

**Making the Most  
of  
Employee  
Community  
Involvement**

by  
**Jo Paton**



Produced by The Volunteer Centre UK  
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"Community groups often stressed the importance of  
specialist advice and skill transfer by companies,  
which was frequently more significant to the success  
of community ventures than direct financial support."  
from "*Profitable Partnerships*": a 1991 research report  
by the Policy Studies Institute

# Making the Most of Employee Community Involvement

Written by Jo Paton

With additional contributions from  
Action Resource Centre

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# Introduction

*“For the last four years the grant from the Local Authority (our major funder) has been held constant. This year it has been cut by one fifth. Will the private sector pick up the shortfall? What about this employee community involvement stuff? Could that be the answer?”*

Employee involvement is a fast-growing phenomenon, and one that represents a valuable potential resource for community and non profit organisations. Through following the suggestions in this handbook, you may be able to obtain, for example:

- \* someone to recommend the best computer system for your organisation
- \* someone to advise on the best use of premises
- \* someone to train your book-keeper in more advanced skills
- \* a group of workers to renew your plumbing
- \* people to raise funds or collect goods for you
- \* people who will regularly visit patients in your hospice or home
- \* a group to organise an awareness raising event on your behalf
- \* help in-kind or cash grants from your supporters' employers.

You may also be able to design projects in ways that make it easy for groups of people to contribute as planners, advisers and general volunteers as well as in the role of donors. Such projects engender a deeper and more durable commitment from the company concerned. They create a more genuine partnership than the mere signing of a cheque.

Some of the suggestions in this handbook need a lot of work to implement; others hardly any.

But it is important to be realistic. However the changes in government funding have affected your organisation, it is not realistic to look to the private sector (through employee involvement, sponsorship and donations) to provide long-term core funding. Corporate giving of all kinds is a relatively minor source of support for the non-profit sector compared with support from the statutory sector and the general public. But it is a useful and welcome extra. In particular, it can provide you with scarce skills – and with the leverage to obtain resources from other sectors.

New forms of corporate community involvement are emerging. Employers are now looking for ways to make the skills, knowledge and energies of the people working for them – the greatest resource of any business – available to community organisations.

In a sense, there is nothing new in this. Some employees have always been active in the community. Some of them have used their workplace and work contacts to gather support for the causes they care about. And some of their employers have on occasions been inspired by them to offer support. The potential for this kind of action is enormous. But until recently, it has come and gone as the leadership provided by concerned individuals has blossomed or faltered. What *is* new is that employers are deciding to endorse and encourage such activity, and to build continuing partnerships with community organisations.

*‘Minor source of support’ means between one and two billion pounds a year in cash, kind and staff time according to researcher, Michael Foggerty*

Employee involvement is here to stay. This handbook has been written to enable you to:

- \* understand it
- \* gauge its relevance for you and
- \* take full advantage of it.

## *A Matter of Terms*

As well as voluntary and community-based organisations, employee community involvement can benefit schools, hospitals and projects organised by Social Services and local authorities. However, the task of finding a single term that encapsulates "statutory and voluntary organisations and institutions" has defeated me. The phrases I shall use instead are "community organisations" and "non-profit organisations". The term "community-based organisation" is used to refer to the more limited range of small voluntary organisations with strong neighbourhood roots.

On the other side of the fence, the employers who may support employee community involvement are not all in the private sector. Local authorities have sent teams to improve the local environment. Government departments are sources of secondees. Employee volunteering programmes exist in public research institutes and in one major civil service department. But here again, the prospect of having the phrase "private and public sector institutions" crop up every few sentences was one I couldn't live with. Wherever possible, I have used the term "employers"; for the rest I have used "business" or "companies" in what is to be understood as a generic sense. Finally, I recognise that there is no clear divide between "the corporate" and "the community". Businesses are part of the community in myriad ways, not separate from it. Once again the language we use is misleading. This handbook, and the activities it describes, it is hoped, go some way to bringing the two sectors even closer as people from both work together for the benefit of the community we all live in.

# 1

## Types of Employee Community Involvement

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The handbook gives an aerial view of the range of possible ways groups may benefit from employee involvement. It contains many ideas for action and there are many examples you might like to adapt. It is meant to be a 'pick and choose' selection. No organisation could implement all the suggestions, even if they were all appropriate. Please take and use one or two ideas which suit your needs, resources and contacts.

# Involving the Whole Workforce

## – As Individual Volunteers

All employees have access to networks of colleagues and perhaps of suppliers and customers as well. They can use these networks to recruit support for causes they care about. A particularly impressive example of this occurred in Mid Glamorgan: the creation of the **Sandville Self Help Day Centre** for people who are terminally ill.

The Sandville Self Help Group had raised funds to buy a former country club, but it had no money to convert it into a day centre. Bob Roberts, a service technician with **British Gas**, read about the project and volunteered his own labour. But then he had an even better idea – he would gather together a gang of skilled craftsmen willing to offer the same kind of help. Over the next 14 months more than a quarter of the 200 strong workforce in British Gas Mid Glamorgan South District, plus their families, played a part in the Sandville project. Managers called meetings to keep employees informed of progress, organised fundraising, allowed showrooms to display collecting boxes, matched the money raised in the district with company money, and provided expert advice, transport and equipment.

Where British Gas were unable to provide what was needed themselves they recruited other companies – their contractors and suppliers – to help. **Welsh Water** provided the water main. British Gas suppliers provided and fitted bathroom suites and a kitchen.

The result: the conversion of the building was achieved through employee effort and the conversion costs amounted to £200 instead of the estimated £100,000 – and some employees



*British Gas Wales – Men at hospice work*

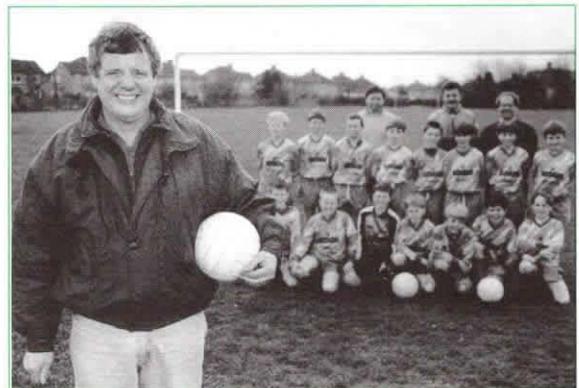
have remained involved by carrying out on-going maintenance. A volunteer emergency crew is also available.

The above example is impressive but, it must be conceded, is largely the result of the leadership provided by an exceptional individual.

However, some employees have access to more structured forms of support. An increasing number of employers may support the individual initiatives of their staff by:

- \* providing small grants to the agencies in which their staff work as volunteers (known as '**matched doing**' or '**community service funds**')

- \* running a volunteer award scheme whereby employees are nominated by fellow workers and a limited number win awards usually consisting of donations to the agencies within which they work (**community service award schemes**)



*Terry Harman, a Legal & General employee from London, won an award for his work with the Kingfisher Junior Football Club in Bexleyheath, Kent. He received a bottle of Champagne. The club for which he volunteers received £250. The Gazette (Legal & General's internal newspaper) can be used by employees to publicise a charity event, appeal for help or ask for sponsorship.*

- \* providing **help in-kind**, such as meeting rooms, design and printing services, training courses, redundant equipment or furniture to some of the agencies in which staff volunteer
- \* allowing **paid time off work** for agreed community activities

Policies allowing all staff a small amount of paid time off for community activities are much less common; **The Body Shop**, **IBM UK** and the **Mosaic Management Consultancy Group** are among the few who permit this.

Secondment, where a larger amount of paid

time off is allowed to a smaller number of (mainly managerial) staff, is much more common. And a large number of companies extend the practice of allowing time off for jury duty (a legal requirement) to include a small number of other volunteer tasks such as being a school governor. But the main thrust of company policies is to support employees who volunteer mostly **outside** work time.

## How Can You Benefit?

The resources which can be channelled into

community groups include money, goods, publicity and increased awareness of your work.

\* Make a point of finding out where your existing supporters and volunteers work. Ask them if their company has any programmes of support you can benefit from. Ask if there are any networks or communication channels they can use to publicise your needs – for example, by placing an article or letter in their company magazine.

\* Draw up a 'wish list' of things you need – services, money, people and goods – and distribute it to anyone already involved with your organisation.

## – As Fundraisers

Raising money for charity is the most usual way in which employees contribute to the community – as indeed it is by far the most common task for volunteers in general. But the various ways in which employers support this fundraising activity are less well known. Understanding them will make it easier for your organisation to benefit from employee fundraising.

Employers support staff fundraising activities by:

- \* matching money raised by staff with a company donation, usually up to an agreed ceiling ('**Matched Giving**' and '**Matched fundraising**' schemes)
- \* promoting **Payroll Giving**: the scheme whereby employees can have tax-free contributions to charity deducted from their on a regular basis; note that the highest take-up rates of Payroll Giving (up to 77%) have always been achieved where the scheme has been promoted by groups of employee volunteers to their colleagues.
- \* helping establish and support **staff charity committees**, committees of employees who organise fundraising events and distribute cash to local community groups. They are often given some company money to distribute as well.
- \* forming **fundraising partnerships** with a national charity (often called Adopt-a-Charity) for an agreed period.
- \* allowing the sale of fundraising goods or the collection of money in shops, offices, social

clubs and through internal magazines. Employee fundraising can be a substantial source of income for the non-profit sector. In 1988, for example, **John Laing** employees raised £625,000 for the 20 children's hospitals located near the company's main business units; the company topped this up by a further £200,000. **WH Smith's** target in 1992 is to raise £1,000,000 for their 'adopted' charity, the **Samaritans**.



*Employee runners from John Laing's Sizewell site being welcomed by children from a nearby school*

Although these partnerships have mainly involved well known national charities, it is possible for a local group to form a partnership with a smaller company nearby. And there are

other methods well suited to small local organisations, as the following letter from Sainsbury's house journal demonstrates:

*From Alan Homer, Warehouseman, Sainsbury, Selly Oak:  
"Thank you for publishing my letter about the Acorns Hospice in the Jan/Feb issue of the Journal. I understand from my friends there that the Journal has purchased over 2,000 teddy bear tie tacks for my adopted charity.  
On March 27 I handed over £103 to the Acorns Children's Hospice. That took my total to £10,000 which was raised in just under seven months by colleagues and friends at Selly Oak and by many of you unknown to me in many places. Teddies have been sold and seen all over the country. Thank you to all the drivers who have assisted in distributing the teddies and to everyone else who has helped."*

### Additional Benefits

- \* Raising Awareness For example, WH Smith made a video about the Samaritans and showed it to their staff to encourage their fundraising efforts.
- \* Promoting Continuing Links For example, the "Laing Children's Hospitals Appeal" resulted in employees offering their services to the hospitals as volunteers.

### How Can You Benefit?

- \* Find out where your existing supporters work. They may never have thought of using their networks and newsletters to recruit further support from their colleagues. If they are involved in a social event at work, such as a sports competition or a quiz night, ask if they can arrange for the event to be a sponsored one with you as the beneficiary.
- \* Ask employed supporters to ask permission to organise collection points in their company for you. Employers who are cautious about displaying collecting tins may be happy to

allow collections of stamps, books, clothes, food etc for direct use or for sale as fundraisers.

Tesco allows charity collections at its stores for two days each month.

- \* Send appeals for fundraisers to help with national events (such as flag days) to the editors of the staff magazines of national companies.
- \* Professional fundraisers could list the place of employment on donor databases. In the USA, where company matched giving is a major source of income for charities, fundraisers keep track of which companies operate such schemes, and use their databases to sort supporters by place of employment. They then write to supporters whose employers operate these schemes saying "if you make a donation, your company will double it. Please give."
- \* When promoting Payroll Giving, ask if some employees could work with you to plan ways of recruiting their colleagues.
- \* When organising a fundraising event, always ask workplaces to participate as well as schools, churches and other groups. Events that are fun and allow employees to work together are particularly attractive.
- \* Think about setting up a supporters group based in a workplace. Use any existing links to build a more permanent relationship. For example, if you are given a donation, ask if you can visit the company to say 'thank you' and talk to employees about your work and needs.
- \* Use fundraising events to raise awareness of your work and to recruit helpers for other tasks. A group of employees can just as easily be sponsored to organise a party for children with disabilities, redecorate the office or design a new leaflet as they can to take a cycle ride.
- \* Make use of fun fundraising events to increase enthusiasm for your cause. You may have more success in promoting Payroll Giving if you ask employees to sign up while they are still full of the good feelings generated by organising a fun event on your behalf.

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## – In Company Volunteer Programmes

Some companies run organised programmes designed to recruit and place new volunteers:

- \* by distributing information about volunteer opportunities to their employees through a special newsletter, through existing methods of communication with staff, or by inviting

community agencies to make presentations on company premises

- \* by developing their own company projects, either one-off or continuing.

"Last year, with the help of the company, we advertised a series of lunchtime sessions where

interested employees could come and be introduced to being an **Age Concern** volunteer. "About ten people became volunteers as a direct result of that initiative," says Jo Osorio, Director, Age Concern, Thamesdown. However, when Age Concern in Thamesdown repeated their appeal for individual volunteers in the Allied Dunbar bulletin a few months later they found the response greatly reduced. This bears out what companies with these schemes often find: that **far more staff volunteer for projects that are time-limited or that allow them to work in a group of their colleagues.** "Forming a team to take on something which is achievable in a fixed time is a comfortable introduction for people who haven't volunteered before" says Jerry Marston, Community Affairs Manager at Allied Dunbar. As a result, for three consecutive years now, the company has organised a Challenge Day where groups of staff complete practical tasks set for them by voluntary organisations in the area.



*Mucking in – employees from Whitbread's Bizzie Links Scheme in Hedge End clear a pond in the Hamble.*

"Some of the staff have become involved with their project on an on-going basis", says Jerry, "but it was important that they had the chance to be involved without strings to begin with".

Challenges undertaken included:

- \* reviving and repairing a small adventure playground (team of 20)
- \* compiling a book of poems and history (team of 4)
- \* painting an advertisement on a bus (team of 20)
- \* redecorating office premises (team of 3)
- \* redesigning and printing a publicity leaflet (team of 3)
- \* building a ramp for wheelchair access (team of 3)
- \* making a 10 minute promotional video (team of 3)

Staff also involved members of their families – an important factor for busy workers who sometimes complain of not seeing enough of their families.

Some companies with a national presence have developed programmes at their sites across the country. Two which have done this are **Whitbread** and **The Body Shop**. In both instances, staff at each site or shop decide themselves what they wish to do and receive support from the company to do it.

Whitbread's goal is for every site with more than 100 employees to have its own employee volunteering committee by 1994. Already, after less than two years, eight sites have committees. Projects they have organised include:

- \* organising and funding a monthly 'beer and sherry' evening for patients at a hospital for elderly people
- \* organising outings for autistic young people
- \* environmental days – clearing a pond and planting trees
- \* collecting cans and waste paper.

The employees also donate money to local causes – both money they raise themselves and a portion of the company's community investment budget which is made over to them.

**The Body Shop** encourages all its employees (and employees of franchisees) to engage in local voluntary work. Head office staff are allowed half a day a month release time to do so. Shop staff are also entitled to undertake voluntary work in company time but the amount of time varies from shop to shop depending on staffing levels. They, too, choose to work as groups, frequently using skills learned at work such as massage and aromatherapy. Here are two examples of what they do:

- \* Volunteers from six franchise shops in central London work with **Growth Unlimited** making something beautiful out of derelict areas of Kings Cross. One such project assisted

pensioners in siting, planning and planting gardens around their home, Sageway, a housing scheme for elderly people.

\* Specially trained volunteers from the shops in Bath and Bristol are visiting people who are HIV positive and giving a massage using aromatherapy oils.

## How You Can Benefit?

\* Find out if there are any companies near you that have structured programmes or are interested in developing such a programme (see Section 3). They could be an additional route for you to advertise your need for volunteers.

\* Ask local companies to include appeals for volunteer help in their house newsletters.

\* Ask local companies to appeal for volunteers for any one-off event requiring a large number of people; such as an awareness raising or fundraising event, an environmental day, refurbishing premises or making up and delivering parcels to people in need at Christmas.

*Is it worth approaching companies without a structured programme?* Yes – in order to recruit a large number of volunteers for a one-off event or in order to find out if there is an interest you can develop. But most people have found it to be a waste of time to persist in cultivating companies where there is no internal commitment (especially at the top). The reason

is that this kind of programme requires strong commitment from the company's management to ensure that it gets an operating budget and an allocation of staff time. Projects trying from outside to encourage that kind of commitment are described on pages 18-19: typically, they require specialist staff.



*Body Shop volunteers giving a massage at Blythe Special School*

# Involving Managers and Professionals

The injection of specialised skills *properly targeted* can bring long term benefit to community groups.

## – As Secondees

Secondees are employees from the private and public sectors who are temporarily “loaned” to community organisations. Salaries and related costs continue to be paid by the original employer. Although other types of secondment exist (such as the secondment of teachers into

industry), this section will describe secondment in the community context.

The number of secondees becoming available is on the increase, especially those who are released part-time for relatively short periods.

## The Benefits

These are considerable and include:

- \* getting an important task done
- \* gaining access to expertise you might otherwise be unable to afford
- \* bringing a fresh perspective to your work
- \* providing an opportunity to understand the different ways business can help you.

*"We not only have a useful report with ideas on how to meet local needs but have also gained the skills and knowledge to do further surveys ourselves."*

Cardigan Centre, Leeds

*"Sue brought a fresh, independent approach to our system of working"*

The Children's Scrapstore

## How do Secondees Differ from Volunteers?

- \* Secondments almost invariably involve "white collar" staff who make use of business and professional skills
- \* Secondment is carried out during work time as a work commitment. The secondee continues to be accountable to his or her employer.
- \* The management process is more formal. The community organisation will probably have to devote more time to planning, execution and evaluation.

