

Company generosity, key for Human Resources performance

HR impacts of employee volunteering supported by the company

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INTRODUCTION

This study takes place in an international research on **employee volunteering supported by the company and Human Resources Management**. It aims at filling a relative absence of research work in this area in France compared to Anglo-Saxon countries.

The goals are:

- **to describe involvement from volunteering employees standpoint**

A set of questions is targeting their motivation, their perception of the support of their company, their colleagues and higher hierarchical managers, the conflicts they perceive between volunteering and their professional activity, the sustainability of their commitment.

- **to explain involvement of employees in their company**

The study looks for the reasons of employees' commitment and actions of the company which can foster its development.

- **to measure quantitatively the link between employee involvement and their attitude towards their company**

This objective meets existing research studies which show the interest of employee involvement for HR Management. However, whereas these advantages have already been put forward, they have never been measured quantitatively before in France.

This survey has been conducted :

- “Le Laboratoire Gestion et Cognition”, directed by Anne-Laure Gatignon Turnau, Ph.d. in 2005 with the thesis « The consequences of the practice of volunteering in companies with regard to Human Resources Management », and who is currently Assistant Professor.
- “Le Centre de Recherche en Management”, directed by Karim Mignonac, University Professor in management, in charge of human resource management.
- The agency “Volonteer”, a CSR consultant company, headed by Octavie Baculard, the author of several publications: *“Employee volunteering, a new form of Corporate Citizenship”* (2006) and *“From philanthropy to social utility”* (2009). Since 2005, the agency has developed an expertise on the implementation of corporate citizenship and volunteering programs. Among its clients: AXA, BNP Paribas, Cisco, Fondation Casino, Fondation Veolia, Fondation RTE, Google, Groupe Hub Télécom, IBM, Prisma Presse.

METHODOLOGY

The survey has targeted active volunteering employees whose commitment is supported by their company. In order to do this, two types of participants have been appealed to:

- **Non-profit organizations relying on volunteering of corporate employees:**

Solidarities Against Unemployment, Our Neighborhoods Have Talents, Urgency Planet.

- **Corporate organizations or networks of volunteering employees supported by their companies:**

Axa Heart In Action, Electricians Without Borders, Air France Foundation volunteers, Club Med Foundation volunteers.

The sample is based on 565 volunteering employees from the following organizations:

Solidarités Nouvelles face au Chômage	Nos Quartiers ont des Talents	Planète Urgence	Axa Atout Coeur	Electriciens sans frontières	Fondation Air France	Fondation Club Med	Total
20	23	117	124	120	127	34	565
3,5%	4%	21%	22%	21%	22,5%	6%	100%

Data processing and analysis methodology

The survey questionnaire has been designed to meet international scientific norms. The volunteering employees have filled the questionnaire through internet, by connecting to a webpage hosted by the "Centre de Recherche en Management". Data were collected between May 5 and July 2, 2010.

The total of the survey results, presented in this document, is the product of a quantitative analysis of data, which has relied on classical statistical tests (normality test of data, correlation tests, simple and multiple regression tests, test of average difference, test of hierarchical regression).

Presentation of the seven organizational structures which participated in the survey

AXA HEART IN ACTION

Axa Heart In Action is a non-profit organization of AXA volunteers. Founded in 1991, upon internal consultation, this non-profit organization consists of 2000 collaborators of AXA, active or retired, who are willing to commit voluntarily on their spare time, for the most underprivileged people, for sick and for handicapped persons. AXA Heart In Action offers tailor-made volunteering actions: each collaborator can commit according to his capacity and availability in solidarity actions organized by 50 correspondents with 250 non-profit organization partners.

AIR FRANCE FOUNDATION

Founded in November 1992, the Air France Foundation has already supported 646 non-profit organization programs. These programs, which can be modest or ambitious, put the help to children at the heart of their commitment. In 2010, the Air France Foundation financed 100 projects in France as well as abroad.

CLUB MEDITERRANEE FOUNDATION

Founded in 1978, the Club Méditerranée Foundation, promotes employee volunteering and community involvement. It also actively supports recycling of all Club Med equipment and materials which can be useful to non-profit organizations. 2150 Kind Organizers (Gentils Organistateurs: G.O.) commit for the Foundation programs. They support children, social action, education and rehabilitation through sport, close to the Club Med Villages or Offices, everywhere in the world.

ELECTRICIANS WITHOUT BORDERS

Electricians Without Borders is an NGO for international solidarity with 1000 professionals of the energy sector. Since 25 years, in partnership with Southern and Northern NGOs, these volunteers act for the access to electricity on sustainable development projects in the areas of education, healthcare, access to water, and economic development.

