

25-49 employees

5 years in business

Our story

COTTON7 Global Enterprises exists to solve high-risk problems others shy away from. We are heavily involved in developing and deploying environmental security solutions that better protect the earth and the people that inhabit the planet. Our clean technology products support road construction, hazardous waste management, mining operations and a wide array of other industry specific needs.

Why we're unique

More than 70% of our employees are former military personnel. They come to COTTON7 Global Enterprises with unique skillsets (strategic planning, logistics, engineering, human resources and leadership) that equip them to manage complex projects in high-risk areas around the world while ensuring the people involved are safe.

Our skills-based volunteerism

The vast majority of our employees have always volunteered their time to special causes, both while in the military and as civilians, sharing their expertise as a way to give back. As a company, we advise two nonprofit organizations that build schools and clinics in hostile parts of the world. Our interest in education also led us to establish STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) internships that allow students to work on real-world projects and to engage with Junior Achievement's Titan Business Challenge and Finance Park initiatives. We are especially proud of our internship program at Brighton High School, which made it possible for about 25 students to participate in a clean technology research and

development project. The program was so well supported by the school community that we are working to enhance the offering.

Our challenges

Our employees are located throughout the United States, which creates some logistical challenges for our skills-based volunteerism projects. However, given who our employees are and the kinds of experience they bring to our firm, we were able to overcome this hurdle through the use of technology. We now have a good system for cross-country collaboration that really draws on the kind of communication and teamwork our people rely on for our business every day.



How serving helps our business

Skills-based volunteerism temporarily removes our people from their “comfort zones,” which supports their growth as employees and citizens. It’s one thing to donate money to a community outreach center and another thing entirely to use your skills to completely reconstruct a center to better serve those in need. Our people are enlightened by the work while being able to help address some of the more pressing social and educational issues in our community and the world. In the process, they also hone and expand the very skills they use to benefit our customers and the company. It’s a true win-win.

Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

The key to success in skills-based volunteerism is to start small and establish a plan of action that uses all your technological capabilities. This plan should include a strategy for how employees can participate in person. Also, you really need buy-in from your top leadership. That can make or break a program.

Want to learn more?

Spencer Shull
Director, Corporate Logistics
s.shull@cot7global.com



Complex Problems. Clear Solutions.

Edgeworth Economics

Economic, financial, and quantitative analysis and expert testimony to world-class law firms and Fortune 500 companies across the globe

www.edgewortheconomics.com

Washington, DC

Dr. John H. Johnson,
President & CEO

60 employees

5 years in business

Our story

The guiding principles in founding the firm were developed by a 19th century economist, Francis Edgeworth, who created a model of trade (known as “pareto optimality”) in which all individuals could be made better off without anyone being made worse off. At Edgeworth Economics, this theory has steered our decisions from the beginning. We believe in a company culture where clients can be served and a work environment can be created where everyone flourishes by putting the needs of the firm above those of any single individual. This guiding mantra is the foundation on which we have built our pro bono practice. Our CEO and President, Dr. John Johnson, worked on a pro bono project early in his testifying career and immediately saw the benefits of this work on the individual professional and in the community. He realized it could prove to be a growth pillar for a business as well.



Why we’re unique

Edgeworth experts provide comprehensive economic and data analyses and expert testimony in a variety of antitrust, class action, labor and employment, and intellectual property litigations

on behalf of clients. Our commitment from the beginning to establishing and nurturing a significant pro bono practice fundamentally distinguishes us from our industry competitors.

Our skills-based volunteerism

Our economists offer high-level economic consulting to community members who would otherwise not be able to afford such services. At Edgeworth, pro bono work receives the same attention and dedication as our other projects. Last year, our professionals donated more than 1,300 hours of skills-based service work. Over the past five years, this work has included economic analysis and testimony in a variety of matters such as assessing the impact of legal reforms on certain subpopulation, the economics of distinct markets and industries, damages resulting from the violation of federal disability rules and damages resulting from discrimination. Examples include:

In Samuel Payne v. Tamia Wells and D.C. ex rel. Bryson Agnew v. Leo Alexander, we provided testimony related to the potential earnings capacity of an individual involved in a child support dispute.

In Mario Alvarado v. Tenants of 10 49th Street SE, we designed a model and provided testimony on economic issues related to a petition filed by the owner of a rent-controlled property who requested that a rent increase be granted.

