

EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

One of the best ways that companies can support their communities is through employee volunteering.

This is when companies allow employees to provide their knowledge, skills and physical labour to community groups in company time.

Employee volunteering can be done regularly such as weekly, fortnightly, monthly, annually or informally whenever help is required.

It can be done individually by employees or in groups. Staff can choose to volunteer in activities in which they are personally interested or the company can make a commitment to support a particular community group or cause.

In the United States, 90% of big companies have formal employee volunteering programs and it is becoming more popular here in Australia.

The Benefits

The benefits of employee volunteering include:

- Strengthening the local community through supporting the work of community groups
- Bringing additional volunteers and skills to the work of community groups
- Building the company's good reputation, customer base and profitability through the good will established in the community from employees volunteering
- Increasing employees' job satisfaction and their pride in the company
- Reducing staff absenteeism and turnover
- Developing greater teamwork among staff
- Improving the abilities of staff

Types of Volunteering

There are a wide range of areas in which employees can do volunteering. They include education (schools), environment protection, sport and recreation, arts, heritage, church, emergency services, human services and animal welfare.

A Positive Experience for Staff

Employees are more committed to volunteering when they are given a genuine choice of whether to volunteer or not. Also, they are more dedicated if they have a say in the type of volunteering activity in which they are involved.

Employees enjoy their volunteering more when they do not have to work twice as hard or do unpaid overtime to make up for work time lost through their volunteering.