## Types of Secondment

### 1. Development Assignments

These are short placements of around 100 hours arranged by **Action Resource Centre (ARC)**. They involve staff in early and mid career, and are often done part-time over several months.



Two secondees from British Gas, Laura Lapniewski (left) and Marie Graham (right), who carried out a market research project for the Hill Top Family Centre in Rochdale, arranged by ARC Manchester.

The work takes the form of a precisely defined assignment. Employers are thus able to provide employees with a challenging project as part of their development and training. At 380 new placements in 1991/2 and rising, development assignments are the most readily-available form of secondment to community organisations. For example, Cheryl from **Nationwide Building Society** spent 100 hours working with **Northampton Women's Aid**. During this time she computerised their accounts, gave training in using the computer and compiled a user's manual. The secondment was arranged by ARC.

In another secondment Jonathon Hyde, a **British Rail** research officer went to **Derby People's Housing Association** and spent a month carrying out a study of the housing needs of black offenders. Barrington Billings, the Association's director, commended the professional way in which Jonathon tackled this complex and delicate subject. The report now forms the basis of a future strategy for the Association.

### 2. Longer Placements

These secondments may involve staff at mid or late career stages. Ranging in duration from several months part-time to two or more years full time, they are best suited to organisations requiring a secondee to perform a role with a job description, rather than carry out a one-off assignment. Pre-retirement secondments are still available and still valued but are getting scarcer.

Jill Tomlin, a senior executive officer in the **Department of Employment**, was seconded full-time for two years to act as a policy adviser to the **Greater London Alcohol Advisory**



June Crofts (right) of British Rail teaching English as a Foreign Language at the Gower Centre in Handsworth. June spent one year working for Fullempley and the Gower Centre, arranged by ARC West Midlands.

**Service.** Her job was to assess how the various statutory and voluntary bodies in London might best respond to alcohol misuse. Jill set up a new co-ordinating body to tackle the problem – “a significant step forward” according to Elspeth Kyle, GLAAS’s director.

## How Can You Benefit?

\* Find out if there is a local office of Action Resource Centre near you (See Section 5.2)

\* Order from ARC the free leaflet “**Business Skills for your Community Organisation through Secondment**” and the booklet, “**Getting the Best from Secondment: Guidelines for Community Organisations**”, (price £3 post free).

\* See Section 3 for information on how to obtain a secondee.

## – As Voluntary Advisers

Some employers enable members of their staff to act as volunteer advisers to non profit organisations. The company acts as an intermediary. First, a list is drawn up of skilled employees willing to participate. Then, when a request is received for someone to perform a particular task, the co-ordinator (a company staff person) asks an appropriate employee if they will volunteer to do the job partly or wholly in their own time.

Sometimes the company organises the scheme itself. At other times it participates in programmes organised by intermediary organisations such as the **Rotary Club** or **Business in the Arts**. Occasionally this kind of help is obtained informally through personal contacts (hence the value of a company representative on your management committee).

Business in the Arts is an initiative run by the **Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA)**. Part of its work involves recruiting business executives with a wide range of skills and training them to work with arts organisations as voluntary management advisers.

Jane Davies, lately senior consultant in **BP’s** Information Technology Group, held several meetings each with the **National Opera Studio** and the **English Shakespeare Company** to help them articulate their computer needs, both in hardware and software. Then, once the equipment had been purchased, she held a few further meetings to help train staff in its use. Strategic planning is an area where advice and consultancy is much in demand. It has formed the basis of the work of Business in the Arts

advisers with groups as varied as **The Women’s Theatre Group** (now renamed **The Sphinx**), **Vauxhall St Peter’s Heritage Centre** and the **Photographers’ Gallery**.



*Julia Kreitman of Curtis Brown Group, Michael Prescott, Assistant Director of the British Film Institute (centre) and James Kendall, Management Consultant, discuss setting performance indicators in a cultural organisation; a project set up through Business in the Arts.*

In Milton Keynes, the Rotary Club runs **RSVP** (Rotary Supports Voluntary Projects) to provide skilled management help with discrete projects, especially in administration and finance. The service is advertised through the newsletter of the Council for Voluntary Organisations, and in three years 40 assignments have been carried out. When a request for help is received, an RSVP volunteer visits the organisation to help

define what needs to be done and the skills needed to do it. This means that the right volunteer for the job can be found. A particularly effective way of using small amounts of skilled volunteer time is to involve the volunteer as a trainer. This is what happened in Derby, when ARC organised two training courses in which departmental

managers from **Marks & Spencer's** ran sessions on charity shop design, stock control and pricing.

Companies and organisations running structured programmes of this nature include **Allied Dunbar Assurance plc** (Allied Professional Help and Advice), **American Express** and some local **Rotary Clubs**.

## – As Management Committee Members

'**Lawyers in the Community**' is a pioneering scheme run by **Action Resource Centre (ARC)**, in the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Southwark. A response to the increasing need of the management committees of community organisations for commercial and management skills, it places lawyers from firms of City solicitors on the management committees of such organisations as a city farm and a victim support scheme.

Michelle Rogers, the scheme's first organiser, said "At first it was much harder to sell the scheme to the community organisations – who were suspicious of the idea – than to the lawyers". *Those initial doubts proved groundless*, however, perhaps because of the careful matching process and the excellent induction and continuing support ARC provide for the lawyers. An evaluation of the scheme showed that the most evident benefit to the community organisations was "increased confidence of the management committees".

**Westminster Volunteer Bureau** is one of many organisations which, in the absence of a structured scheme such as Lawyers in the Community, have simply asked prominent local companies to nominate representatives for their management committee. In each case the VB asked if a named individual known to them and known to be willing could join their committee. At the company's request, the VB discussed its reasons for wanting a company representative and the skills and aptitudes required. Stephanie Willatts, the Bureau organiser, says "They brought new skills to the committee and a new outlook. It was harder for us to make the usual assumptions. Meetings were more lively."

In a similar example, **Age Concern** in Brighton asked **American Express** to nominate a suitable employee to join their management committee specifically to help them with marketing. As a

result, Dale Clements joined the committee and now spends four hours a month helping the group. Dale worked as a marketing specialist at Cadbury Schweppes and is now Customer Services Manager at American Express.

Another programme to place company representatives on the management committees of charities is **The Trustee Register**, a database run by Reed Charity, part of **Reed Executive** with the support of the Charities Aid Fund and NCVO. (Details are in Section 5.2)

It is important to realise the difference between a "brokerage" service – which provides induction and training for prospective committee members – and a referral service, such as the The Trustee Register, which merely links individuals and organisations. Volunteers obtained through the latter route are likely to need more careful preparation for their role and responsibilities; it is fair to assume that somewhat fewer will turn out to be suitable.

## How Can You Benefit?

- \* Find out if there is a special programme or a brokerage agency placing professionals as volunteers near you. (See Sections 3 and 5.2)
- \* Use personal contacts to recruit skilled volunteer help or consultants.
- \* Consider recruiting representatives from prominent local businesses on to your management committee. An alternative is to recruit them on to an advisory board or board of patrons. Or ask first for an adviser. Then, should you build a positive relationship with the adviser, you can then invite them on to your management committee.
- \* Don't neglect business schools if there is one in your area. Many business students are taking advanced post-experience courses.

# Involving Trainees

Some voluntary organisations have had considerable success in devising projects that are valuable to them and at the same time offer training or team building benefits to employees. In this context, the armed forces, the police and statutory organisations are worth

considering. The **Army, Navy and Airforce**, in particular, have a constant through-flow of young people, many of them taking apprenticeships in useful trades. For practical projects requiring manpower they can be ideal.



*Royal Naval volunteers from HMS Raleigh moving storm-damaged timber at Cotehele, Cornwall at the request of The National Trust. These projects are similar to very short secondments but are usually less structured and less closely managed by the community organisation involved.*

## – Apprentices

Many of the projects suited to trainees or apprentices use specific work skills as when two apprentice technicians from **Ferranti** in Edinburgh devised a speech mechanism for a young boy which allowed him to 'speak' using his eyebrows.

**South Eastern British Gas**, however, wanted their apprentices to develop more personal skills – so they arranged for groups of them to spend a week each helping in a hospital for people with a mental handicap. The apprentices were allocated to the social recreation

department and the rehabilitation unit where they played board games and helped with swimming sessions, outings and entertainments. Michael Dark, a senior nurse at the hospital writes "The residents gained much pleasure from these young men ... and thoroughly enjoyed their company...From the apprentices' point of view there are now many young men who have some insight into mental handicap ... and can put that experience to good use when dealing with people with a handicap in their homes"

## – General Staff Development

A Contracts Manager from **Southern Electric** provided 20 electricians to conduct a survey of all the **National Trust's** historic properties in the area. The benefit for Southern Electric was in the broadening of experience for its employees.

In another example, eleven police inspectors from **Hendon Training College** planned a training exercise for their fellow police officers aimed at developing leadership skills building a team. The project, suggested by the National Trust, was to reclaim a pond with complex flora and fauna that was infected with Viles disease. To make the project even more testing the policemen worked without the direct supervision the Trust usually provides to such groups.

**Halifax Building Society** has incorporated community projects into their staff development programme in a more structured way. They operate a scheme called 'Community

Development Circles'. Staff are asked to volunteer to organise complex projects to benefit community causes that fall within the company's social priority guidelines. Those who do, are organised into teams of between five and eight people by the Management Development department. The teams are given an initial start-up grant and a small amount of work time to spend organising their projects. In 1991, 45 teams – (a total of 350 employees) – undertook projects such as renovating gardens at homes for elderly people or raising enough money to buy a fully equipped ambulance. The company held regional and national competitions and winners were given a prize of money to donate to the organisation for whom they undertook their project. The skills and qualities developed included planning a budget, organising, communication, confidence and creativity. The programme was so successful that they plan to repeat it.

## – Senior Management Training Programmes

In yet another variation, some companies may incorporate community projects into development programmes for senior managers. For example, in 1992, **ICI** arranged for two senior managers to conduct a project looking at an aspect of change in **Barnardo's**. This was arranged by the Shepperd- Moscow consultancy as an element in their regular 'Development of Change' in-house management course for ICI. John Morrison and Mike Nicholds of ICI spent 48 concentrated hours on their project. David Sowter, Deputy Appeals Director at Barnardo's, says about the results of their work "We gained reassurance about our direction and some very useful indications on change strategy."

**Boots** is another company which, with the help of Action Resource Centre, has made similar projects a part of advanced executive-level training.

### How Can You Benefit?

\* Develop some of the tasks which need doing in your organisation into discrete, time-limited projects. Analyse the projects in terms of the opportunities for learning, team building or personal development.

\* Approach training officers, management development officers in appropriate organisations (See Section 3)

## Involving Retirees

These days people are retiring earlier but are remaining healthy and active to a much greater age – which means that they have a lot of time available to use as they choose. Many volunteer involving organisations are gazing longingly at the increasing pool of people who are in the ‘Third Age’ and are looking for ways of recruiting their help.

The most usual method to date has been to give presentations about volunteer opportunities during company pre-retirement courses. But the results have been disappointing; immediately before retirement, it seems, people are more interested in pensions, travel plans and seeing their grandchildren. Not until about 6 – 18 months after retirement do they begin to feel the need for more active and demanding work.

An alternative method, very successful in the USA, but largely untried in the UK, is to establish a designated company retiree volunteer programme, *run by retirees themselves* from an office on company premises.

Employees learn of the programme’s existence while they still work for the company. They also receive information about it after retirement, through special mailings. In addition, retirees are sometimes hired to co-ordinate programmes for current employees. The **Honeywell** Retiree Volunteer Project is run entirely by retirees working from an office in the company’s HQ. The programme is 12 years old and involves as many as 1,200 retirees. They work individually or in groups at a wide variety of tasks including teaching, befriending, repairing therapy equipment and processing computer data.

In the UK, several companies support schemes where their “pensioners” visit and care for ex- colleagues. Some of these are extensive; **GKN**, for example, has over 850 volunteer “visitors” who are supported by a system of training and networking.

Very few employers organise more general voluntary projects through company pensioner clubs, although it is not unknown. For example, **Frizzels** motor insurance firm in Brighton set up a volunteer group amongst its retirees specifically to work with **The National Trust**. The group undertook several major projects including a survey of wild flowers and grasses and researching medieval, Tudor and Elizabethan estate records. The project has been very successful and has now been opened up to the general public.

Retiree volunteer programmes are the fastest- growing form of employee involvement in the USA. Given the growth of interest in employee community involvement among UK companies, such programmes are likely to start over here within the next few years.

### How Can You Benefit?

\* Ask local companies if information about your organisation and its need for volunteers can be sent out to company pensioners who have been retired for between six months and two years.

\* When making presentations during pre-retirement courses, obtain the addresses of those ‘not yet ready to help’.

\* Ask company pensioner clubs to form a supporters’ group or to undertake a specific project for your organisation.

\* Check your volunteer policy to see if the retirement age for volunteers is appropriate. It is clearly not possible to benefit from the energies of volunteers who are over 50 if your organisation discriminates against them on grounds of age.

The **Retired Executives Action Clearing House** (REACH) is a referral agency linking retired executives with volunteer tasks; contact information is in Section 5.2.

## Involvement in Partnerships – In “Company-branded” Projects

Increasingly, companies with corporate responsibility policies are choosing to put

substantial resources into a small number of carefully-selected projects rather than giving

smaller sums to a large range of organisations. The recipients then become seen as "official" company projects and may be referred to by the company name; for example the **Unilever Good Neighbour Scheme**, or jointly by the company-community group name.

The projects are often run in partnership with a charity, school or community group. The relationship with the non profit organisation is much closer than if the company had simply made a donation or signed a sponsorship deal. The company will usually commit a senior member of staff to sitting on the management or advisory committee. Company employees may be recruited, often in a very informal way to provide additional support for the project.

*"We do not simply donate money or product, we become fully involved, both as GrandMet companies and as individuals, and seek to develop a close working partnership with charities and community organisations."*  
 Sir Allen Sheppard, Group Chairman and Chief Executive, Grand Metropolitan

For example, **Freshfields**, a City law firm gives financial support to the **Tower Hamlets Law Centre**, which provides free legal advice to the people of Tower Hamlets. The firm also organises a rota of volunteers who staff the Law Centre for one evening a week. Fifty Freshfield volunteers are involved in total, with five going to the community centre each week. The main part of the volunteers' work takes place in their own time but they are allowed to devote office time to necessary follow-up work and to administering the scheme itself.

Another example is provided by **The Livewire Initiative** which supports young people in starting their own businesses. Livewire receives financial support from **Shell** and in its early years, the involvement of more than 500 current and retired Shell staff was crucial to its success. The employees worked as volunteer business advisors in their own time. Livewire has since expanded to become a major partnership with professional staff.

School/Business Partnerships are a common way for businesses to become involved with their local communities. Vital to the success of these projects is employee involvement. For the past six years there has been a link between **IBM UK's** laboratories at Winchester with **Hiltingbury Junior School**. The value of the three computers donated to the school has been multiplied many times by the value of the volunteer input. For two hours every lunchtime, a team of helpers from IBM supervises small groups of pupils using the

machines. They have also written software and trained parents in how to teach their children to use computers.



Steve Newberry, who founded the link between IBM and the Hiltingbury Junior School, with some of the pupils.

Company-selected projects frequently operate in areas that have some link with the company's business objectives. Enterprise, education and the environment are the most popular, although people who are black, have special needs or are women – all needed for the future workforce – are also areas of concern. Alternatively, there may be a link with the company's products or areas of expertise. All of this is in contrast with projects initiated by employees themselves, who often choose to support local causes such as a hospice or a special needs school.

## How Can You Benefit?

- \* If you are applying to a company for funding or a product donation, think about ways in which their staff might be involved as well.
- \* If the company is to have a substantial involvement, ask for a company representative to sit on your management committee/board of governors, or perhaps on a special steering group for the project. Once someone becomes involved and enthusiastic, they may bring extra resources (often but not always non-financial) with them.
- \* Write letters or articles for the company

magazine to keep the employees up-to-date with the project; you could, for example, say “thank you” to an employee who has been particularly supportive by doing a short piece on their involvement.

\* If you succeed in obtaining a donation or sponsorship from a company, try to convert it into a more long-term partnership by finding ways to involve employees.

## – In National Partnerships

Most employee involvement is arranged locally, but occasionally a company with a national presence will form a partnership with a national voluntary organisation, usually for a limited period. These partnerships often involve fundraising – but by no means exclusively so.

National partnerships will probably become more common as more major companies recognise the importance of employee involvement and look for ways to support it. Here are some examples:

Volunteers from **The Body Shop** planted trees in a regional scheme organised in conjunction with the **East Anglia Region of British Trust for Conservation Volunteers**.

**IBM** established employee teams (known as Local Environmental Action Teams) in 18 different company locations in 1990. The 18 new projects created included running management training seminars, restoring an under-water nature trail and developing a database of environmental organisations.

As a number of different organisations were involved, a group which played an important part in forming the links was the **Environmental Volunteering Development Forum**.

**Woolworths** extended their support for **Barnardo’s** by circulating all their branches with information about how to contact their local branch of Barnardo’s. They also distributed Barnardo’s own list of events and ideas for fundraising.

Here is an US example that national voluntary organisations in the UK might consider emulating: After consultation with its employees, the **H B Fuller Company** decided that domestic abuse should be the national focus for all forms of company help. During that year, the company sponsored a seminar on child abuse and battered women and employee volunteers from the company’s many sites repaired crisis centres and shelters.