In Robert W. Gettleman and Elaine Bucklo v. United States of America, we calculated damages regarding the withholding of deductions for Federal income taxes, Medicare and Judicial Survivors’ Annuities System.

Our challenges

We are increasingly seeing greater demand for our pro bono economic services, which means we are having to transition from actively seeking opportunities to prioritizing the work we are asked to take on. We have established some basic parameters for the projects we work on. For example, we initially assess whether our skills can best serve the client and, if not, find an organization that can better assist them. We also examine the ways in which a proposed project will provide experience and professional development in ways that will enhance our economists' core strengths.

How serving helps our business

As our professionals work on projects, we both foster and enhance our working relationships with attorneys while simultaneously enabling our economists to grow their skillsets. In some instances, pro bono work has provided our economists with their first testifying opportunity, which can sometimes be difficult to get. Others have been given a first opportunity to lead data work or present to a client. These opportunities enhance and build their experience, making that next time a little easier. It is also a point of pride, shared by employees and others, that our community impact is so visible. For example, on the steps of the DC Courthouse, where our professionals provided analysis that led to the installation of a handicap-accessible entryway after our client was injured walking into the building. We are proud that our reach has been wide in helping members of our community win social justice and access to basic human necessities. That pride has become a critical part of our brand image.



Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Your pro bono practice should be an integrated part of the culture of your organization from the top down. Dedicating resources to doing good in your community not only feels great and helps others, it also creates a positive culture of giving and collaboration and gives back to your organization in tangible ways you may not have expected.

Want to learn more?

Kara Gorski
Chief Marketing Officer
kgorski@edgewortheconomics.com

A direct-to-consumer shaving company built out of respect for quality craftsmanship, simple design, modern convenience and, most importantly, for guys who know they shouldn't have to overpay for a great shave.

Harry's

Direct-to-consumer grooming brand for men

www.harrys.com

New York, NY

Jeffrey Raider and Andy Katz-Mayfield, Co-Founders

60 employees

1.5 years in business

Our story

Harry's seeks to deliver the best shaving experience for our customers. This is why we run a vertically integrated business, owning the entire process from manufacturing to the point of sale. This allows us to offer factory-direct pricing and also have a personal relationship with our customers, taking their feedback and putting it right back into research and development. Our razors help our customers get ready for the day ahead, but we realize there is a lot more to readiness in life. That's why we created Harry's 1+1, our pledge to give 1% of our sales and 1% of our team's time to City Year and other organizations that get people from all walks of life ready for their next big step.



1% SALES



1% TIME

Why we're unique

Harry's is best known for entering a market dominated by a couple of major institutional players with a direct-to-consumer model and high-quality, thoughtfully designed products sold at factory-direct prices. We make ergonomic razors and premium shaving cream, which we offer to customers à la carte and in shave plans. We built the company on the value of respect and believe all businesses should leverage their core strengths for social change.



Our skills-based volunteerism

At Harry's, we consider our team's 21st century skillsets to be chief among our strengths and one of our most valuable assets. We love to contribute what we do best—whether it be design, engineering or marketing—so our nonprofit partners can focus on what they do best: inspiring others and delivering impact. Our team has a truly varied set of skills, such as graphic design, engineering, data science and user experience. With our partners, we curate skills-based volunteering sprints where we tackle specific, carefully scoped projects with concrete deliverables, such as wire framing a website, rebranding creative collateral, building a pitch deck, or developing a data dashboard.

In April, our entire team participated in our first 1% Hack. We set aside an entire day for our whole team to focus their skills on tackling—or “hacking”—a challenge that City Year faces. In the span of a single day, we collectively committed more than 300 hours of time in skills-based service, developing ideas that could help City Year recruit more male corps members. Though the hack-a-thon is over, a smaller team at Harry's is now working



closely with City Year to develop the winning idea—a mobile app—into a fully-functioning product that City Year’s recruiting team will actually implement. As one of our team members said, “This is one of the most meaningful volunteer activities I’ve done. It was incredible to actually solve a real organizational problem of a nonprofit that doesn’t have the resources to solve it themselves.”