SOLIDARITIES AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

Since 1985, Solidarities Against Unemployment acts for employment and against exclusion through practical commitment. Each year, more than 2000 unemployed persons are accompanied by 1200 volunteers. More than 130 of these volunteers come from a company and act within 106 solidarity groups (of which 13 are corporate groups). In 2010, Solidarities against Unemployment has also financed 95 jobs in non-profit organizations, which are partners.

URGENCY PLANET

Urgency Planet is a French non-profit organization of International Solidarity which was recognized as acting for the general interest in 2009. Founded in 2000 and based on an original model of commitment called "Solidarity leave", Urgency Planet enables companies or communities and citizens to act for projects managed by local NGOs, everywhere in the world.

OUR NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE TALENTS

Our Neighborhoods Have Talents enables companies to discover young university graduates less than 30 years old and originating from underprivileged areas. Since its foundation in 2003, it represents 7700 young graduates mentored, of whom 3900 got a job in a company, 2200 mentors and 500 partner companies.

OVERVIEW

The study analyses the feedbacks of 565 volunteering employees committed on various actions like helping people, organizing fundraising activities, implementing development projects between the North and the South, with the material or financial support of their company.

About the involvement of employees in volunteering

- **Occasional commitment compatible with an absorbing professional activity**, since 72% of the employees are volunteering on an occasional basis with an average of 3 hours per month against 28% who are volunteering on a regular and continuous basis.
- **Gateway to volunteering**: 51% of employees are also committed as volunteers outside their company, whereas 43% never had any volunteering commitment before.
- **Loyalty in the commitment**: involved in average for the last 5 years, 72% of the employees are not considering withdrawing from their volunteering commitment in the company.
- **High rate of satisfaction among involved employees with regard to their life, their work and a pride of belonging to their company**: 64% consider that their life corresponds closely to their ideals, 70% are satisfied with their work and 77% are proud to be an employee of their company.

Volunteering involvement develops Human Resources performance

Supporting employees' involvement "outside work" improves team cohesion, develops self-fulfilment and the acquisition of new professional skills.

Creating a volunteering community :

82% of employees state that their volunteering activity has enabled them to meet colleagues in a different context, 74% consider volunteering activity as an activator of internal networking, and 53% think that it allows opening up hierarchical levels.

Contributing to self-fulfilment :

- **Feeling of being useful which reinforces self-esteem**. For 61% of employees consulted, volunteering activity gives the feeling of being useful and recognized in an action proposed by the company.
- **Enhancement of professional skills which gives back meaning to the work**. For 68% of employees, voluntary activity allows them to exercise their professional skills in a different context.

A way of acquiring new skills by:

- **Learning relational skills**: 75% of employees recognize that they apply during their daily life what they learnt in volunteering activity.
- **A development of professional skills**: 56% of consulted employees consider that volunteering activity enables them to acquire new skills which can be useful for their professional activity.

Strong expectation that what has been learnt during volunteering experience be valued by HR Management.

The survey shows that the more the employees perceive the support of their company as genuine and selfless, the more they feel they are working for a generous company, the more their attitudes towards the company are positive. Perceived generosity is a lever for developing work satisfaction and commitment which are keys to company's performance.

Perceived generosity depends on two factors: the help provided to conciliate work and volunteering activity and the motivation which is attributed to the company. Thus, putting forward the volunteering commitment in corporate communication to serve image goals, puts in doubt the real generosity of the company. On the contrary, **the idea that this support is a mean to attain human resource goals as skills development, reinforces the generosity perception**. Only 13% of surveyed employees consider that through the support of volunteering commitment, the company aims at developing the skills of their employees so that they can be more performant. **The employees are expecting an enhancement of the skills they have acquired during volunteering commitment**: only 16% consider that their company is recognizing the skills they have acquired through volunteering activity.

The company has a facilitating role and is an added value in the selection of non-profit organizations.

The times of fear regarding the risk of trespassing on private life are gone. Nowadays, **55% of committed employees consider that their voluntary commitment has been facilitated by the support of their company**, and 39% think that they would not have had the time to do a volunteering activity otherwise.

Employees recognize the added value of the company in selecting the right non-profit organization partners and the projects where their skills will be useful. **54% of employees consider that their company selects serious non-profit organization partners for which they know that their commitment will be used in a good way.**

The support of volunteering commitment contributes to improving the company's reputation in a positive way: 98% of employees declare that they would recommend working for a company which supports voluntary commitment among its employees. Finally, the support of employee involvement is perceived positively by an overwhelming majority of employees: **96% consider that the support of volunteering by their company is an important action.**