## How Can You Benefit?

\* Find out which companies are looking for national partners (See Section 3)

\* Fundraisers selling “Adopt-a-Charity” partnerships to national companies (see page 5) might consider extending the concept to include “hands on” help as well as fundraising. This could bring extra resources to you and extra publicity to the company.



Volunteers from IBM in North Harbour identifying and checking species of flowering plants

## – In The National Challenge

In 1992 The National Challenge will be held for the first time. Its aims are to stimulate links between companies and non-profit organisations throughout the UK, and to help companies new to employee involvement to get started. The co-ordinators of this event, **Business in the Community** and **The Volunteer Centre UK**, hope it will become an annual fixture.

The basic idea is that, instead of being sponsored to go on a bicycle ride or to abseil down a wall, groups of employees will be sponsored to do something of immediate benefit to a local community group. Companies invite community groups to “challenge” them to complete a number of projects within a 24-hour period. The company then recruits groups of employees, plus their friends and families, who are willing to accept the challenges. Projects usually fall within one of five categories:

- \* Practical; for example, building a cycle path, redecorating office premises or renovating a small playground.
- \* Skilled or administrative; for example, designing and printing headed notepaper, painting a mural or conducting a training day.
- \* Entertainments; for example, running a disco for the residents and friends of a children’s home.
- \* Collections; for example, gathering “activity” materials such as board games, art materials, paper, crayons etc.

\* Direct service; for example, taking a group of adults with a mental handicap on a day trip or taking physically handicapped children to a dry slope skiing session.

The projects are rarely matters of top priority for the challengers. But they do allow groups to obtain valuable extras that they might otherwise be unable to afford. Most importantly, they allow employees to get to know about the activities of community groups in a non-threatening way.

### How Can You Benefit?

\* Suggest to your company contacts that they participate in The National Challenge. Participants receive a step-by-step guide, briefing papers and a special pack – all available from Business in the Community and The Volunteer Centre UK.

\* If you are a “challenger” organisation, use the occasion to build a longer-term link with the company by:

- inviting the employees back to see their handiwork in use
- sending up-dates on the progress of your project; for example, a photograph of their creation being used, a copy of your annual report, plus list of the help you still need
- visiting the company to speak about your project.

## Involvement In Local Partnership Schemes

### – In Business Links Schemes

Business Links Schemes are local brokerage services matching community organisations that have specific needs with local businesses that are willing to donate equipment, facilities, services, advice or consultancy.

The schemes may be run by a **Council for Voluntary Service**, a **Volunteer Bureau** or the **Industrial Society**. Most **Action Resource Centre** offices offer a more limited service

under the name “Recycled Resources”.

Employee involvement is handled separately, as part of their mainstream work. To be successful, a Business Links Scheme needs:

- \* a co-ordinator who has a good base in a well-connected voluntary organisation, and who can provide day-to-day supervision of the scheme; typically, a co-ordinator will spend at least two days a week on organisation.

\* money to pay the co-ordinator's salary or volunteer's expenses and cover administrative costs.

*Kensington and Chelsea's Scheme, run by the Volunteer Bureau, employs a worker for two and a half days a week. In Westminster, the Volunteer Bureau pays a staff member for one day a week; and two volunteers contribute another day a week. The yearly budget of £500 covers the cost of telephone calls, stationery, leaflets and the production of a newsletter. Postage is extra.*

Goodwill from companies and a willingness to get involved, have been found in every area where a Business Links Scheme has been started.

### What can be achieved

Five years after its launch, the Westminster Business Links Scheme has contacts with 120 companies and 70 community organisations, most of whom have received some help.

Examples include:

- \* filing cabinets from the **John Lewis Partnership plc** for the **St Martin-in-the-Fields Social Service Unit**
- \* weekly volunteers from **The Body Shop** for the **Pimlico Toy Library**
- \* a training session on Basic Accounts run by **NCR Ltd** for Westminster **Mencap**
- \* talks from the Wardrobe Department at the **Royal Opera House** for the **Stroke Association Volunteer Stroke Scheme**.

### Employee Involvement

Business Links Schemes, (with the exception of

ARC's 'Recycled Resources' schemes), do encourage employee involvement in the form of specialised consultancy and the placing of staff on management committees. But community organisations say that what they mostly receive is donations of equipment and "waste" materials (such as wood and sheet metal) and the free use of facilities; employee involvement is much less common. This may be because:

\* to persuade people to volunteer, they need to be asked regularly, specifically and personally, preferably by a colleague or someone else they know. This means each participating company needs an internal co-ordinator or a committee willing to do this.

*There is an important difference between a professional service provided free (pro bono) by an employer and an employee volunteer who is a professional. In the former case, the employer instructs the employee to carry out the job in the normal way. The cost of the donated service is deducted from the company's contributions budget. In the latter case, the employer must ask the employee if he or she is willing to give up leisure time to do this worthwhile job; the employer acts as an intermediary. Pro bono services are much easier for an employer to donate. But they are available in much smaller amounts than help from professional volunteers.*

\* "brokering" people rather than equipment requires more intensive help from the intermediary agency.

\* community organisations are not used to recruiting this kind of help and tend not to ask for it.

## – In Employee Volunteering Initiatives

Special programmes have been set up in various parts of the country to recruit volunteers from the workplace; most have been pilots of a year or two's duration.

The earliest of these programmes appointed a co-ordinator, who set out to visit the personnel managers of local companies in order to arrange for a presentation about volunteer opportunities to be made to the employees. This method proved ineffective.

Most recently, programmes have been set up in Leeds, Cynon Valley, Leicester and Birmingham during 1991; they have built into

*"I was impressed by the amount of time it took to visit these ten firms, mainly because of difficulties in arranging suitable times...The representatives I spoke to are normally extremely busy...If senior management were to allocate more time and money, then the situation could be different...My gut feeling is that the concept has to be sold to them by someone with a very strong business profile" (from 'Volunteering and the Workplace', the report of a pilot volunteering scheme in Swindon, by Robin Theobald)*

their plans the lessons learned from previous experiments.

These programmes are similar to Business Link

Schemes in that they have a co-ordinator based in a well-connected voluntary organisation, and they aim to match the needs of a large number of community groups with the resources of a large number of businesses. There are, however, some important differences:

\* "the objective of the project is to leave 20 companies with sustainable volunteering structures (for example, internal co-ordinators and/or committees with resources), in place". Leeds Employee Volunteering Initiative Information Sheet

*"Where there is commitment from the top of the company and an enthusiastic person can be found to co-ordinate activities within the company, then things happen. But you do need those two things."*  
Simon Robinson, Co-ordinator, Leeds Employee Volunteering Initiative

\* the projects have begun by recruiting a small number of "leadership" companies, which have committed themselves to the project aims at a high (Chief Executive Officer, Managing Director, Company Secretary) level. There is a steering group in which these companies take part. They also provide resources (in cash or in kind) for the project, both within their own company and to help fund the central co-ordinator.

\* the aim is for the scheme to be company-owned and "pro-active", rather than simply responding to requests from community groups.

\* all the projects have achieved a high degree of partnership between interested organisations, such as Business in the Community, Action Resource Centre, the Council for Voluntary Service, the Volunteer Bureau and others.

\* The co-ordinators are encouraging community groups to think of volunteer tasks that use business skills, allow volunteers to work in groups, or are attractive to employees in other ways

*Employees from BT's Basinghill telephone exchange in Leeds hand over some of the goods they collected for local organisations to Simon Robinson, Leeds Employee Volunteering Initiative co-ordinator*

## The Results

It is still early days yet, but initial indications are promising. Let us look at the project in Leeds, which is managed by **Action Resource Centre**:

\* three companies displayed a Christmas "job tree" listing one-off jobs for individuals and groups of volunteers; 70 people responded.

\* volunteer opportunities are circulated within the six participating companies by means of a monthly bulletin, house newspapers, noticeboards and other forms of internal communication.

\* permanent volunteer committees have been formed in each of the six participating companies.

\* local community groups have been invited to join a forum to enable them to inject their ideas into the initiative. Twenty five groups have joined with a further 125 involved in less time-consuming ways.

\* a Yorkshire Challenge Day – when groups of employees will undertake community projects which can be completed in one day – has been scheduled for August 1992.

\* Examples of volunteer projects completed include building a wildlife garden with a pond and organising a Christmas party for disabled youngsters. In both cases volunteers (from **Asda** and **BT** respectively) not only worked on the projects themselves but organised a team of their colleagues to do so as well.



## Extra Ideas

### – *Affiliation Schemes with an Employee Involvement Link*

An idea developed by **Suffolk Rural Community Council** is to offer local companies the opportunity to become corporate members. The scheme is seen as a simple method of providing financial support to a range of local organisations – and it will be sold to companies as a way of “bringing local businesses and local communities closer together”.

In addition to the usual benefits of membership, the companies will receive three special services. RCC director Peter Waterman explains:

“We shall make two presentations each year to affiliated companies with the help of local voluntary organisations. One will describe local community activities around the companies’ locations. The second will advise employees about work as volunteers. The company will also be given an annually-revised list of organisations providing support and advice for

personal problems which will be useful for those responsible for personnel matters.

“For this affiliation service, companies will be asked to pay an annual subscription on a sliding scale according to the number of employees. The subscription will be shared with the voluntary organisations who assist in providing the service.”

On the face of it Suffolk community organisations have a hard task ahead of them in trying to make mutually-beneficial links with business. The county is large and sparsely-populated, and has few large HQ companies; only one company is a member of Business in the Community and hardly any others have a stated policy of helping local voluntary effort. Yet, despite this unpromising situation, Peter says that: “I have discovered that firms are prepared to support local groups, especially when their employees are involved”.

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### – *Starting A Volunteer Club In A Company*

A project worker from **Thamesdown Volunteer Bureau** set up a club at two public research institutes, the **Natural Environment Research Council** and the **Science and Engineering Research Council**. This group of 16 core volunteers organised, and recruited colleagues to run:

- \* a Christmas party for 100 children
- \* a secondhand furniture store and associated transport scheme
- \* outings for children in care.

The club is entirely employee-owned and led.

As public institutions, the research institutes have no community affairs budget and the employees fundraise to pay the operating expenses of their projects.

Although, in the all-too-familiar way, funding for the project worker ended several years ago, the club has survived. By contrast, the other more traditional recruitment methods tried by the worker, such as giving talks during pre-retirement seminars and mounting an exhibition in the cafeteria, have sunk without trace.

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### – *Obtaining Free Services*

An alternative to recruiting skilled volunteers or secondees through their employers is to ask

a business to supply you with a service free of charge or at a discount. Although, strictly



Royal Navy lifting stonemasons' equipment for restoration of a tower on St Michael's Hill, Montacute at the request of The National Trust

speaking, this is not employee involvement, it is an option available to all community organisations, no matter where they are. Simply asking can often make the difference between paying for a service and getting it free.

Although employers probably won't want to provide too many of their services for free, doing so is a straightforward process for them. The employer instructs the employees to carry out work in the normal way. Instead of charging, the cost of the work is deducted from the employer's charity budget. Companies find donating services more attractive than donating money, as the cost of the service to them is less than its value on the open market.

Some companies make a large proportion of their contributions to the community in the form of donated products and services. For example, **British Telecom** provides telephone help lines for organisations such as the **Samaritans** and **Contact A Family**. **Apple Computers** spends 90 per cent of its community budget on donated computers, including customising and installing them and training their users.

**The National Trust** obtained £29,500-worth of undergrounding electric cables and staff time from **Southern Electric plc**. The Trust has also had success in extracting gifts of time from the armed forces. Their method couldn't be simpler; they simply write to the Station Commander explaining what they want – anything from help with building a bridge to someone to fly a helicopter.

## How Can You Benefit?

\* List your needs for services on all requests for help, including funding proposals. Remember that many companies have skills available that they need for their own operations – such as accounting or staff training – in addition to those relating to the services or products they sell.

\* Always **ask**, – at the very least, whether the company gives a discount to charities and community groups.

# Summary of Types of Employee Community Involvement

Employee Involvement	Benefits for Non-Profit Organisations	Employee Involvement	Benefits for Non-Profit Organisations
<b>The Whole Workforce</b>		<b>In Partnerships</b>	
<b>As individuals</b>	grants, awards, help in-kind, people	<b>In "company-branded" projects</b>	money, help in-kind, volunteers and secondees as projects planners, advisers and doers on on-going basis
<b>As fundraisers</b>	money from employees plus company 'matching', fundraising teams, promoting Payroll Giving	<b>In national partnerships</b>	money, volunteers as doers and fundraisers
<b>In volunteer programmes</b>	publicising your needs for individual volunteers; groups of volunteers	<b>In The National Challenge</b>	short-term, practical tasks completed
<b>Managers and Professionals</b>		<b>In local brokerage schemes</b>	gifts in kind, free services, publicising needs for volunteers
<b>As secondees</b>	professionals to undertake discrete projects on a short-term, part-time basis or to do a job for a few months to two years	<b>Extras</b>	
		<b>In affiliation schemes</b>	membership fee, publicity for your cause, needs & services
<b>As voluntary management advisers</b>	advice, consultancy & technical assistance on part-time basis	<b>In volunteer clubs</b>	projects funded & completed; funds raised
<b>As management committee members</b>	committee members often with relevant professional or managerial experience	<b>Free services</b>	self explanatory
<b>As trainees</b>	often groups to undertake discrete projects		
<b>As retirees</b>	full range of volunteer tasks, usually on part-time basis		

# 2

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## Why Do They Do It? Motivations and Barriers

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“In addition to helping the communities in which we trade, employee volunteering has brought many benefits to the company and our employees – motivation, personal development, team building, improved inter-department and cross-site communication – and all taking place in a context of fun and enjoyment.

Everyone benefits. This winning combination makes good, sound business sense.”

Sam Whitbread, Chairman, Whitbread plc

This section will help you produce this “winning combination”. It discusses why employers and employees become involved and, just as important, why you might choose to do so.

It describes the factors which make it easy (and hard) for employees to be involved in the work of community organisations.

# Giving and Getting

Not so long ago, volunteering was thought of as a purely altruistic activity. But nowadays it is widely accepted that personal benefit is a vital ingredient of community involvement, whether by employees or anyone else.

The reasons why people volunteer are seldom simple, as the **1991 Survey of Voluntary Activity in the UK** discovered when it asked questions about motivation. The answers showed that there is a continuum between giving and getting. Some respondents were at the altruistic end: "I wanted to improve things; to help people". Other were more self-interested: "It is connected to my own needs and interests" or "I thought it would give me the chance to learn new skills". Some reconciled the two extremes, demonstrating that many

people volunteer for what might be called "personal altruistic satisfaction". They said, for example, that they volunteered because they "enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing the results" and "it made (me) feel less selfish".

Certainly, more attention has recently been given to the benefits people might derive from volunteering. As a result, many organisations that involve volunteers have recognised that the jobs they want volunteers to fill must offer opportunities for personal benefit as well as the chance to help others.

It is equally important to realise that, in exactly the same way as individuals, *institutions have needs that can be met through community involvement*. The motivations of businesses also display a mixture of altruism and self interest.

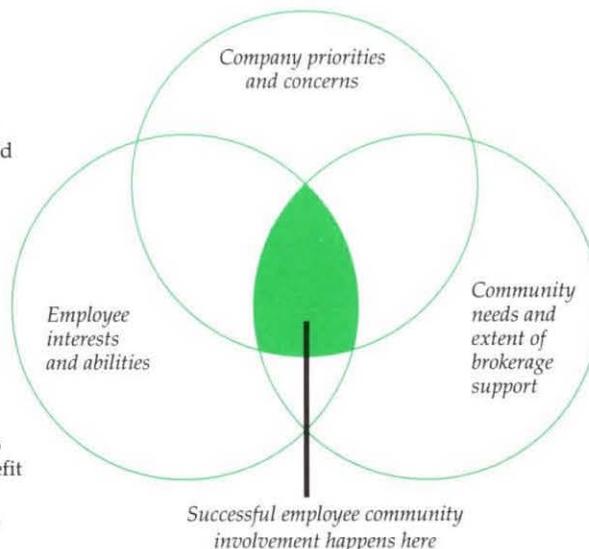
## The Key To Success

When an individual becomes involved in your organisation, whether as paid worker, volunteer or secondee, it is essential that both the organisation and the individual should benefit; the organisation gets the job done, the individual gets a salary or some other satisfaction. When the individual is recruited through a company, as happens in employee community involvement, success requires that **all three** parties to the transaction should benefit.

"Through our community investment programme, we are not just doing good – we are doing good business"  
Martin Laing, Chairman, **John Laing**

"(Community involvement) facilitates the demonstration of skills and expertise which would never be recognised in the employee's usual role"  
Alan Giles, Operations and Development Director, **Do It All**

"We learned so much about ourselves...It makes you glad to be alive...To see somebody benefit gave us such a lot"  
Hilary Stubbs, Senior Secretary, **Allied Dunbar Assurance**



"What is the use of increasing the amount of community involvement by companies if the contribution is meaningless to the community or inappropriate? You must analyse and answer the needs of the community"  
Anna Whyatt, **Southwark Borough Council**

"Community groups often stressed the importance of specialist advice and skill transfer by companies, which was frequently more significant to the success of community ventures than direct financial support."  
from "Profitable Partnerships": a 1991 research report by the **Policy Studies Institute**

"The most valuable resource of the country, and our only truly renewable resource is the talent and imagination of our people"

*The key to success in employee community involvement is to understand, feel comfortable with and respond to the motivations of the company and the employees so that all three parties benefit. If the benefits being sought by a company or an employee are not compatible with those you are seeking, the transaction is unlikely to succeed.*

## Motivations of Employers

### *Why Business Is Involved In The Community*

With a few exceptions, community involvement by companies is largely a recent phenomenon. It is, therefore, still at a formative stage, and motivations and practices vary enormously. According to Business in the Community's most recent report, based on consultations with their members (400-plus major UK companies): "Many companies justify their community involvement on a largely philanthropic basis." This motivation should not be discounted. After all, most funding for charities comes from the general public – and most of **them** work in the private and public sectors, in some cases as managers.