Our challenges

When we created Harry’s 1+1, we were a six-month-old company of about 15 people. As a small business, it was challenging to understand how we could make a meaningful impact for our select partners. We created the 1+1 model because we understood that giving not just money, but also time, would allow us to drive the most positive change. It wasn’t until our hack-a-thon and a handful of other service events that we realized how much impact we could have as a team in a day and sometimes even in an afternoon. That key observation led to the launch of our “skills-based sprint” model. To ensure this model was successful, we focused on scoping service engagements so everyone knows at the beginning what we need to do in order to get the work done well and efficiently.

How serving helps our business

Many employees are drawn to Harry’s in part because it is a socially responsible company. What 1% time achieves is a regular and reliable avenue to engage all of our employees in that aspect of our business. Our teammates are eager and excited to give their time. Caitlin D., on the Customer Experience team at Harry’s,

articulated well some of the benefits employees reap from the service program. She said, “I really enjoyed being involved in and hearing from an organization that is very different from Harry’s. It broke up the day and gave me a feeling of fulfillment in different and exciting ways.”

Our approach to giving time has also garnered attention and awards, landing Harry’s speaking engagements at respected social innovation conferences as well as shout-outs in articles and other media about socially responsible companies. As an e-commerce company, we also see skills-based volunteering as a unique way to interact with our customers in the real world and hope to engage our customers as partners in service in the future, inspiring and empowering them to share their skills.

Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Begin with the people on your team who don’t need to be convinced that service is important. Use their positive experiences and enthusiasm to build broader base support. Make sure you have senior leadership on board from the beginning. That doesn’t simply mean your leaders should approve of a volunteer program. It means they should show up and help.

Want to learn more?

Laura Zax
Social Mission Manager
laura@harrys.com

Service. Accountability. Better Communities.

M Powered Strategies

Management consulting
 www.mpoweredstrategies.com
 Washington, DC
 J. Kendall Lott, CEO
 37 employees
 12 years in business

Our story

M Powered Strategies (MPS) is a small consulting firm based in Washington, DC that specializes in advanced management strategies for senior executives in the federal government. Under the leadership of CEO J. Kendall Lott, MPS offers four primary service lines: Program Development, Organizational Development, Collaboration, and Professional Development.

Why we're unique

Although our primary client is the federal government, we're in the business of serving not only our clients, but also each other and our community as a whole. It's this desire to serve that led us to launch our Community Engagement Portfolio, which includes pro bono programs and skills-based volunteerism that allow us to extend our mission of positively transforming the effectiveness and quality of organizational management into the nonprofit sector.



Our skills-based volunteerism

Our Projects for Partners program is just one way we empower nonprofit organizations to achieve their goals. The focus of this pro bono program is on providing skilled volunteers to organizations facing management challenges through customized three-month projects. For every engagement, our consultant team takes a unique approach to project design by compelling the partner organization to be highly involved in determining the scope of their pro bono project. By working together to understand the problem, we enable the partner to better understand their condition, identify solutions and then help them to execute actions that will lead to improved operations and maximized social benefit.

Our challenges

A primary goal within all of our pro bono programs is to ensure that our partners receive the same quality of service as our federal government clients. To maintain the strong reputation of our company, we treat all pro bono projects the same as we do our federal contracts, ensuring that the work is performed by qualified consultants who have the capacity to transfer necessary knowledge and skills to the client. As a small business, availability of appropriate subject matter experts can sometimes be a challenge. Although we gain so much through our pro bono consulting, it is often difficult for us to predict future resource demands that may affect the availability of our consultants for these projects. To overcome this challenge, we have put processes in place to ensure that once engaged on a pro bono project, our consultant team is fully committed to the scope over the duration of the project.

How serving helps our business

MPS is vested in making a sustainable impact on our community and is proud to support our employees' interest and passion for giving back. Providing pro bono consulting services to nonprofit organizations opens up another market to us where we can exercise our skills and expertise while providing our consultants with a new perspective for management challenges. Operating in this different environment leads to thought innovation that can later be applied to projects with our federal clients. This ability to strengthen our company's core competencies and diversify our employees' experiences is bolstered by the unique professional development opportunities that our pro bono projects offer to MPS consultants. Each pro bono project allows consultants to grow personally and professionally and to hone their technical skills.

Advice for other small businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

The strategic decision to make community engagement initiatives a priority in our company has contributed to the success of our pro bono programs. Pro bono work is one of MPS' core capabilities, and our Community Engagement Portfolio is a significant contributor to our ability to attract and retain our employees. The launch of pro bono programs requires serious commitment as well as financial investment. If you plan to do something similar in order to differentiate your firm in the workplace, you will need to make the program a strategic priority.

