CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR), EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

What is CSR, and how can Employee Volunteering be of benefit to your business, help you to achieve your goals and have a meaningful impact in the community...

What is CSR?

Corporate Social Responsibility is the impact companies have on their staff, wider community and society as a whole. This includes the economic, environmental and social impacts of their business.

It has been estimated that the world's largest 500 companies are spending US$20 billion a year on corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, according to UNESCO. Organisations are increasing their CSR efforts, as both current and prospective employees and consumers step up their scrutiny of business ethics.

CSR or sustainability initiatives might include partnering with non-profits which fit with your overall business focus, fundraising activities, workplace or pay-roll giving, sustainability and environmental programmes, providing goods in kind, sponsoring events, and of course employee volunteering in a wide range of settings.

How does volunteering fit?

Offering your staff's time and talents to non-profit organisations and engaging with your community is likely to be one of the areas you have the greatest impact in terms of outcomes for society as a whole. This has positive effects on your staff through employee engagement as well as achieving results in the community which would not otherwise be possible.

Your staff could be providing hands-on help planning for a conservation project, supporting those who are vulnerable which broadens their worldview, or passing on their skills and expertise in a coaching session or workshop for a non-profit.

Having a well-run Employee Volunteering Programme ensures that your staff are supported and resourced in their employee volunteering. This ensures their volunteer day is worthwhile and has meaningful outcomes for all concerned.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is not just about staff satisfaction and experience, but how emotionally committed your employees are to your company's vision and goals. A passionate employee is one who will go the extra mile, feel part of the bigger purpose, and tell everyone they know how much they love their job!

In the past employee engagement was largely driven by factors such as salary and job security. Now however employees are also looking for their workplace to provide other forms of engagement… including purpose and fulfilment.

Research tells us that right from the recruitment and interview stage, prospective employees, particularly

millennials, will be asking what your company CSR initiatives are.

Demonstrating authentic CSR initiatives can connect your company to the personal values of job seekers and employees alike - it draws them in to make them feel they are a good fit with your company's values and goals.

A CSR programme which includes volunteering can help your business in other ways - retention rates and productivity increase when people are motivated and energised. Providing a paid volunteer day to connect with the community is a great, lower cost way to boost to your team.

Part of being a responsible employer also means ensuring your staff's well-being in their physical environment, along with their mental and emotional health. As well as the feel-good factor of giving time in a meaningful way for individual employees, there is also the team building aspect of bonding outside of the office in a different environment.

Employee Volunteering makes good business sense too. Recruitment and training are costly as most HR/People Management specialists know, and motivating and retaining loyal staff is a key factor in a business' success.

"A highly engaged workforce means the difference between a company that outperforms its competitors and one that fails to grow." – Gallup

Getting involved with the Volunteer Marlborough Employee Volunteering Programme enables staff teams to choose a meaningful volunteer day and engage with the community outside of their usual work environment. When they return to work, they will be more motivated, enthusiastic and think more positively towards their employer, as well as engaging more with their team and colleagues.

Where do you start?
This is where we can help. The first thing you need to do is establish your goals for volunteering. What would your team like to do? What can you commit to? If you have CSR policies and objectives at your workplace, consider them and how volunteering may fit in with those objectives. Think about what causes or organisations may fit within those guidelines. Have a chat with your team and get their input. They may have some very different ideas - if they do, work on bringing things together so that everyone is on the same page.

Have a look at the list of opportunities that is currently available on the Volunteer Marlborough website. This list is updated regularly, as the needs of our member organisations change. If you see something you would like to get involved with fill in the enquiry form and we will be in touch. If what you are looking for is not listed, don't worry. Get in touch with our Group Volunteer Co-ordinator and let them know what your team would like to do, what size team you have and when you would like to volunteer. We will then see what options we can find that would suit. We are often able to source projects to meet particular requirements for teams. Once a project has been set up all that is left to do is to have a great day out with your team, giving back to your community.