Another common motivation is a desire to improve the services upon which the company's employees and business depend. This explains the popularity of education and training, and the rush of company support for

enterprise agencies and inner-city development following the riots of the early 1980s. For the same reasons, protection of the environment and issues connected with social and economic regeneration – such as poverty, unemployment, crime and abuse of drugs and alcohol – are also given high priority by businesses.

In addition, however, community involvement enables companies to acquire less tangible assets:

- \* an enhanced corporate reputation that may earn goodwill from local authorities, government, customers and employees
- \* an increased ability to attract and keep high-quality staff
- \* opportunities to develop the skills and broaden the experience of employees
- \* the flexibility to aid career transitions – for example, from work to retirement

### *Why Employers Support Employee Community Involvement*

Analysis of community involvement reports submitted in 1991 by more than 300 members of the Per Cent Club (which includes the UK's largest donor companies) shows that employees have become a major corporate priority in community involvement programmes. Support for employee involvement has to compete with other, more traditional, ways of spending the company's contributions budget

(although this is not always so – secondments that have a planned-for and proven staff training benefit may be funded from the training budget). Reasons for spending money on employee involvement may include:

- \* to enable the company to achieve greater impact on community problems with the same amount of money; to "add value" to financial contributions

- \* to enable the company to be more genuinely a "partner" in solving community problems. Involved companies feel that simply "throwing money" at a problem is no longer enough. Business has other, unique resources to offer: management skills, technical and marketing expertise, credibility, lobbying and people.
- \* to demonstrate the company's pride in, and support for, what employees are already doing
- \* to demonstrate to their employees that they work for a company they can be proud of; to raise morale



- \* to provide staff development opportunities, particularly in team work and leadership. No doubt you have already picked out the key words from these lists: "teams", "staff development", "employee satisfaction", "using our unique resources". You must bear these concepts in mind when designing projects that you hope will attract company support.

These concepts are, however, generalisations. The individual motives for community involvement vary according to company policy, management level and the social issue being addressed. To find out what one particular company is seeking from supporting employee involvement at one time, you must observe:

**THE GOLDEN RULE: ALWAYS ASK. – NEVER ASSUME YOU KNOW.**

Most company staff are comfortable with the idea that there should be "something in it for them", and are quite candid about telling enquirers what that something is. You may, however, find that you cannot provide what the company is seeking – or that you don't want to. For example, you may feel uncomfortable with a company looking for very specific training benefits for its staff that you are not sure you can provide. This does not mean that they are wrong to seek such a benefit or that you are foolish to pass up their offer, just that your needs are incompatible. The company you are looking for is the one you can work with to your *mutual* benefit.

## What Attracts Company Involvement

In general, then, projects that are attractive to a company will have as many as possible of the following characteristics:

- \* a link with a known priority area of the company
- \* a link with their product, service or skill base
- \* employees are already involved in it on their own initiative
- \* provide a service (such as care of children or elderly people) that is useful to their employees or their families, among other users
- \* be local – in an area where the company has a presence.
- \* provide ways in which employees can be involved that will be of benefit to the

employees. For example, if you are dealing with a company looking for team building opportunities for its staff, don't just ask them for people to operate your project – ask them for people to help plan and manage it.

# Motivations of Employees

## Why Employees Are Involved In The Community

Employees become involved in the community for much the same reasons as other volunteers:

- \* to help others
- \* to use job skills in a different setting
- \* to use skills not utilised at work
- \* to explore a new career
- \* to meet people
- \* to relieve job monotony.



"I USED TO MAKE BUSINESS CONTACTS ON THE GOLF COURSE. NOW I MAKE THEM ON VOLUNTEER SCHEMES"

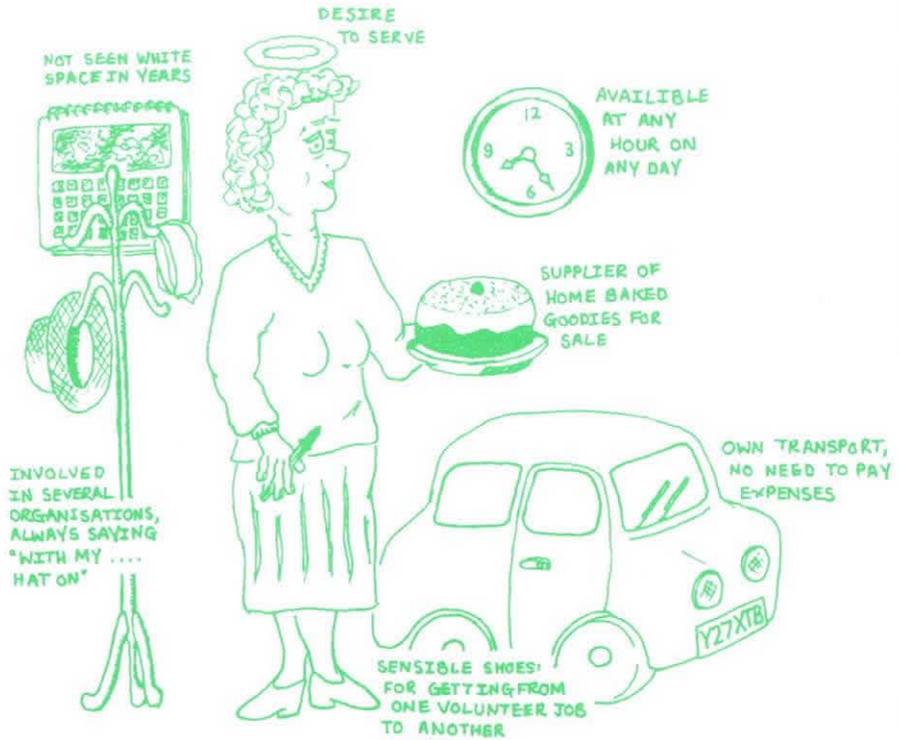
What may differ are the working conditions they prefer – this is particularly true of people who work very long hours, or who have never done anything like this before, or who are “blue collar” workers.

A vital rule in attracting and keeping volunteers is that the volunteer tasks you offer must match the motivations and availability of the people you ask to do them. Recently, there has been increased competition for volunteers, so organisations have been trying to recruit

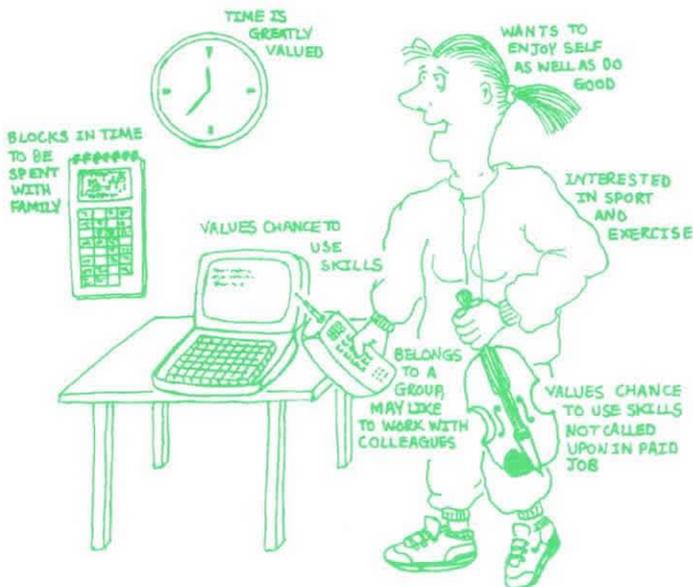
from groups previously under-represented in voluntary work; for example, people who are black, unemployed, are elderly or have special needs. Not all these recruitment campaigns have worked; those that succeeded did so because the organisation concerned discovered that *it needed to adapt its volunteer opportunities to make them as attractive as possible to the people it wished to involve*. The same needs to be done for employees.

**THE MYTH OF THE GOLDEN AGE VOLUNTEER**

Once upon a time, so long ago no-one can really remember, but it was before the dawning of demographic changes, women returning to work and increased demand and competition for volunteers, there existed Mrs Goldenage. Although not as beautiful as a princess she had other more important characteristics: she was reliable, available during the day and during the week, she was willing to work long hours for nothing, to supply home baked goodies for sale, to serve where she was needed. She looked like this:



The reality is that the number of Mrs Goldenages no-where near matches the number of jobs to be done. 66 per cent of current volunteers are employed. Mrs Goldenage's successor looks like this:



## Opportunities Which Attract Employees

Companies that recruit employees as volunteers and community organisations that recruit volunteers from the workplace agree that:

- \* many first time volunteers like one-off, time limited opportunities to "test the water"
- \* it is essential to offer evening and weekend opportunities
- \* opportunities to work with the whole family are important for employees whose work restricts the time they can spend with their families
- \* employees often like to work in groups with their colleagues and friends
- \* many employees respond well to marks of appreciation and recognition from the company and their colleagues
- \* it is sometimes more productive to ask people to do a particular task or use a particular skill than to issue a general appeal (for example, "please help elderly people")
- \* appeals for volunteers work better if they are specific about the time commitment needed.

### Some Examples

You may find some of these suggestions for

involving volunteers unfamiliar, representing a different way of thinking about what volunteers do. I shall therefore describe some examples of what other groups have done to benefit themselves and at the same time provide attractive working conditions for employees.

### Workplace-based Volunteering

**The Macintyre Trust** in Westoning, which runs a home for people with learning difficulties, has developed a link with the Stevenage branch of the maintenance company, **Willmott Dixon**. But instead of asking volunteer befrienders from the staff to visit the home, they arranged for two of their residents to go into the company on a weekly basis. One was keen to learn and take part in office skills, and the other loves to clean vehicles. All fifteen members of staff have been involved in helping these two young women achieve their goals; indeed, they are now helping them set up a car-wash business, with



"I AGREED YOU COULD RUN A RECYCLING COLLECTION CENTRE, I DIDN'T SAY IT COULD BE IN MY OFFICE."

one woman cleaning the cars while the other does with the administration. Body Shops in Aberdeen and Edinburgh provide work experience of people with learning difficulties for two or three days a week.

For several years **Lex plc** organised and hosted a Christmas party for the volunteers and clients of **Westminster's Talking Newspaper for the Blind Scheme**. Employees gladly stayed behind after work to run the party. Also popular with groups of employees is organising collections. In Hedge End, **Whitbread** employees collected new, quality Christmas presents for children living in financially difficult and emotionally distressing circumstances. **Southampton Council for Community Service** provided a list of the children's first names and presents requested. All the presents asked for were bought.

## Volunteering As A Group

Major changes in Whitbread's information systems group meant 100 people coming



Five adults with severe learning difficulties and no speech, on an outing to Bristol Zoo with employees from Allied Dunbar.

together under a new senior manager. To provide a day-long project which would enable these 100 people to start feeling part of their new group and, simultaneously, to do something of value for the local community, they organised a Challenge Day. Local community groups in Luton came up with a wide variety of ideas. They included:

- \* designing and producing a colour poster with a new logo and printing 500 copies
- \* running a training session for six vocational trainees with disabilities on job search skills
- \* building a fence between an old peoples' home and the neighbouring building.

Most communities will be able to find projects to which the energies of a large number of people can make a big difference. For example, in Camberley, the **Surrey Heath Council for**

**Voluntary Service** organises a yearly collection and distribution of food parcels to elderly people. Last year, the employees of **Sun Microsystems** joined in. The participation of this one moderately sized company branch resulted in the donation of 400 items of food plus the work of making up the parcels being done in half the usual time.

More examples of projects suitable for groups of volunteers are given in Section 1, pages 7 to 8.

## Rotas and Job-Shares

A job that is normally done by one volunteer can sometimes be shared between two, to allow people with limited time to spare to get involved. Alan Stark, Senior Vice President of **American Express** together with John de Trafford, Vice President, shared lunch duties at **St Mary's drop in centre for the elderly in Pimlico**. Having a partner in their volunteer work meant that they could be sure of meeting their commitment even when the demands of their paid jobs were urgent or unpredictable.



Rota-duty for Alan Stark of American Express at St Mary's drop-in centre for the elderly.

In Norwich, the **District Legal Services Committee** was set up to make legal services more accessible to everyone. Fifty lawyers work in a lunchtime rota giving free legal advice in the town's Advice Arcade.

At The Body Shop, 28 staff from the Materials Control department of head office have developed a link with a local day care centre, run by Social Services. Staff provide support by driving the minibus, fundraising and assisting with social activities including summer outings and a Christmas party for the children. However, for some activities, such as the playgroup and the mental health support group, regular attendance is needed. These projects are supported by at least four staff from The Body Shop each week.

## Twining

The staff of IBM's Leeds office formed a partnership with the **Neighbourhood Centre on the Belle Isle council housing estate**, a five minute drive away. Many of the local IBM staff were involved in the partnership activities, which included desk-top-publishing the Centre's annual report, fundraising for a theatre trip, garden tidying and running a Christmas party. The relationship started when IBM service engineers and joiners fitted intercom door locks in the homes of elderly bedridden residents. In another example, engineers from **Royal Mail** in Leicester volunteer to maintain the building of a charity that helps the families of cancer patients. They undertake all electrical,



Ian Campell McLean of IBM fits an intercom door lock for a resident of the Belle Isle estate in Leeds

plumbing, heating and repair work and provide an emergency service.

## Involving Families

Short-term or one-off activities which are suitable for groups can often be open to families as well; for example, environmental clean-ups and tree planting. Most organisations catering



"THE WHOLE FAMILY WANTED TO GET INVOLVED"

for parents with young children, such as the pre-school-play groups, only survive only because their volunteers are able to bring their children with them. There are other activities in which families are not usually involved but where they could be an advantage – as Mrs Stevenson says about her children, who volunteer with her for Meals on Wheels: "You can just see the people they visit brighten up...Most don't get to see children that often."

## Links With Work-based Clubs

Thanks to IBM's programme of Local Environmental Action Teams, the **Dorset Trust for Nature Conservation** was able to restore and map an underwater nature trail. The work was carried out by employee volunteers who were members of IBM's Sub-Aqua Club.



Volunteer divers from the Civil Service Sub Aqua Club at Knole

The discovery at Knole, a **National Trust** property in Kent, of a huge water system under the paved Stone Court raised anxieties about possible subsidence, especially during the Knole Festival when audiences of up to 400 are seated in the Court. To the rescue came volunteers from the **Civil Service Sub Aqua Club**, who worked entirely in their own time. The benefit for them was the pleasure of doing something they really enjoyed for a good cause.

### Time Limited Projects

Several companies agreed to set up large Christmas trees on their premises hung with cards containing volunteer opportunities. Employees choose a card and carry out the task before Christmas. By definition, the tasks need to be short-term, demanding minimum commitment from the volunteer – but they are a useful introduction to voluntary organisations and their work. Here are some of the tasks hung on the Christmas “job trees” in **Joshua Tetley** and **Yorkshire Electricity** in December 1991:

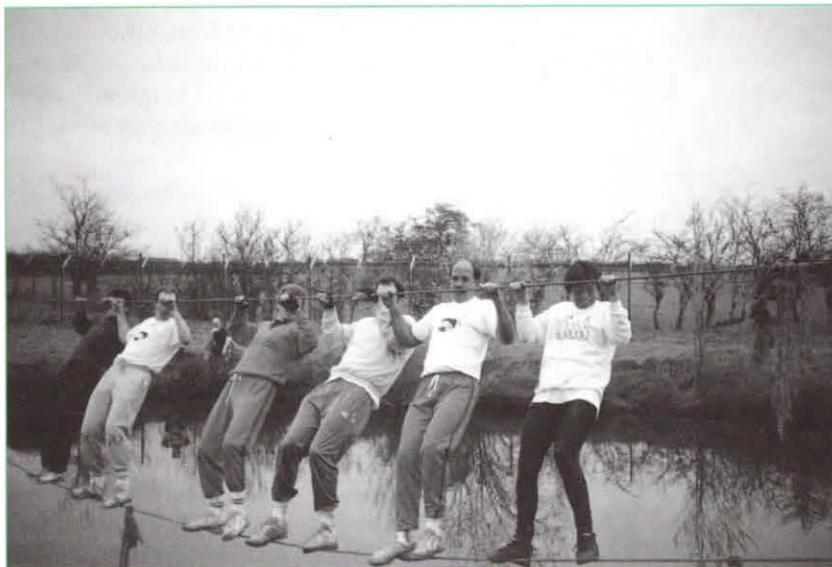
- \* escorting a disabled person to the theatre
- \* helping with a large mailing
- \* planting trees
- \* organising an assault course team for a fundraising event

Some of the employees have remained involved with the organisations on an on-going basis and some have not. But it was important for all of them to have the opportunity to become involved initially with only a short-term commitment.

### Involving Skilled Volunteers

The projects need to be ones that volunteers can complete working in their own time; for example, advising on computer systems, help in securing premises, assistance with finance and preparing accounts, as well as consultancy in staff management, recruitment and training, design and printing.