Want to learn more?

Kat McDonald
Community Engagement Manager
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Mizzen+Main is the classic American-made clothier for athletic professionals that elevates their innovative lifestyles.

Mizzen+Main

Men's Performance Apparel

mizzenandmain.com

Dallas, Texas

Kevin Lavelle, Founder & CEO

5 employees

2 years in business



Our story

Six years ago, while working in Washington, DC, in the summer heat, Kevin Lavelle watched a staffer run into a very important meeting soaked in sweat. The staffer was a mess. His shirt had turned two different colors and was sticking to him. Here was a guy making a name for himself on Capitol Hill, but he looked terrible. It took an hour for his shirt to dry, leaving him wrinkled and disheveled. About this time, collared performance shirts were becoming popular for golf and tennis, which helped spark the idea for a moisture-wicking dress shirt. Mizzen+Main was born.

Why we're unique

Mizzen+Main proudly manufactures our dress shirts in the United States, working with suppliers, sewing shops and distributors across the country. From the material to the stitching and finishing, every detail that goes into our shirts is designed to benefit our country's resurgence as a textile manufacturing power. Our founder, Kevin Lavelle, has always admired and respected servicemen and women who voluntarily put themselves in harm's way defending the United States. Mizzen+Main has adopted this focus, putting its give-back energy into helping veterans through volunteerism, hiring, and by donating a percentage of all sales to wounded veterans. We think of this as "A Shirt for a Start."

Our skills-based volunteerism

Mizzen+Main leverages its employees' skills to help former servicemen and women, working specifically with veterans' service organizations with a focus on training and career development. We aim to help veterans get experience, contacts and references they need to successfully make the transition from the military to their next careers. As an example, Kevin and others volunteer their time and experience to speak with veterans about such topics as entrepreneurship and marketing, both presenting information and spending time answering the specific questions unique to someone coming out of the military.

Under his leadership, we are expanding our skills-based volunteerism program by launching an internship program that provides veterans on-the-job training and exposure to the world of startups.

Our challenges

There are a lot of veterans' organizations, but even with so many offering services, our former servicemen and women aren't getting all of their needs met. Our challenge is to determine how to fit into what might seem like a crowded market while providing unique services our veterans need. There are thousands of veterans here in our community with a wealth of experience who need a bit of help getting started on their careers.

How serving helps our business

Our focus on career development for veterans has become intertwined with the culture and purpose of the company. In addition to providing a core value around this concept, our commitment to veterans has led us to hire one former serviceman (so far), who is arguably one of the hardest working people on the team. So in a cool way, we are benefiting as a company from the way we give back. We have also formed partnerships with various veterans' service organizations as we seek to find unique ways for our people to engage the general public and veterans' communities to raise awareness and encourage others to make their voices heard. This all results in a strong, unified, happy work culture committed to doing good.

Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Find something that you are passionate about and seek out opportunities that both suit your business goals and support your community.

Want to learn more?

Jen Lavelle
Marketing Director
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Bringing Clarity to Purposeful Brands.

Riggs Partners

Marketing and Communications

www.riggspartners.com

Columbia, SC

Teresa Coles, Managing Partner

18 employees

26 years in business

Our story

Riggs Partners is a marketing and communications firm dedicated to helping corporations, public sector agencies and nonprofit organizations develop purposeful brands. We harness the power of marketing and public relations to a meaningful end—whether that's helping clients articulate and demonstrate their brands, develop innovative products and experiences, or engage their customers, constituents and employees in positive behavior.

Why we're unique

Our commitment to corporate social responsibility is best demonstrated in CreateAthon, an annual 24-hour marketing marathon we developed in 1998 to benefit nonprofit organizations in South Carolina. Seventeen years later, CreateAthon has grown from a single-market event to a 501(c) 3 organization that has engaged 99 different marketing organizations in the US, Canada and Europe.



All together, these events have served over 1,300 nonprofits and delivered more than \$16 million in pro bono marketing services.

Our skills-based volunteerism

Riggs Partners was continually being asked to provide pro bono marketing services to nonprofits in our community. As a small firm, we struggled with determining which nonprofits to adopt, when to provide the pro bono work, and how to manage the work in a way that would not overburden us. We decided to focus our service efforts at one time, via a unique delivery model that would engage and motivate our staff while allowing us to do more work for more nonprofits. Our thesis proved immediately true with the first CreateAthon event in 1998, when our team of 11 marketing professionals selected and served 13 nonprofits.

