



## **WORKSHOP 6: New collaboration mechanisms**

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**New partnerships opportunities between private companies and non-profit organizations. Ramon Guardia, Valores y Marketing.**

Corporate volunteering programs have experienced an important growth in the last years. At the beginning, American and English subsidiaries copied the Anglo-Saxon volunteering model. Big national corporations followed the same path. In our country, companies have progressively started developing volunteering programs. Today, 65 % of companies with more than 500 employees are involved in corporate volunteering programs.

At the beginning, corporate volunteering was part of companies' social action plans. Today, it has become a key element for many companies. This is what reflects the Estudio sobre el estado del voluntariado corporativo en España 2010, carried out by Valores & Marketing with the support of Fundación Adecco, Club de Excelencia en Sostenibilidad. The report shows that corporate volunteering programs tend to align with companies' values and strategic objectives. It could be said that corporate volunteering is far from being a temporary trend. It is rather a key element for many companies and in the future it could be one of their main strategic tools for employees training and personal development.

There are other lessons to retain that are highlighted in the report Estudio sobre el estado del voluntariado corporativo en España 2010 :

1. Corporate volunteering is part of companies' agenda. In fact, 33% of companies have been involved in volunteering programs for more than 5 years.
2. Corporate volunteering creates a common value. The report shows that corporate volunteering is a win-win scenario.
3. There is greater participation when corporate volunteering programs adapt their offer to employees' profiles.
4. There are 3 main mechanisms to enhance participation:
  - Joint action initiatives
  - Celebration of events
  - One day volunteering initiatives



5. Corporate volunteering is a long-term process. 26% of companies declare that more than 10 % of their employees participate in volunteering programs.

6. It makes employees pride to belong to their company. This is due to the following points:

- Social commitment.
- Professional development.
- Corporate image.
- Services and products quality.

7. It improves cohesion and it contributes to the alignment of employees with corporate values.

8. It improves corporate image and it boosts employees' commitment with the company's objectives. In other words, it improves the workplace environment.

9. It enhances teamwork, leadership and creativity. Volunteering boosts individual skills and it becomes a transforming experience through which everyone gives of their best.

10. Corporate volunteering enables employees to gain an insight into new social realities and it boosts their feeling of belonging to society.

From a corporate perspective, the participation of employees in volunteering programs involves internal changes that benefit both the company and society. The tools with which employees are provided contribute to their personal and professional development.

Companies have traditionally provided their employees with technical training programs related to their job. Today, corporate volunteering programs open the doors to new social realities. Companies are economic actors and as such they have a key role in the development of society. Companies' knowledge of the environment in which they operate can translate into a tool for social change.

This will only be possible if managers are aware of social realities around them (4th world, disabilities, illnesses, environment, etc.).

Corporate volunteering is an opportunity for corporation managers to attend the "University of the Streets", to gain an insight into different realities. Only if corporate managers get this insight into social, cultural and environmental challenges will they be willing to participate in the solution both from a personal and a corporate perspective.

## II Congrés Europeu del Voluntariat

Barcelona  
9, 10 i 11 de novembre de 2011



In order to make this collaboration possible, mutual understanding, a methodological approach and a high degree of organization are required.

Linking corporate managers with non-profit organizations and their social objectives enables a knowledge symbiosis process to take place. It also lays the grounds for the development of new skills. It is a win-win scenario. It is an important raising awareness process among corporate employees that enables the development of new relationships between them and the non-profit organizations with which they collaborate.