For example, Jackie Wightman of **Yorkshire Electricity's Supplies and Meter Reading Department** organised a promotional Open Day for the **Palace Youth Project**. The project provides counselling, advice and short-stay accommodation for homeless and unemployed young people. Jackie devised a questionnaire to seek ideas from the management committee, researched the project's work and areas of potential funding. She says “*The best thing... is that it gives me the chance to try out skills I don't normally use at work.*” Yvette Smalle, of the Palace Youth Project, reports that “*Jackie's efforts ... are providing our project with a very exciting development opportunity.*”



Found on a Christmas Tree in Joshua Tetley – an invitation to complete an assault course to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

## Why Secondees Are Involved In The Community

Secondment is a work commitment, so many employees become involved initially because their managers choose them. The secondment may be part of their development and training programme, a means of assisting a change of role or career, or an aid to staff planning.

### What Attracts Secondees

As in any placement, the skills and interests of the secondee must match the requirements of

the host agency and vice versa. A secondee should never be there under duress. The matching process is critical for ensuring that the project is attractive to the secondee. This underlines the importance of an experienced broker such as Action Resource Centre. Secondees need to be offered the chance to develop skills or broaden experience, and to maintain contact with their employer so that their promotional prospects are not jeopardized as well as the opportunity to contribute to a cause they believe in.

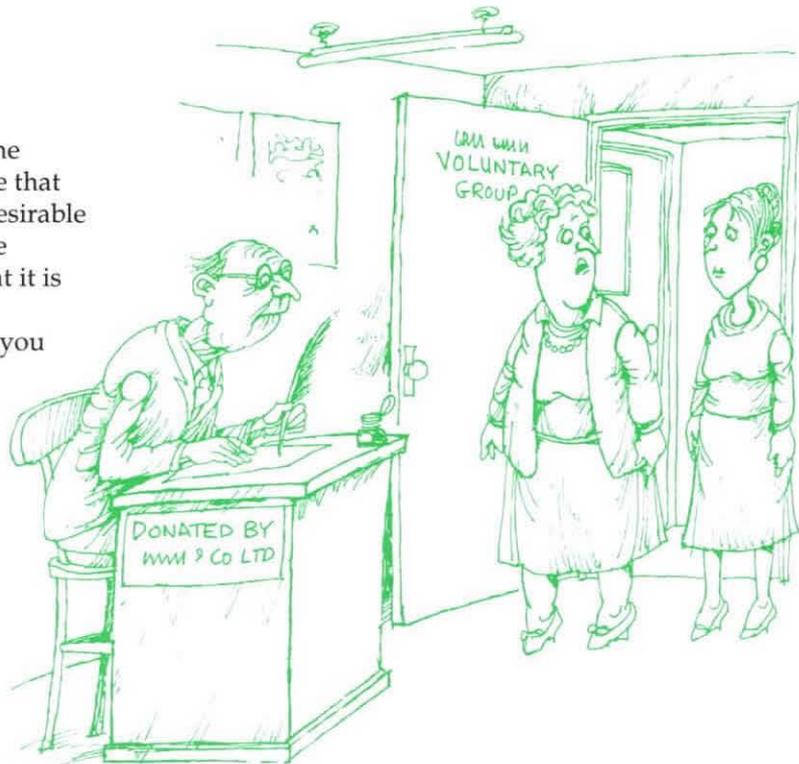
## Motivations of Community Organisations

### Benefits: Specific and Realistic

But what about the third party to the transaction? It is too easy to assume that employee involvement is always desirable that it will automatically benefit the community. But a vague feeling that it is "a good thing" is not enough. For employee involvement to succeed, you must **be specific** about the benefits you want.

*'Well, I thought "We need people. They've got people. Let's go for it"'  
A Volunteer Bureau organiser.*

It is seldom so simple. Although companies are an excellent source of volunteers, they are not the only one. Finding potential recruits and encouraging them to work for you can be a time-consuming business, and success is by no means guaranteed.



*"WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE SPECIFIC WHEN WE ASKED FOR A WORD PROCESSOR!"*

"Because it's there" may be a good reason for climbing a mountain – but it isn't sufficient justification for approaching a company for volunteers or secondees. There needs to be a quite specific benefit for you – one that you cannot acquire with less effort elsewhere. Here are some reasons why community groups may seek employee community involvement:

\* "It's the best place to get the specific skill we need"

\* "It has the largest single group of people in the town. We see this as a way of increasing public awareness (of our cause)"

\* "The company has a reputation for community service. We think we can persuade them to adopt our organisation for fundraising support for a year. That would be a significant source of funds for us."

\* "We want to reduce the isolation of our residents from the mainstream. They would benefit so much from on-going involvement in normal working life."

\* "We want to create an on-going link with the company. It may take us some time but we think that, once the relationship has been developed, we will benefit from all kinds of support – people, help in-kind and maybe cash as well."

There are two other reasons that you may not have thought of for involving employees in your work:

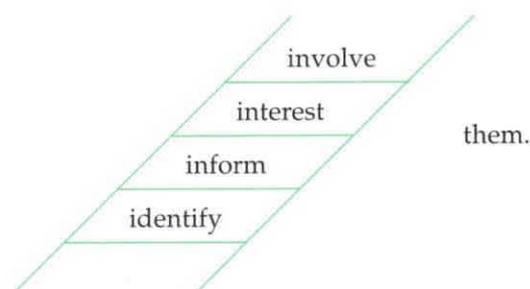
## Employee Involvement Is A Way of Involving People In Your Organisation Gradually

If your organisation has a limited number of jobs for volunteers, and those jobs are emotionally demanding and require long-term commitment, you are probably missing out on many would-be volunteers who feel unable to make that kind of commitment at one leap. Some people claim, for example, that they could not work with people with learning disabilities – but this is often because they have never met any and thus have a completely inaccurate idea of what they are like.

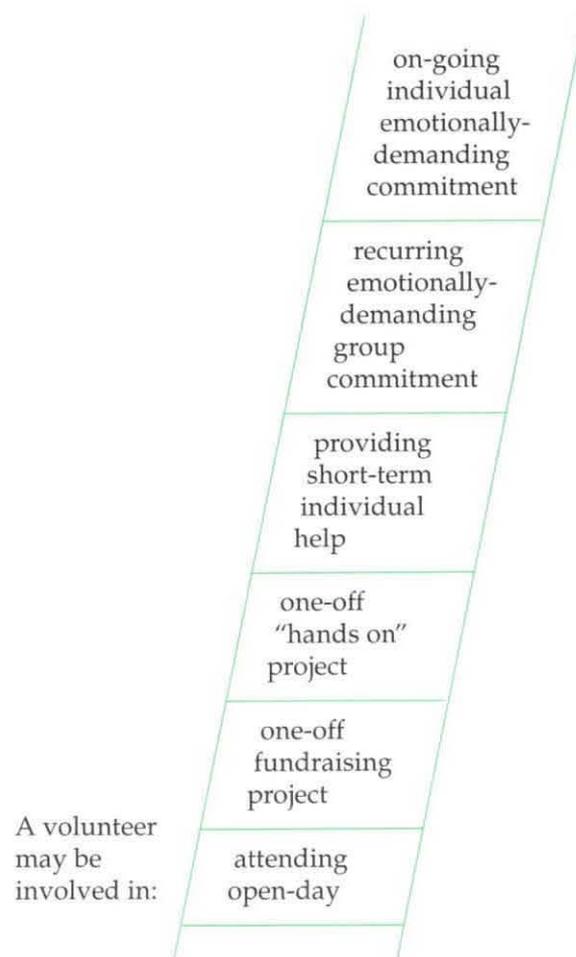
The kinds of group projects and links which are appropriate for new volunteers enable people to become involved gradually with an organisation, learning about the work but without having to make a commitment for which they are not ready.

Diagrams 2a and 2b show the kind of "ladder of commitment" you might like to construct for your organisation. This will enable volunteers (not just employee volunteers) to choose a level of involvement with your agency that matches the commitment they are prepared to make. It also allows people to move from a lower to a higher level of commitment when they feel ready.

When building awareness of your organisation and its needs among the general public, you may:



A person, who volunteers, in any capacity, in your organisation is already on the top rung of this first ladder. To build their commitment further, you may offer them the opportunity to gradually increase the level of their involvement.



## Employee Volunteering Offers The Chance To Involve People You Otherwise Cannot Reach

Organisations that targeted their recruitment campaigns on people from ethnic minority groups or those with special needs achieved more than just some extra volunteers. They became more in touch with sections of the community that they had previously had little to do with. The same benefits can be achieved through employee involvement.

*The figures for skilled manual and semi-skilled manual workers were 20% and 12% respectively*

**The 1991 Survey of Voluntary Activity** published by The Volunteer Centre UK showed that "the 'typical' volunteer in 1991, as was the case in 1981, is someone in work, with a professional or managerial occupation... Moreover the volunteering gap between social classes appears to have widened over the last ten years." The survey found that unskilled manual workers made up only 4 per cent of people who volunteered at least once a year, (slightly less than the 5 per cent who were unemployed). Clearly, current methods of recruitment do not reach this group of potential volunteers.

By contrast, projects set up specifically to recruit volunteers from industry have consistently found that, although most working people know little about the available opportunities for voluntary work, many are glad to hear about them. The other lessons they have learned – which are very similar to those learned by companies pioneering employee volunteering – are summarised in the box below:

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS FROM INDUSTRY

- \* Male, "blue collar" workers prefer physical, task-oriented, outdoor opportunities
- \* New volunteers respond best to one-off or short-term events
- \* Group work is popular and can be effective
- \* Peer-to-peer recruitment within the company is the best way of getting volunteers
- \* New volunteers must be made to feel welcome. Form filling and other bureaucratic procedures are a major discouragement to many would-be volunteers.



"IT'S PART OF THE DRIVE TO WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS WE GIVE THEM THE FORMS TO TEAR UP!"

An anecdote by a Whitbread employee neatly illustrates the latter point. Given information about volunteer opportunities through the company scheme, she phoned a well-known voluntary organisation to offer her services: "There was this woman with this plummy voice asking me why I wanted to work for them and talking about all sorts of forms. She treated me like dirt. I'm not going to work there." In fact, encouraged by the company co-ordinator, she persevered, and is now working happily for that organisation – and has even recruited several of her colleagues. Nevertheless, if you are serious about expanding the range of volunteers you involve, you should consider whether your initial welcome and selection procedures can be made more "user friendly".

For example, at the first contact the prospective volunteer can be made to feel welcome and invited to visit. At that visit, both parties can exchange information to see if there is a mutual fit, and any information needed for the records written down by the staff member.

Organisations which recruit volunteers for tasks for which extensive selection procedures are necessary (eg counselling) might make this point clear on recruitment literature so that prospective volunteers know what to expect.

# Summary Of Benefits Of Employee Involvement

## Benefits to the Community

Employee involvement:

- \* provides new talent and energy by increasing the pool of available skills, especially managerial and technical skills
- \* brings a fresh perspective to community organisations
- \* increases understanding between business and the non-profit sector
- \* increases public awareness of community problems
- \* may bring access to products and other forms of corporate support

## Benefits to the Employee

Employee involvement programmes:

- \* enable employees to make a difference to issues they care about

- \* add balance to work responsibilities
- \* provide opportunities to develop new skills and broaden experience
- \* provide information about local community services which may be of help to them and their families

## Benefits to the Employer

Employee involvement programmes:

- \* increase employee morale
- \* provide opportunities for staff to develop and practise business skills, particularly in leadership, teamwork and decision making
- \* improve community relations
- \* improve public image
- \* "add value" to financial donations
- \* provide useful community information
- \* provide a bridge to retirement for employees

# 3

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## How To Do It

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"You can be on the right track but you can get run over if you just sit there."  
Will Rogers

# The Three Stages

Whatever kind of employee involvement you are seeking and for whatever reasons, the basic techniques are the same. I have grouped them under three headings:

## • Preparing

Are you comfortable with the idea of working with the private sector? *What do you need?* How can volunteers or secondees help meet those needs? What can you do within your resources? Will you need to look for more resources?

## • Attracting employee involvement

Which company to approach. Who to approach within it. Brokerage organisations. Presenting your case effectively.

## • Managing employee involvement

Matching needs and resources. Managing secondees and volunteers. Good practice issues. Maintaining the relationship.

## Preparing

### Question 1: Ought We To?

It may seem strange to introduce this question now. After all, if you have read this far it is a fair assumption that you have decided that you *do* want to involve employees in your work. But you could be considering this course of action with some reluctance. Perhaps you simply cannot afford to turn down any source of support for your work but – would much rather you could. Or you may be happy about working with the private and public sectors but others in your organisation or on your management committee may not be. Whichever is the case, you'll have to decide whether these are minor misgivings that will evaporate once you get down to work, or whether they are serious differences of opinion that relate to the fundamental values of your organisation.

If the latter is the case, the sooner you address the problem the better – and certainly before rather than after you start working with companies. Here is an illustration: recently, in a town in North East England, community groups that were members of a local Business



"COME NOW, MRS JONES, THIS IS NOT THE TIME OR PLACE FOR THESE DISCUSSIONS"

Links consortium agreed to send representatives to sit on the steering group alongside representatives of local companies. When the first meeting was halfway through, a couple of the community representatives started to discuss whether, on the grounds of environmental impact, it was ethical for them to have anything to do with two of the companies whose representatives were sitting at the table. This was the worst possible moment to raise such basic issues and risked discrediting all the other voluntary organisations present. Every organisation must decide on its core values and stick to them. But values can be tricky things. Sometimes an organisation can hold several values, all of which are good in themselves but which conflict with each other. For example, an organisation may wish to improve the living conditions of their clients by accepting an offer of volunteer labour to renovate the premises. But they may **also** wish to avoid involving volunteers in tasks (eg building, plumbing) traditionally done by paid workers. The organisation is likely to be unable to afford to pay for the job to be done at precisely those moments when it would most like to be able to offer paid employment (ie times of recession and unemployment).

*To stick to one's values is an irregular verb: "I stick to my values. You are an opportunist. He or she has sold out completely." An alternative conjugation is "I am flexible. You are opinionated. He or she is prejudiced"*

Sometimes values get confused with prejudices – which are unfounded generalisations about others. These questions will help you to sort out values from prejudices:

#### \* Is the objection specific?

For example, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth both refuse to work with certain companies whose environmental record is particularly bad; this is an expression of their core values as organisations. But, the agency that decided to have nothing to do with employee involvement because "we don't like big business...they just want cheap publicity" was simply expressing a prejudice.

*Watch out for words like "They", "big business" and "always". That is the language of prejudice.*

#### \* Is the objection based on experience or knowledge?

For example an organisation decided to reject employee involvement because "they are

bound to exploit their employees. It won't be voluntary".

In fact, most companies go to great pains to ensure that employee involvement is *not* 'top down' – the last thing they want is to upset their employee relations.

#### \* Does the objection concern one of the organisation's core values?

In other words, is it something that matters to the organisation as a whole, or just to one individual? And does it relate to a value which is peripheral to the organisation or does it *really* matter?

#### \* Is this moral criterion applied equally to other proposed "partner" organisations or only to private companies?

(and, indeed, to one's own organisation? Do we like cheap publicity?)

To expect a higher standard of moral probity from the corporate sector than from, say, the public sector is an example of prejudice. No organisation is completely "pure" and that includes voluntary organisations.

#### \* How important and visible is the proposed link?

For example, you will need to think harder about an on-going partnership involving a high-profile link than about the involvement of a few employees in a small, one-off project. The larger partnerships do certainly pose dilemmas: for example, the World Wide Fund for Nature received an estimated £300,000 from Procter & Gamble for allowing them to put the WWF logo on publicity material for disposable nappies and soap powder. This decision, which arguably contravened the Fund's own environmental code, brought the WWF adverse publicity and may have lost them supporters. But it would be foolish to treat every company as if it were threatening you with major public exposure.

#### \* What is your image of a 'typical' business person?

Unfortunately, some of us derive our image of business people from television melodramas, where they are usually portrayed as ruthless manipulators earning mind-boggling salaries and determined to get to the top at all costs. Set against this, the image of someone who carries a generous sponsorship budget in his briefcase at all times, and you will understand why people have mixed feelings about business

people – feelings that can make it difficult for them to see the real human being in front of them.

“The advertising guru David Ogilvy once told a (presumably male) audience: ‘The consumer is not a moron – she is your wife’... it made them think. In the same way the average business executive ...may be your next-door neighbour, the person collecting for charity outside the supermarket on Saturday, or that twit in front of you at the cash dispenser who’s forgotten their PIN number” from Business in the Art’s handbook **‘Working with a Management Adviser’**, a Prudential Guide for Arts Managers.

## Implications

- \* Try to resolve values issues **before** approaching companies
- \* If the people in your organisation cannot agree and feelings are running high, start small or don’t start at all. Choose some of the easier options from Section 1. Don’t impose a major campaign of building links with businesses on reluctant colleagues.
- \* Seek information about a company from neutral sources if possible. If you cannot do this, ask the company’s public affairs department, or look in its annual report.
- \* Always treat individual people from companies with courtesy, even if you decide not to work with their company. The employee is not the company.
- \* To transform a prejudice into a concern that can be dealt with, formulate specific questions about the objection and then find out the answers.

## Question 2: Will We Need To Involve Other Departments, In Planning This Initiative?

### Fundraisers and Volunteer Co-ordinators or Service Delivery Staff

Large organisations often have a corporate fundraising person, or even a whole department. These staff usually operate independently of the service delivery staff and the volunteer co-ordinators.

It is essential that staff from both departments should consult about plans to recruit employee volunteers or secondees. This is partly to co-ordinate approaches to companies, to share information and to help each other. It is also to reassure the fundraisers. If a fundraiser has spent months preparing the ground for a sponsorship deal worth thousands, they are likely to get nervous if someone else in the organisation asks “their” company for a few volunteers to carry out a survey. Their fear is that the company will become “inoculated”; that it will say “We’ve done our bit for your organisation, so we won’t give you the sponsorship money.”