CreateAthon teams are comprised of people with expertise in brand strategy, visual design, copywriting and content development, media placement, digital marketing, public relations and project management. Deliverables range from comprehensive brand strategy, brand design, marketing and public relations planning and digital marketing strategy, to the development and production of projects such as websites, search engine optimization, search engine marketing, television, video and radio, outdoor and place-based advertising, direct mail, print collateral, and so on. Counsel provided through CreateAthon also has expanded into helping nonprofits build and market social enterprise initiatives designed to diversity revenue streams and boost long-term sustainability.

Our challenges

Our biggest challenges are selecting nonprofits that have the kind of marketing and public relations issues we can address effectively within a 24-hour marathon, adapting our project management protocols to facilitate work in this model, and managing expectations with the pro bono clients about what we can and cannot solve or provide in 24 hours. For example, we have to ramp up the work faster, deliver it in a concentrated period of time, facilitate client approval, and wrap up the projects in a timely fashion. Surprisingly, this challenge is the very thing that makes us most successful, uniting us as a firm and helping us all see what we can achieve when we are united in mission-based service.

How serving helps our business

CreateAthon has generated a tremendous amount of goodwill for Riggs Partners in our community, both in nonprofit and business circles. It has positively impacted business development, recruiting and retention, and has led to more staff engagement in volunteerism, such as board service. We've been recognized for our leadership in expanding the program nationally, and have greatly benefited from meeting other leaders in the pro bono movement. While we're proud of all that CreateAthon has achieved, we're most inspired by the way CreateAthon has moved thousands of people in the communicating arts to put their talents to work for good.



Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Force yourself to think outside of the ways in which you typically deliver services to your clients. While your business service protocols may be the perfect way to manage pro bono services, our experience in talking with other small businesses is that they have difficulty in making pro bono work fit into their existing business models. For us, it was embracing an outrageous idea like a 24-hour marathon. Think about a new way to approach pro bono work, and odds are you might discover something that will open up new ways of carrying out your work, just as CreateAthon did for us.

Want to learn more?

Teresa Coles
Managing Partner
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Turning Good Ideas Into Real Solutions.

The SISGI Group

Consulting and Training

www.sisgigroup.org

Jersey City, NJ

Thenera Bailey, President & CEO

6 employees

4 years in business

Our story

The SISGI Group is a consulting and research group that specializes in nonprofit capacity building. Bringing together independent consultants with a variety of expertise, we address cross-sector issues and a range of specialties impacting organizations, individuals and groups working within and on social problems. Our CEO comes from the nonprofit sector and knows the value of skills-based volunteers in helping organizations meet their mission. When developing the organization's business model, she incorporated a focus on pro bono work as a part of the firm's values and approach.

Why we're unique

The SISGI Group is committed to operating as an 80-90% virtual organization, leveraging the benefits of technology and cloud work environments. This allows for the least amount of overhead and administrative costs, access to the most talented global staff and partners regardless of geographic location, and the ability to decrease our environmental footprint. The SISGI Group also operates SISGI Beyond Good Ideas Foundation as a nonprofit division, focusing on internship programs, educational resources and collaborative work, as well as free and low-cost consulting.



Our skills-based volunteerism

Our organization requires each of our consultants to lead a pro bono consulting project annually with a nonprofit organization. This allows nonprofits that do not have the financial resources for consulting services to benefit from our work. Our consultants provide a variety of services including strategic planning, fundraising planning, grant writing assistance, evaluations and program design assistance. In addition, nonprofits can submit a request for projects for our pro bono services through our website to meet their specific needs.

Our CEO and a group of 10 interns from across the country did a nine-month engagement with the Alliance Center for Independence (a New Jersey based nonprofit focused on disability support and awareness), helping them prepare for their Disabilities Pride Parade and develop a social media policy.



The organization was severely underfunded and behind in planning for this annual community event, which celebrates the diversity of ability within New Jersey. The SISGI Group helped to develop systems and budgets for managing parade costs and assisted with overall event funding strategy. We also provided long-term program planning support, helping them develop case statements for grant writing and operational systems development.