The evidence suggests the opposite, in fact; individuals and organisations both tend to give more money to causes in which they are involved as volunteers. Conversely, individuals and institutions are both more likely to give time to causes to which they give money. This is borne out by the fact that organisations involving large numbers of secondees also receive substantial financial support from the private sector. What is more, some of the major givers among businesses are now actively seeking organisations with whom they can form partnerships that will allow them to contribute both money and people. The catch-phrases are “added value”, “gearing up” financial contributions with employee involvement and “ensuring that money is spent to best effect”. Community organisations able to offer opportunities for both types of contribution will have the edge over other groups competing for corporate resources. Nonetheless, fundraisers do need a chance to talk through their fears and how problems can

be avoided. Setting up employee involvement requires close co-operation between departments, and this may take some time.

### Staff from HQ and Regional Branches

Large organisations may need a system allowing regular consultations between staff from HQ and those in the regions. Otherwise, someone from HQ could well be discussing a national partnership with a national company at the same time as someone from a regional office is approaching one of the same company's branches. Being aware of what is going on in other parts of your organisation can save you embarrassment. Barnardo's, for example, has set up a 'clearing house' of

corporate contacts shared by head office staff who approach large companies for sponsorships and regional field staff canvassing for payroll deduction schemes.

### Other Staff and the Management Committee

You will need to discuss why you are attempting to recruit volunteers or secondees for particular tasks with the staff with whom they may be working. According to Alistair Grimes of WISE (a Glasgow training organisation) "Often secondees are just parachuted in, leaving staff to wonder why, and what was wrong with them that it was needed."

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## Question 3: What Do We Need? Turning Problems Into Specific Needs

"We were almost 100% Local Authority funded and this year the Local Authority was charge-capped and our grant has been cut. They have implied that we are not as efficient and well-targetted as they would like. We have an urgent need to diversify our funding, including fundraising among the general public. We have some assets we might be able to sell – extra space in our building. Also our counsellors may be able to charge some clients for some of their services, though we are worried that charging might put off the clients who are really in need from approaching us. But we aren't well-known and we fear our appeal may be limited. How can we produce decent materials about our work when our budget has just been cut?

Would a company give us some money?"  
In short, No. Being a good cause in trouble is not enough. You need to be a good cause, a good bet for survival, with specific needs which can be met by the people you are approaching for help, and able to satisfy some need felt by the company. So the first step is to turn the nebulous tangle of problems into jobs that can be done. The second step, as far as this book is concerned, is to decide which of the jobs could be done through employee involvement and which require other approaches. What does this mean in practice? The following table tries to answer these two questions on behalf of the project quoted above.

**Problem****Do-Able Job**

"We are not as efficient and well targetted as they would like"

Outsiders simply cannot judge whether this is so. Only after we have decided for ourselves exactly who our priority audience is, can we seek help to

- conduct a survey into what proportion of them have heard of us, and how we might reach them more effectively;
- analyse our work-plans and spending levels in the light of the budget reductions; and
- draw up a business plan reflecting our newly-clarified goals.

"We have an urgent need to diversify our funding"

Business advisers are often skilled in marketing but not in fundraising. Employees could be asked to fundraise on your behalf, but it would need to be for a specific, achievable goal; for example, "We are establishing a bursary fund to ensure that clients in greatest need do not have to pay for our services. Our target for this year is £x thousand"

**Problem****Do-Able Job**

"We have some assets we might be able to sell – space in our building"

We need specialist advice on sub-letting and disposing of property

"We think our counsellors could sell their services to some people but we are worried that charging might put off the clients who are really in need"

We need advice in putting together an attitude/ marketing survey to find out how much we can charge to whom, and what the impact would be on our most needy clients

"We can't afford to produce decent materials"

We need help with writing, designing and producing a new brochure that will make us better known in the community

## *Question 4: How Can Volunteers Or Secondees Help Meet Our Needs?*

To answer this question, you need to look in much greater detail at your statement of needs, to decide for each one what tasks need doing, how long they will take and what skills are needed. For the brochure, for example, you will need a writer, perhaps a photographer, a graphic designer, and someone with access to either desk-top publishing or typesetting and printing facilities – these can be provided as an in-kind contribution.

You should also try to make the working

conditions attractive to employees. Must the job be done at your office, or can it be done on the company site? How long will it take? Must it be done in normal working hours or can it be done during evenings and weekends? Is it a job for one person or can it be done by employees working as a team or on a rota?

Remember that long-term secondees are becoming more difficult to obtain; there is, however, an increasing supply of secondees for short assignments.

## Question 5: What Can We Do Within Our Current Resources?

All employee involvement comes at a price. Even if you want a secondee and are lucky enough to have a broker nearby who will recruit one for you, you will not be getting a completely free resource. Secondees need somewhere to sit, for example, as well as a telephone and some administrative support. You will also need to spend time deciding what they should do, supervising them, reporting to the seconding organisation and reviewing the secondment when it ends.

*"We had to invest our time and timetable work so that time could be allocated to (our secondee)"*  
Sue Pearson, Liverpool Gingerbread

There are many ways of stimulating employee involvement in your work, but it's vital that you choose ways you can afford to sustain, and that are cost-effective. If you make ambitious plans, you may need to raise extra resources in advance to enable you to carry them through. The following chart lists the various kinds of employee involvement in ascending order of how much time and money you will need to use them.

### Low Resource Options

- \* Working with a company that approaches you
- \* Making approaches through the contacts of existing supporters who are employed
- \* Participating in a locally-brokeraged scheme

### Medium Resource Options

- \* Approaching a company known to have an employee involvement programme
- \* Hosting a brokered secondment or volunteer placement
- \* Asking local companies to circulate to their employees a newsletter about volunteering opportunities prepared by a Volunteer Bureau or Volunteer Co-ordinators Forum
- \* Asking companies to include appeals for voluntary help in their house newsletters

### High Resource Options

- \* Establishing an affiliation scheme
- \* Approaching companies without special programmes
- \* Establishing a national partnership
- \* Setting up a local employee involvement initiative

## Attracting Employee Involvement

### DANGER – THERE'S A LARGE PITFALL HERE

*"We had no budget at all... We had no idea how much work would be involved. We hadn't thought how we would follow through on the interest we raised. If I had the time over I would do it very differently"*  
Volunteer Bureau organiser

The most common mistake among community organisations is to overlook the first steps; thinking ahead, and preparing yourself as an organisation. Without these, you might find yourself, after making great efforts to get an interview with a company representative,

unable to answer even the most basic questions, such as:

- "What sorts of volunteers do you need?"
  - "Are these the sorts of task my employees could do?" (in terms of time available, interests, skills, geography etc)
  - "Why are you approaching **my** company?"
  - "What's in it for me?"
  - "What precisely are you asking me to do? How long will it take and how much will it cost?"
- If you have skipped the sections on "Why: Motivations and Barriers" and "Preparation", go back and read them now!

## Identifying Companies To Approach

### Question 1: Who Are The Major Employers In This Area?

To find out the major commercial employers in your neighbourhood, go to the reference section of your local library and consult **The Kompass Register of Businesses** – this will tell you the number of employees and the nature of the business. The reference section will probably also have regional business directories, which may list a larger number of local businesses than Kompass.

Commercial directories exclude shops and such public institutions as Local Authorities and the armed forces; for these, you may need to rely on local knowledge or the telephone directory. Your Chamber of Commerce will have a list of employers. In addition, some Local Authorities employ Economic Development Officers, who may have a database of local businesses.

### Question 2: Which Companies Already Have Employee Involvement Programmes?

#### COMPANIES WITH 'COMPANY-OWNED' EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMMES

**COMMUNITY SERVICE FUNDS OR AWARDS**  
Allied Dunbar, Honeywell Control Systems, IBM, Legal & General, Midland Bank, National Westminster, Rowntree Mackintosh, Royal Mail, Shell, Sainsbury, United Biscuits

**STAFF CHARITY COMMITTEES/FUND RAISING/MATCHED FUNDRAISING**  
Abbey National, Allied Dunbar, Asda, Bank of England, Barclays, Boots the Chemist, British Gas, Honeywell Control Systems, IBM, Iceland Frozen Foods, John Laing, Levi Strauss, Lloyds, Marks & Spencer, Mosaic Management Consultancy, Sainsbury, WH Smith, Tesco, Unilever United Biscuits, Woolwich,

Of the 213 companies who took part in the Charities Aid Foundation's 1991 survey of the UK's top company donors, 66 said that they match employee giving. A total of £6.3 million was raised in this way through company contributions.

#### RECRUITING NEW VOLUNTEERS OR COMPANY PROJECTS

Allied Dunbar, BET, The Body Shop, Cranfield Management College, Freshfields, IBM, Levi Strauss, Mosaic Consultancy, Rowntree Mackintosh, Sun Microsystems, Whitbread,

#### CURRENTLY PILOTING RECRUITING NEW VOLUNTEERS OR ESTABLISHING COMPANY PROJECTS IN SELECTED AREAS

American Express, Asda, British Gas, BP, British Telecom, Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency, Grand Metropolitan, Halifax Building Society, Joshua Tetley, National Westminster, Royal Mail, Unilever, Wellcome Foundation Ltd, Willmott Dixon, Yorkshire Electricity

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** We print this list merely to indicate the range of companies that support employee involvement. *It is not a complete list.* So many employers have seconded staff to community organisations that it is impossible to include them all this handbook. Also, the fact that a company is listed here does not mean that it operates a programme in all of its branches. There is often considerable variation between branches.

#### Other Sources Of Information

The most comprehensive listing of the community involvement policies (including employee involvement) of major companies – including contact names and addresses – is in **"The Major Companies Guide"**, available from the Directory of Social Change, Radius Works, Back Lane, London NW3 1HL, telephone 071 435 8171; this book is updated every two years.

**"High Street Giving"** (available from the same address) does the same for the shops, banks etc you are likely to have in your local high street. The Volunteer Centre UK's Development Officer for Employee Volunteering keeps information about company programmes and activities.

Business in the Community (BITC)'s central office is compiling a database of company employee volunteering programmes, due to become operational by May 1992. One of the purposes of the database is to link together companies with community organisations wishing to involve employee volunteers. Contact: Amanda Bowman, Campaign Manager, Employees in the Community, BITC, tel: 071 3216421

BITC's function is to help its member companies develop excellent community involvement programmes; it does not serve

community organisations directly. Your local Council for Voluntary Service or Volunteer Bureau may have information about, or links with, local businesses. More detailed information about a company's social priorities and policies can sometimes be found in its annual report. Some of the larger companies now publish separate reports of their community involvement activities. Both reports can be obtained on request from the company's Public Affairs department (if it has one) or from an information officer.

## Question 3: What About Brokerage Services?

Contact addresses for the schemes mentioned here can be found in Section 5.2

### **ACTION RESOURCE CENTRE (ARC)**

*ARC is the national expert on secondment. It is increasingly involved in brokering business volunteer placements. A lesser service is the 'recycled resources' scheme. It has 12 local offices. Special schemes include Chartered Accountants in the Community, the London-based Lawyers in the Community (see page 11) and Leeds Employee Volunteering Initiative.*

### **BUSINESS IN THE ARTS**

*Business in the Arts, part of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA), aims to recruit business executives and prepare them to work with arts organisations as voluntary management advisors. (See page 10)*

### **BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY'S PROFESSIONAL FIRMS GROUP**

*Not strictly speaking an employee involvement programme. The member firms donate services (feasibility studies, investigatory & advisory services and technical expertise) to community organisations as a form of in-kind donation. Members include surveyors, architects, consulting engineers, property consultants, accountants, solicitors & management consultants. It is London-based.*

### **CAREERS RESEARCH AND ADVISORY CENTRE (CRAC)**

*CRAC helps education to structure its involvement with industry; secondment, mainly of teachers into industry, is one of the means it uses.*

### **THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS**

*Has set up a database of members willing to help charities with financial management advice and consultancy (not auditing accounts).*

### **ROTARY CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN**

*Several branches of the Rotary Club of Great Britain run Management Assistance Schemes.*

### **THE TRUSTEE REGISTER**

*A database, established by Reed Charity with the support of the Charities Aid Fund and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, which links individuals, largely senior managers from a variety of companies, with charities looking for trustees. The volunteer trustees are not personally interviewed, matched and prepared for their placement.*

### **LOCAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES**

*A variety of local intermediary bodies such as Action Resource Centre, the Industrial Society, Councils for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Bureaux operate schemes designed to link the resources of a number of local businesses with the needs of local community organisations. Some of these schemes provide gifts-in-kind only; others have also developed ways for employees to be involved as volunteers in the community.*

### **RETIRED EXECUTIVE ACTION CLEARING HOUSE**

*National referral service to match voluntary opportunities with retirees with executive or administrative skills*

## What Should We Do If There Are No Special Schemes In Our Area?

This will depend on your resources. But seriously consider either *doing nothing* or choosing *low resource options* – such as making links through your existing employed supporters (see pages 5-6) or requesting free services (see page 20).

This is because company managers cannot donate an employee's free time in the same quick, uncomplicated way that they can (if so minded) make a cash donation from a charity budget. Setting up a programme for employee involvement needs support at the top of a company, staff time and the resources required to recruit willing employees. Your request, if carefully presented to the right person, *might* encourage a company to developing such a programme – but even so it could easily be a year or two before you saw the results.

On a more positive note, many companies do wish to increase the proportion of employee involvement in their firm's community activities but don't know how to go about it. They are looking for projects to support that will allow employees to be involved as planners, advisers and mainstream volunteers. If you approach one of these with a project that which needs people as well as money, you may be met with open arms.

What this means is that you will need to approach companies in order to find out which ones are interested in supporting employee involvement. But do not waste your time persisting in cultivating a company if the response is unpromising.

## Question 4: Which Companies Are Most Likely To Be Receptive To An Approach?

You cannot approach any and all companies – about five to ten good prospects may be a realistic number, though this will depend upon the level of your resources. Even if you are a large national organisation, it may still be wise to get to know a small number of companies well and then to build up the number. To identify the ‘good prospects’ look at your list of employers and reduce it by asking the following questions:

**(i) Which companies have a history of involvement in the community? More specifically, which already have links with my organisation?**

**(ii) Which companies would be interested in what my organisation could offer?**

**(iii) Which companies have the skills I am looking for?**

**(iv) In which companies do I have a personal contact?**

**(v) Which companies have been subject to internal changes that might make them particularly keen to build links with the community?**

Help in answering question (i) will be found earlier in this section. It makes sense to start with companies that have given financial support to your organisation, but beware of internal conflicts between staff concerned with fundraising and those concerned with volunteers (see page 40)

The information on why companies support employee community involvement (Section 2, pages 25-26) will help you to answer question ii). More information to help you with questions ii) to v) is given below.

### (ii) Which companies are seeking benefits you can provide?

#### MAKING THE RIGHT LINKS Examples of what the voluntary sector has to offer

Voluntary Organisations	Private/Public Organisations	Possible reasons for Employee Involvement
Children	Major Companies, banks, food stores	Those committed to supporting women returners/those whose market is women with children
Health & Welfare	Retail Insurance	Developing people skills/sensitivity to needs of customers Business goals (interest in health and welfare)
Local arts organisations	Local companies	Good local public relations (mention in programme, free tickets)
National Touring Arts	Commercial property developers, banks, building societies	Mention in programme, reaching “influential” <b>Financial Times</b> readers
Education	High Technology High Street Shops, banks	Interest in high quality of future school leavers and students Future employment of school leavers/good company image with parents
Disabilities	Major Companies, the public sector	Those with equal opportunities commitment
Environment	Construction and oil companies	Those with environmental policies
Housing	Building societies and insurance Companies located in inner-city areas	Business goals (improving the local housing stock) Responding to staff concern
Youth	Retail All national and local employers	Business goals (fashion, records etc) Interest in future recruitment, especially with the falling number of school leavers
Ethnic Minorities	Major and local employers, the public sector	Those with a commitment to equal opportunities or wishing to develop a policy
Women	Major and Local Companies, the public sector	Those with a commitment to equal opportunities; need to expand workforce

(Adapted with permission from ‘Getting the Best from Secondment’, an ARC handbook.)

Looking at the issue from the company's point of view can help you see links more easily. For example, let us look at where **Legal & General**, a major financial services company, focuses its community support. The main, national programme is clearly linked to areas of the firm's business:

- \* **life insurance.** Medical research and health education concerning life-threatening conditions (eg Cancer Research)
- \* **general insurance.** crime prevention (eg Crime Concern)
- \* **pensions.** Quality of life in retirement (eg Retired Senior Volunteer Programme)
- \* **investments.** Small business and enterprise (eg Women in Enterprise)
- \* **mortgages.** Housing.

The local programme is centred around the company's main offices, and preference is given to activities in which staff are involved.

Every community organisation has some benefit to offer some company, even if it's a campaigning organisation rather than a service-provider. For example, the staff of a magazine about healthier eating were unable to think of a company that might support them, as they are uniformly critical of the food industry – including the purveyors of "health foods" and vitamin supplements! Finally, someone pointed out that, if readers take the magazine's advice they would prepare all their food from scratch, which suggests that the manufacturers of kitchen equipment (such as food processors) might have an interest in supporting its work.

#### WHAT CAN YOU OFFER? – SUMMARY

- \* *Challenging problems and assignments; meaningful involvement and productive work*
- \* *Staff development or team building opportunities*
- \* *Links with the company's recruitment base or customer base*
- \* *Information about community needs and a perspective on how business can respond to those needs*
- \* *Opportunity for the company to identify with an issue of concern to its staff or market*
- \* *Information about sources of help/advice/counselling in the community that could be useful to staff and their families*
- \* *Expertise on equal opportunities; perspectives of minority communities etc*

Obviously such a careful, time-consuming search for links and benefits which you can offer a company is not essential **every** time you approach a company. But if you are seeking a substantial or long-lasting link with a company, you are more likely to succeed if you can show that your project affects the company's workforce and customers in some way.

#### (iii) Which companies have the skills you are looking for?

Don't just consider the major output of the company here. For example, a building society will obviously have personnel experienced in finance and property management – but it may also have staff who are specialist trainers or have graphic design skills.

#### (iv) In which companies do you have a personal contact?

**THE VALUE OF A PERSONAL CONTACT IS IMMENSE.** Your contact doesn't *have* to be a board member or managing director. At this stage, what you need is someone to whom you can put the question, "How can I best present this request to your company?"

#### (v) Which companies have been subject to internal changes that might make them particularly keen to build links with the community?

Local news such as centenaries, re-organisations, forthcoming redundancies, new companies moving to the area, local protests about company activities, planning permission applications, even new staff appointments – can all help decide who to approach. One fundraiser persuaded a newly-appointed personnel manager to 'adopt' her organisation by writing to him in these words: "Congratulations on your appointment. I understand how concerned you will be at the moment to build good employee relations. You might like to consider adopting a charity as a method of furthering good manager-staff relations..."

This kind of news can be gleaned from newspapers and from business magazines (look for them in the library reference section).

## Compiling Your List of Target Companies

You may be able to gather enough information to get started simply by sitting down with a couple of people who know your community well and working your way through the questions listed above. A sympathetic person from a company or the Chamber of Commerce may help you. Also, more and more Councils for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Bureaux have links with companies, and can give advice about "good prospects". If you are a branch of a major national voluntary organisation, make



sure you check your target list with head office first to avoid conflict or duplication. Remember to record all the information you get (on large index cards, if you do not run to an electronic database), particularly the names of contacts – and the names of the people who gave you the contact.

## Identifying The Person To Approach Within The Company

If you have ever experienced the frustration of phoning an organisation and being passed from department to department in search of someone who can deal with your problem, you'll know how vital it is to find out in advance the name and job title of the most appropriate person to contact. A standard letter will almost certainly end up in someone's bin. A letter to the wrong person – or to the person who was right last year but has now moved on – *may* get through to the right person. But, in view of the effort you have already expended in finding the right company, it is not worth taking the gamble; you want to be sure that your letter *does* get through. The problem is, community involvement is handled by different departments in different companies – though telephonists, receptionists and secretaries are valuable sources of up-to-date information and are usually pleased to help a telephone enquirer.

A recent (1991) Business in the Community survey discovered that support for employee volunteering is usually organised by either the

Human Resources or Personnel Department or by the Community Affairs Department. However, about a quarter of companies said a staff member in Public Affairs or Communications was responsible. In large companies secondment is often co-ordinated by a Community or Public Affairs Manager – but in smaller companies it may be the Personnel Manager. Development Assignments are sometimes the responsibility of the training department.

To be really sure who to approach, ask someone who knows the workings of the company you are interested in. Hence the crucial importance of a personal contact; a "tour guide" to how things are done in that particular company. *What* you are asking for has an effect on *who* you should approach. This chart is to help you find the right person. It consists of generalisations; to make absolutely sure, check with each company individually on the name and job title of the staff member who has the authority to respond to your request.

## Who To Approach

Existing volunteers

Employed supporters at any level in the company

Staff social clubs

Staff charity committees

Employee volunteer committees/ co-ordinators

Community Affairs/  
Public Affairs Director

The Managing Director/  
Chief Executive

The Branch Manager

Training Manager

Customer Services Manager

Pensions Manager

Personnel Manager

Welfare Officer (a new appointment in large organisations such as banks, responsibly for the welfare of female staff, creche provision etc)

## Kind Of Involvement

Access to community service funds,

Publicising your needs through internal channels, recruiting colleagues to help

Sale of fundraising goods, organising fundraising activities, establishing a 'supporters' or volunteers club

Donations, promoting volunteer opportunities to colleagues

Promoting appropriate volunteer opportunities, local projects which involve employees as volunteers

Best initial contact point for most things, including secondees, promoting volunteer opportunities to employees, organising volunteer projects, company-wide partnerships, finding a company representative to sit on your board

Anything which affects the whole company or demands the allocation of significant resources

Establishing local school or community group partnership, local business link schemes, free or discounted services, donation to local organisation, anything with a specifically local focus

Secondments that offer a clear and specific training benefit, projects offering team building opportunities

Involvement in projects that could increase staff sensitivity to needs of customers

Establishing retiree volunteer clubs, speaking on pre-retirement courses, inserting material in mailings to recently-retired staff

Projects that could improve employee relations or morale

Part-time female secondees for projects which will allow the secondees to ease transition back to paid work

If you are approaching a firm that has no-one whose job it is to respond to you, then you will have to do one of the following:

- \* ask existing supporters of yours who are employed there to recruit whatever support they can from special schemes, colleagues or clubs
- \* make your request simple and within the area of responsibility of the person you approach
- \* approach the person at the highest level you can reach, and expect a delay before you get a response.

## How Much Time Will That Person Have To Respond To My Approach?

Very little. A few large national companies employ a full-time member of staff to co-ordinate employee volunteering activities – but these people are usually responsible for starting and supporting projects in *all* the company's locations in the UK. Within any one workplace in your locality, therefore, the amount of staff time available to organise employee involvement is very small. In a volunteer programme, the work may be done by:

\* a co-ordinator who undertakes this work on a voluntary basis in addition to their paid job in the company

\* an appointee who, once again, carries out the work in addition to their normal duties

\* a volunteer committee.

Very occasionally, a company contracts out the work of running the programme to a local voluntary organisation (eg a Council

for Social Service or a Volunteer Bureau).

So although these organisers may be able to recruit their colleagues to take part in community activities, they are unlikely to have the time or the contacts to seek out appropriate projects. You can help them greatly by offering a ready-to-run project or set of on-going volunteer opportunities.

## Presenting Your Case Effectively

### Question 1: How Should I Make Contact?

Wherever possible, arrange a face-to-face meeting. If there are no personal contacts, you will need to rely on either a brief letter, followed by a telephone call to ensure a response, or on a telephone call confirmed later by letter.

#### Written Materials

Your letter should be short and clear (one side of A4) and with it you should send:

\* a copy of your annual report or a user-friendly summary of it

\* a description of the aims and activities of your organisation, quantified wherever possible (one side of A4)

\* a current financial statement

What else is needed depends upon what you are asking for. If you are asking for a secondee, you will need a full job description. If you are asking the company to distribute information about your need for volunteers to its employees, you will need a statement of the benefits of employee volunteering to all concerned and a sample newsletter insert. Whatever you are asking for, you need to make clear

- \* the benefits to all parties
- \* what it is you are asking them to do, and how you will help them do it
- \* your competence in the management of volunteers or secondees.

An example of a sample letter requesting a

secondee can be found in Section 5.7.

Project Fullemploy, an organisation which has had great success in involving secondees, distributes to companies a regular bulletin of secondment opportunities. The bulletin lists opportunities for instructors, business advisors, administrators, financial managers and others.

### Question 2: How Can I Make The Most Of A Face-To-Face Meeting?

The meeting is a chance to "sell" your organisation and the idea of employee community involvement. If your job requires you to ask for things frequently, you might consider taking a course in selling. For those not in that situation, here are some basic tips: \* Dress (and behave) in a professional manner. You want to encourage your contact to overcome any stereotype he or she may have of people in the community sector.

\* When selling anything, the salesperson should not emphasise the features of the product so much as *the benefits that product will bring to the customer.*

For example, who would you be most likely to buy a holiday from? The salesperson who took one look at you and said "I know just the holiday that would suit you." or the salesperson who asked you what you wanted from a holiday and then recommended one that met your requirements?



"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THIS IS THE WRONG APPROACH?"

\* You cannot assume that you know what is good for the company – even if you have done some preliminary research. It is common to assume that the primary – or only motivation – of a company is "publicity-seeking". But this is *not* always the case.

\* You may simply be asked a series of questions, in which case you should answer them as best you can. But if it proves possible to "steer" the conversation to some extent, you should ask questions about what benefits your company contact is seeking. In this way you will be able to discover if there is an overlap between the benefits you are looking for and the benefits that the company and its employees are seeking.

Sales staff are taught to give the customer "EARS". EARS stands for: Encourage the customer to talk, to feel good, Ask questions, Reflect back the customer's thoughts and feelings, Summarise the customer's thoughts and mood.

\* Asking about what the company would like out of the partnership serves two purposes. It is necessary for an effective "sell". It also relieves the pressure on you to make a speech. It is much easier to describe your proposal, and the benefits it offers the company, as part of a normal, two-way conversation.

\* At the beginning of the interview, get clarification on how much time your contact has got and what you both want to cover. Thank them for giving you their time.

\* Tell your contact at the start that you are *not*

asking for a donation (companies are always being asked for money).

\* Promote your organisation first and employee involvement as a method of helping it second. Talk about the people (or the countryside or the animals) first. This is more appealing than the mechanics of employee involvement.

\* Be concise. Practise your presentation with a friend, a colleague or a tape recorder beforehand. Be prepared for questions like "What does your organisation do?" and "Who funds you?". Emphasise your organisation's attractive points: it's local; it makes efficient use of its resources; it gives excellent support to

volunteers; some of the company's employees are already involved. Point out any link between your work and the company's.

\* Don't try to sell volunteering in general. Give a few examples of how volunteers are involved in your organisation. Be as concrete as possible.

\* If you can learn something about the company's business beforehand, that's excellent. If not, there's nothing wrong with being ignorant – providing you admit your ignorance and ask to be told about the company's operations. Try saying "Can I just confirm that the information I have about your company is correct?"

*Community Affairs staff from BP, one of the worlds biggest companies, express irritation at the number of people who assume that BP consists only of a chain of petrol stations*

\* If you cannot provide the benefit the company is seeking, or if you don't want to, you should say so politely. You will not be able to work with every company.

\* Before you leave, arrange some form of follow-up. If, for example, they say "I'd like to think about it" you could reply "Of course. Perhaps I should ring you in a week or so? What day would be best for you?"

\* Always send a Thank You note acknowledging the time they spent with you.

\* If the company representative says No, ask "Well, what would I need to do to be able to get what I'm asking for?". They may tell you – in which case you are on the way to a Yes.

# Managing Employee Community Involvement

Managing employees well is much the same as managing other kinds of volunteer, although there are a few extras to consider. And though secondees need more formal management (see the summary of good practice in secondment in Section 5.5) the basic principles of how to treat them are the same.

*This Section is not meant to constitute a guide to volunteer management in general. (See Section 5.3 for books and pamphlets on this topic). It describes those ways in which you may need to add to or adapt your general good practices to make them more appropriate for employee volunteers or secondees.*

Of course, all volunteers deserve excellent treatment. But, there are additional reasons for ensuring that volunteers recruited through an intermediary structure are treated well. Good management of "their" people is of tremendous importance to company staff. If you want to maintain cordial relations with them in order to obtain more people or other forms of help in the future, you will have to make sure that your management of volunteers is as supportive as you can make it. This will mean:



"MARVELLOUS ISN'T IT? I VOLUNTEER TO HELP THE SCHOOL RUN IT'S COMPUTER AND THEY GIVE ME DETENTION FOR NOT WEARING A TIE".

## 1. Thinking Ahead

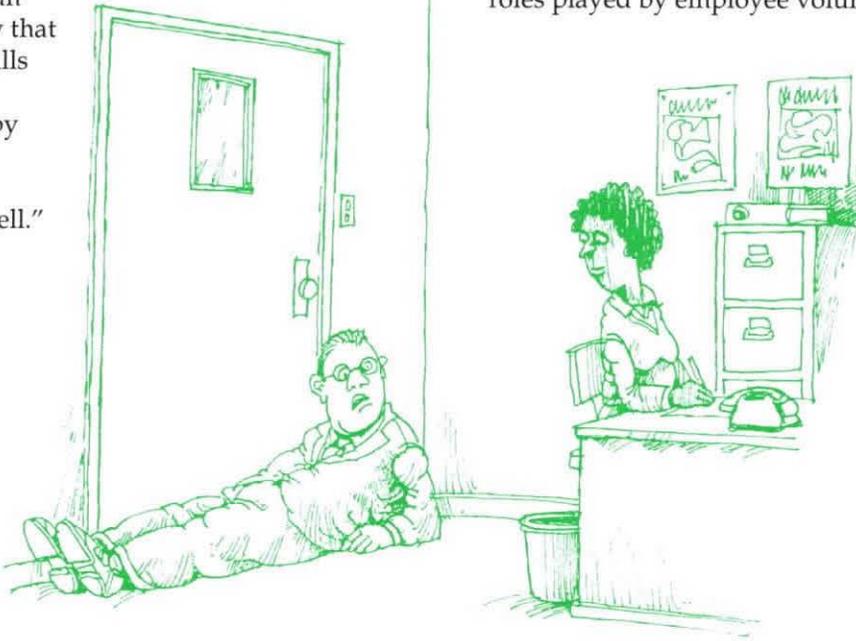
Ensure that there is a clearly-defined and worth-while job to do. Secondees and professional volunteer advisers, in particular, will expect a formal briefing and clear goals. You don't have to be able to tell them how to reach those goals – that can be part of the job. But vague requests like "we need advice on marketing and management" will not produce helpful results. Secondees (and some volunteers) need job descriptions, person specifications, procedures for performance appraisal and established reporting channels.

Project Fullemploy, an organisation providing training for unemployed people with disadvantages, has had great success in recruiting secondees. One of the reasons for their success is that:

*"We have a carefully managed programme. We prepare an assignment for the secondees which meets the needs of the company seconding them as well as our own needs."*  
Victoria Secretan, lately, Company Relations Manager, Fullemploy

Other volunteer job designs can be simpler and less structured but they still need careful thought. The essential characteristics of a volunteer job were summed up by Kerry Ken Allen, then President of 'Volunteer', (the US national resource agency on volunteering), in the following words:

"Volunteers are motivated by jobs that challenge them, by jobs that they help to create; by jobs that meet some of their own needs; by jobs that offer them an opportunity to meet a real need in an effective way that uses their skills and energy creatively – by jobs that are worth doing and doing well."



"I'M SURE IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE DRAUGHTS OUT BUT I WAS HOPING YOU'D GIVE ME SOMETHING MORE INTERESTING TO DO."

This dictum applies just as much to volunteers engaged in fundraising as it does to ones undertaking other roles. Scope for development (to use initiative in organising, for example) and for some direct involvement with the recipients of their fundraising efforts may help to motivate such volunteers.

Take a look at your volunteer agreements and job descriptions and review them in the light of what may be new volunteer roles. (See Section 2, pages 29-32 for a discussion of likely new roles played by employee volunteers)

## 2. Taking Time To Find A Fit Between What They Offer And What You Want

The kind of work that groups of employee volunteers would like to do may differ from the voluntary opportunities you are used to offering.

The **Body Shop** has met this problem; it allows its staff approximately half a day per month paid time off work to participate as groups in community projects. Now half a day per month for the entire workforce in perpetuity is a generous offer (think about the effects of

bringing in such a system in your organisation.) Even so, it does not suit all community organisations. Some of them, for example, want volunteers who are available at least weekly and during the day – and for whom rotas or group projects are unsuitable.

The experience of The Body Shop so far shows that many organisations who are offered their volunteer support find it very valuable.

*"The input of (The Body Shop volunteers) gave us all a boost and made such a difference to the people involved and to the staff morale".*  
Valerie Sharp of West Sussex Social Services

Some organisations, however, are bemused by the offer, but feel it impolite to reject it. The result is that the employees visit the hospice or other institution and find that there is nothing for them to do. Very occasionally a project has had to be discontinued because the people being visited were upset by the lack of personal continuity. Groups who have benefited from secondment say it is important to be clear about what needs to be done and to have the self-confidence to refuse an inappropriate offer of help. Prospective secondees should *always* be interviewed.



*"I'M SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, BUT OUR VOLUNTEER WORK IN THE HOSPITAL DOESN'T INCLUDE HELPING THE SURGEON TO OPERATE."*

A word of warning before turning down employee involvement because it does not fit exactly with what you are looking for – or what you usually get. It could be that, while the employees are not available at the times you want or as regularly as you want, there is something else useful they could do. Nadine Casey, until recently a volunteer organiser with Barnardo's, describes her visit to a company to recruit employee volunteers:

"I went along with the usual long list of volunteers I would be keen to recruit: child care

volunteers, drivers, befrienders....As we talked I realised that this type of volunteering was unlikely to be popular within this particular company...We talked of other possibilities: special events; parties and presents for Christmas; talking to pre-retirement groups about developing the child/grandparent relationship; gaining some work experience places for some of our teenagers; organising visits so that employees could see the varied work done by our organisation; helping to break down barriers"

*"I found adaptability and creative thinking were important."*

If you have to turn down an offer of help from a company, do it in as encouraging a way as you can. It may be their first attempt at supporting employee involvement, and they will need an enthusiastic response. Thank them for their time and interest. Tell them you think what they are trying to do is very valuable. If possible, refer them to another group better able to use what they are offering. It will also help smooth this matching process if, when advertising your needs for volunteer help in a company newsletter, you include a line about any selection procedures you operate. For some volunteer roles (eg counselling) selection is essential and it is important that this does not come as a surprise to prospective volunteers.