Our challenges

Our nonprofit partners are sometimes small, which can make it difficult for them to coordinate the work needed to meet the larger outcome of a pro bono consulting project. Although they see the value in the projects, they also question whether it's worth the time to learn new approaches and strategies. We address this by helping partners prioritize work so it's not so overwhelming. It's also difficult choosing the organizations that will receive our donated time and talent. We receive two to three applications per month through our online system and can only manage about six to ten projects a year. We are looking at ways to combine nonprofit organizations within projects to increase our outcomes and the number of organizations we can serve.

How serving helps our business

Our consultants have seen a direct return on investment with pro bono projects. At times, these projects evolve into paid projects with the nonprofit organization or their partners. Our student interns gain valuable real world experience, a better

understanding of the challenges nonprofits face, and ways to find solutions. Graduates of our internship program have indicated this experience has been invaluable in their professional development and their inability to problem-solve within their careers.

Advice for other businesses interested in skills-based volunteerism

Institutionalize your volunteer efforts as much as possible. If you find a partner organization or group to work with, allow your staff the time to volunteer in a regular and supported strategy that is part of their existing work plan. This makes it easier to implement and to get buy-in from your team.

Want to learn more?

Thenera Bailey
President & CEO
tbailey@sisgigroup.org

Getting Started

You're now inspired and ready to begin a skills-based volunteerism program at your business. Great! Follow these seven steps to get your new initiative going.



1 Develop your plan: Before you begin, take a moment to think through all the ways your business gives back today. Document what you do so you have a clear understanding of the foundation from which you are beginning. This document is the beginning of your formal giving strategy. Make sure you include the following.

- a. Donations you make (what you give today and why, making sure you look at the marketing budget to include donations that might be disguised as sponsorships)
- b. Volunteer projects
- c. In-kind products or services you give to nonprofits
- d. Leadership positions that members of the firm hold in the community (nonprofit boards, committees, etc.)



2 Engage your people: Share your interest in adding a skills-based volunteerism program with your team. See who gets really jazzed by the idea and ask them to join a committee that will help develop a pilot. The committee can take on a variety of tasks, such as these examples.

- a. Learning more about skills-based volunteerism so they can become internal champions
- b. Hosting educational sessions for other team members to get them excited about serving
- c. Surveying all employees about their interest in skills-based volunteerism and, in particular, the kinds of skills they would like to offer
- d. Coming up with a name for the volunteerism team to use externally when your people are out in the community



3 Identify partners: With steps 1 and 2 complete, you'll have the information you need to figure out where to begin serving. Look at the nonprofits where you have made donations in the past or where your team has done traditional volunteerism. Work with the employee committee to identify those partners who are easy to work with and might have an interest in trying out skills-based volunteerism with your employees. Having good partners matters because the nonprofits need to do brainstorming of their own about their needs and must be open to working with you. They might need to do some planning of their own, which you can encourage, to match the skills your people can offer with good opportunities to serve.



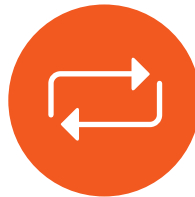
4 Do something: Make it clear that it's a pilot (so you have the flexibility to make adjustments) and identify a couple of small projects. These could be individual service opportunities or small group projects that last for a finite period of time. Identify work that is important for the nonprofit but not overwhelming for your team. You want them to be successful, and you want the nonprofit partner to be happy with the work, asking you back to do more as you get to know each other's needs better. A wise woman once said "doing something is doing something," and I think that advice is great. You have to begin somewhere in order to learn what worked, where you need to rethink things, and what project you should take on next. Above all, be patient. It's not about how MUCH work you do or how quickly. It's about the quality of the result.



5 Debrief: Following the completion of the project (or projects), sit down with the nonprofit partner and the team to debrief. What did each party expect going into the initiative? Was the goal met? What happened differently than you expected? Is there a logical next step? Although some might prefer the actual service to the debrief, this step is essential and will help ensure you build a meaningful program over time.



6 Celebrate: Recognize the employees who were involved in front of their peers, making it known that you value service. Involve the nonprofit partner and recognize them for the part they played in identifying, scoping and overseeing the work. Make sure you take the time to share the story of what was accomplished with your people, the community and your customers. As you grow your skills-based program, it will become a part of your company culture and how you are known by others.



7 Get started again: A good volunteerism program never ends. It keeps evolving, learning from past efforts and finding new ways to tap into the skills of your people. Doing projects and sharing the results is a great way to generate more ideas and requests to serve.