### 3. Being There To Welcome The Employees When They Arrive

When the employees arrive for the first time, take the time to show them around. Introduce them to the person they should contact in future if they have any questions or suggestions (if this person is not yourself). Introduce them to the other people they will be involved with. If you can, show them everything. Even if the employee volunteer has come to advise you on your computer system,

he or she will appreciate meeting the people, and seeing the work, that the system will benefit.

Explain anything they need to know. This is especially important if the employee is there as a professional adviser or management committee member. Avoid doing this when you are the only staff person in the building and the phone is ringing non-stop.

### 4. Offering Training And Support If Needed

Just because employee volunteers may come in groups or with the company "stamp" on them, it doesn't necessarily mean that they come with their own system of volunteer support and training, in the way that, say, Red Cross volunteers in a hospital do. Your volunteer or secondee may well bring particular skills, but they are unlikely to have experience of your kind of work. Thus they may be unsure and in need welcome and guidance.

*"Our staff are mainly young – aged 18 to the early 20s. Many have never been volunteers before. They work in all kinds of settings, some very stressful such as in hospices, and over 50% of them receive no training or support at all. What can we do about this?"*  
The Body Shop

In one instance, an organisation working with a group of employee volunteers didn't tell them of the existence of their training course because they thought it would be impolite to do so! They felt it would imply that the company was

not totally competent, and that to expect the employees to attend a training course might turn them off.

*"We have had to step up the amount of training for the volunteer lawyers because of the demand from them. They want to do a good job and are keen to absorb information that will help them do it"*  
Michelle Rogers, Lawyers in the Community

If you involve a large number of volunteers from one company, you might like to consider putting on a special training course for them on the company premises, or revising the schedule of a course to make it more convenient. Age Concern in Swindon organised a course that was spread over several weeks and took place during lunch-times.

It is important to clarify with the company in advance who will be responsible for any support, supervision and training so that the employees do not fall between two stools.

### 5. Taking Time To Learn From Them

If your secondee or volunteer is there to provide a professional service or give specialist advice, you will get more out of the placement if you enable them to explain what

they are doing; make sure that all relevant staff have time to listen to the explanation. Placements are an opportunity for on-the-job training.

## 6. Negotiating Special Company Projects

Employees often like working in teams, and they are particularly keen on special projects just for them. For example, a group of employees may "adopt" a stretch of woodland and look after it, or they may spend a Saturday redecorating a hostel.



*Body Shop staff building a fence at Lodge Copse Conservation Club*

These kinds of project are as unfamiliar to most companies as they are to most community organisations. As a result, companies may not realise that volunteers do not come completely

free; they cost money to train, supervise and equip. You must think about whether you have the resources to accommodate a company's offer, even if it is to carry out sorely-needed work; for example, the redecoration of your premises would require you to provide materials and be present for part of the weekend. If you lack the resources needed, you may only be able to accept volunteers to work in projects you already have in operation. When setting up a new group volunteer project for a company, you will need to consider:

- \* who will pay for any materials needed
- \* who will pay any expenses incurred by the volunteers (or are they expected to pay their own)
- \* who will provide insurance cover for the volunteers
- \* who will pay for the training and supervision (if needed) of the volunteers.

Finally, as with a relationship with the Local Authority or a funder, it is important to ensure that you do not lose sight of your own direction and priorities in an attempt to respond to an outside offer, however attractive.

## 7. Saying "Thank You"

You should thank the volunteers or secondees personally. You may also like to thank the company member of staff who helped you recruit the volunteers. If you hold a recognition event for volunteers (for example, a party during UK Volunteers Week), in addition to the volunteers invite the person who helped you get them. And on top of that, if the company made a major contribution to your project, you should think about ways you can recognise that contribution publicly; for example, by mentioning them in a press release or presenting them with a certificate.

Three things to note about saying Thank You.

\* It's an opportunity to give information about your work and communicate further needs; see the letter in the box opposite.

*"May I congratulate and thank all your staff, especially Alan Homer, for the tremendous amount of money raised during the last six months by distributing our teddy tie tacks...Acorns is funded totally by voluntary donations and fundraising. To operate our services for the children and parents who need our help...we will have to raise in excess of £900,000 in 1991...Whilst I appreciate that there are many other good causes, both locally and nationally, which your staff support, I hope that they will continue to support Acorns for many years to come...Many thanks to you all."*  
*Letter from John Barnes, Chairman, Friends of Acorns Children's Hospice quoted in Sainsbury's staff newsletter*

\* To keep an employee involvement programme going, the company member of staff responsible needs to prove to their boss that what they are doing is needed and valued.

A note to that boss or a letter to the company's staff magazine is a good way of doing this.

\* It is an essential part of follow up, of maintaining a relationship. To get more in future, you must say Thank You now. If all this sounds like hard work, buy a stock of

Thank You notes. Scribbling a couple of lines on a card is much less trouble than writing a letter. Writing a proper letter is better, but a note is better than nothing. Make it an automatic reflex to write a Thank You letter or note immediately after any event involving company support.

## 8. Providing Feedback To The Company

Companies need to assess whether employee involvement programmes are worthwhile. The programme organiser must collect evidence, such as the number of employees participating, in order to demonstrate to the boss that the programme is a success. No evidence may mean no budget in the future. Companies also need to know of any problems, so that they can avoid them next time around.

volunteers have performed may cause you some anxiety.

The best way of handling this is to ask the volunteers whether – and how – they would like you to provide feedback to the company. Some may prefer to pass the information on themselves, or have some other method they prefer. In practice few volunteers object to positive feedback being given to their employer,

but occasionally employees may not want the company told anything at all about their volunteer work. If so, you should obviously respect their privacy; but you should also

point out to them that the more information the company gets, the more likely it is to continue to support the project. It may be acceptable to the volunteers for you to give feedback about such things as the number of volunteers recruited through the company, the number of hours worked, what they accomplished and what problems, if any, arose as long as no names are

mentioned. (Ideally, the nature and method of giving feedback will be agreed with the company and the individuals concerned before the project begins.)

A company that organises a special volunteer project is usually able to see the results. But if the company's contribution is to distribute



"WHEN YOU AGREED TO SEND A SECONDEE WE WERE EXPECTING ONE OF THE ZOO EMPLOYEES"

None of this will cause you difficulties if you are providing feedback about a secondee. Regular appraisal is part of most secondees' contracts; it ensures that what they have learned is recognised when they return to their mainstream career. But the prospect of reporting back to employers on how a

information about your needs to its employees, who then make their own way to your agency, the company has no way of knowing how many employees respond and whether it is worth continuing to distribute the information. To help the company with this, you should ask new volunteers where they heard about you,

and keep a running count of the numbers coming from that company.

However it is done, you must tell the company that it has helped you. If they are unaware that what they are doing is making a difference to somebody, they may not continue.

## 9. Keeping In Touch And Asking For More

Working with the business sector needs to be seen as a long-term endeavour. With most companies, *support comes with familiarity* – which means that you will get more out of the relationship if you take the trouble to make it a long-term one. Here are a few simple ways of maintaining contact.

- \* send up-dates on how your work is going; a copy of your annual report plus information about the help you still need
- \* invite the employees back, perhaps on a special occasion such as an open day; or invite them to any event you organise to celebrate UK Volunteers Week
- \* offer to visit the company to speak about how your work is going
- \* acknowledge the company help in your annual report. Send copies of all such acknowledgements, (especially any press coverage gained) to the company
- \* ask a volunteer or secondee to join the management committee
- \* ask employees to organise a collection of goods – for example, clothes, food, play

materials – for you on company premises

- \* ask employees to sell your trading goods from your catalogue
- \* ask employees to promote Payroll Giving on your behalf to colleagues
- \* ask for more of the same kind of help or include them in general recruitment campaigns
- \* ask the employees if they can apply to the community service fund (if there is one) for a grant for you or if they have access to other forms of help
- \* ask employees for information on how requests for sponsorship are handled in their organisation.

If people are giving you their time and energy they are likely to care enough to help you in other ways if they can. Remember that it's not just money that companies can donate: products, surplus equipment, facilities and services are other possibilities. A fuller list is provided in Section 5.6

Most importantly, a satisfied employee volunteer or secondee is the best recruiter of co-workers, family and friends.

# 4

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## 'How-To' Supplement For Intermediary Organisations

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"Successful partnership depends on frank recognition by each side of what the other is after and where a deal can be done. That, of course, depends on sitting down and talking. Organising this is one of the places where strong intermediaries on both sides come in."

Michael Fogarty, co-author '**Profitable Partnerships**', writing in NCVO News, June 1991

At a local level, there is a shortage of specialised agencies (such as **Action Resource Centre**, **Business in the Community** and **Groundwork**) whose purpose is to build links between business and organisations working in the community. A number of Local Development Agencies – such as **Councils**

**for Voluntary Service, Volunteer Bureaux** and **TECs** – have stepped in to fill the gap. This section is written for other intermediary agencies planning to follow their example. It is meant to be read in conjunction with the rest of the handbook and not on its own.

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## Before You Start

The most important message in this handbook is – plan ahead. This is even more important for agencies that wish to establish programmes to benefit a variety of companies, employees and

non profit organisations in their area. There are two things you need to understand before you start.

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## 1. What Is Involved For A Company In Establishing An In-House Employee Involvement Programme

Imagine for a moment that you are the managing director of a local company which installs and maintains central heating systems. You have 100 employees, mostly men, on your payroll. You are interested in helping your local community and respond positively when approached by a Local Development Agency with a proposal to help you 'build links' of some kind. But what can you do and how will you do it? Let's take a look at the options open to you and how you might feel about them:

a) **Money.** This is straightforward. Your profit margins are not high so you haven't a great deal of it, but the Board has set aside a certain amount per year for 'charitable causes'. So it is within your power to say 'yes' or 'no' to a request.

b) **Donated products or services.** Perhaps the Local Development Agency is able to link you with a hospice whose central heating system needs renovating. You may prefer this option to giving money as the service will cost you less to provide than its equivalent value in cash terms on the open market. And here again, life is

straightforward. You merely instruct your staff to do the job in the usual way and then write off the cost of wages and materials as a charitable donation. It is important to realise that there is no employee volunteering or secondment involved in this transaction. You may not be able to afford to make many of these in-kind donations but, it is within your authority to do so if requested.

c) **Communicating needs for volunteer help to your employees.** The Volunteer Bureau is producing a regularly updated newsletter with opportunities designed to appeal to people in full time work. They are asking you to photocopy and distribute it to each of your staff at team briefings. They also want you to distribute information to staff approaching retirement and to recent pensioners. This is certainly possible and it isn't an expensive option, so you could afford to do it regularly. If it is a success it could involve far more people in helping community groups than the donated services. However, it makes you anxious. You do not want to upset relations

with your employees. Will they think you are interfering where you have no business to, or will they see it as a service to them and their community? You may need some persuading to consider this and may wish to know about other firms where it has worked before you will try it yourself.

d) **Seconding a member of staff** for a part-time assignment for three months. This is an expensive option, especially for such a small firm. However, the current recession has meant a reduction of orders and less work for your staff. There is one engineer in particular whom you want to keep but who is becoming demoralised through boredom. The project assignment is one that would develop his skills. Even so, you cannot say 'yes' to the request straight away. You have to consult with the prospective secondee. He may be worried that the secondment is the first step towards redundancy. If the secondment is to go ahead, he will need to see it as part of his career development and for this to happen you need to be absolutely sure that the secondment will be managed professionally.

e) **'Twinning'** with a home for adults with learning disabilities, a school, a community centre or other local institution. The Local Development Agency has developed a programme to promote longer-term links between firms and community groups and has asked you to participate. The twinning runs for an initial period of six months and then can be

renewed if all goes well on both sides. The company (or department of a large company) is asked to concentrate its in-kind giving and employee involvement on the one agency for that period. Ideas for what can be achieved include holding fundraising events, decorating or renovating premises, organising entertainments and providing work experience placements.

Well, it's an interesting idea but again you cannot say 'yes' at once. Many of the projects seem to involve employees and their spare time. This means you have to ask them and you are not sure how best to do this. Who is going to decide which agency to twin with? Who is going to organise the projects, who is going to be the liaison person and how much of their paid work time will it take? You will have to bring this up at the Board meeting. Can the Local Development Agency project worker come along and answer the Board members' questions? Is there a short clear brochure you can read about it?

f) Establishing an **employee involvement club or team**. The Local Development Agency worker says that there are several other companies in your town where enthusiastic employees have formed a committee. They organise volunteer projects and recruit their colleagues to work in them. Some have their own newsletter. The company provides support in cash and in kind but the projects themselves take place in the employees' own time. They get lots of benefits. Why not you?

On the plus side, it isn't an expensive option and you did read something about the other companies' achievements in the paper recently. However, it does make you very nervous. The other companies' employees may be enthusiastic but maybe yours won't be. Employee relations have already been damaged by some enforced early retirements. Your employees already organise fundraising events from time to time. How can you introduce this new idea without it looking like management trying to hijack the employees' own initiatives? How will you get started? The Local Development Agency worker says that to make it work management needs to commit

some resources, a little staff time and that you need support at Board level. You are interested but you are going to need time, help from the Local Development Agency worker and information from the companies who have



"NO, NO, YOU CAN'T TAKE HIM.  
WE HAVEN'T ASKED HIM YET."

already taken the plunge.

This list by no means covers all the options in which a promoter of such a programme might attempt to interest a company. They could, for example, be interested in recruiting employees for a scheme to provide volunteer professional assistance to community groups. But what I hope it makes clear is that options which involve recruiting employees as volunteers or

secondes cannot be implemented as quick, straightforward responses to outside requests. Establishing such programmes takes time, resources, support from the top of the company, peer group support and often external help as well. If you plan to make them part of your programme you will have to build the programme in such a way that will make these factors possible.

## 2. Beware The Great Breakfast Seminar Trap

There is nothing wrong with breakfast seminars. They are a great way of bringing together representatives of business and non profit organisations and of launching or promoting a partnership programme. But they are not a partnership programme in themselves. If you do not know how your programme is going to operate after the seminar is over, what services you will provide to companies, who is going to do the work and how you are going to resource it, then you are not ready to organise a launch event. You cannot rely for follow-up

work upon a secondees springing from the empty coffee cups at the end of the morning. The danger of breakfast seminars is that people become so excited by the prospect, and so involved in the details of organising them, that they overlook the objectives of the exercise. Breakfast seminars are a means not an end. Company staff who attend them are interested in 'helping the local community'. There needs to be in place a mechanism to enable them to do so.

## Steps To Success

### 1. Build Support

Recruit representatives of sympathetic companies and business organisations (such as a Community Trust, Rotary Club or Chamber of Commerce) on to your management committee.

Alternatively, form an advisory or steering group for your Private Sector Partnership Project. You need these people for their ideas and their reactions to your ideas. You also need them for their contacts. Ideally they will be at a senior level within their own companies and will pilot your programme in their companies. Following that they will 'sell' the programme to their colleagues in their networks and write testimonial letters for you to include in your approach package to other companies.



## 2. Develop Services

Clarify with this committee and your management committee (if the two are different) the objectives of your programme, exactly what services you will offer companies, how the programme will be staffed and

resourced and what the implementational plan will be. Will you be reactive or pro-active in promoting your services? The box below contains a list of possible services.

### POSSIBLE SERVICES AN INTERMEDIARY CAN OFFER A COMPANY

- \* Provide a clearinghouse for materials, equipment and services which companies donate
- \* Develop "volunteer opportunity" columns for in-house company magazines. (You provide the copy written with the needs and time constraints of their staff in mind. They print and distribute it.)
- \* Develop special events or group projects in which employees can participate
- \* Match companies or company departments with schools, community centres, homes or other institutions for 'twinning'
- \* Develop a "wish book" of the volunteer and non-cash resource needs of non profit agencies which can be publicised within individual companies (A sample page from a "wish book" is provided in Section 5.8)

- \* Help to start and provide on-going support to employee volunteer clubs/committees/ teams both for current and retired employees
- \* Provide information on community services for employees who might need to use them
- \* Make presentations about volunteer opportunities on pre-retirement courses or at lunchtime seminars
- \* Conduct needs assessment interviews with agencies and develop clear project descriptions to send to companies running management assistance schemes
- \* Conduct seminars orienting prospective volunteers to the voluntary sector (particularly useful for volunteers who are going to give management assistance or sit on management committees)
- \* Conduct needs assessment questionnaires and advise companies on making effective financial contributions

## 3. Involve Other Interested Agencies

Cement alliances. To develop the best possible programme for your community you will need to work with other organisations with an interest in this area. Ones to consider include Business in the Community which has regional staff, Action Resource Centre, and the TEC. A

decision to go it alone is likely to lose you credibility as well as ideas and contacts. Another valuable recruit is a representative from the local newspaper, television or radio station.

## 4. Cost The Services You Plan To Offer

Consider staff or volunteer time needed, space and transport if you plan to run a clearinghouse of donated equipment, administrative support, promotional materials. Will you need to raise more resources? Are you hoping for a secondee to set up your programme? If so, now is the time to draw up their job description and approach companies with your proposal. "Development work with less committed firms...is an enormously time-consuming job because companies have to be talked through

*The Westminster Business Links Scheme runs on a budget of £500 per annum. (This covers stationery, certificates, publicity leaflets and newsletters but not postage. Sponsorship is raised separately for events such as receptions.) Staff time is estimated at one day per week plus an extra day a week of volunteer time.*

individually and at length" Michael Fogarty, co-author 'Profitable Partnerships' in NCVO News June 1991

## 5. Prepare Written Materials

You will need a leaflet or brochure outlining the services you offer and the benefits to business,

employees and the community. See Section 3, page 50 for other materials to have ready.

## 6. Research Companies

Decide upon the number of companies you are able to approach initially. Draw up a list of

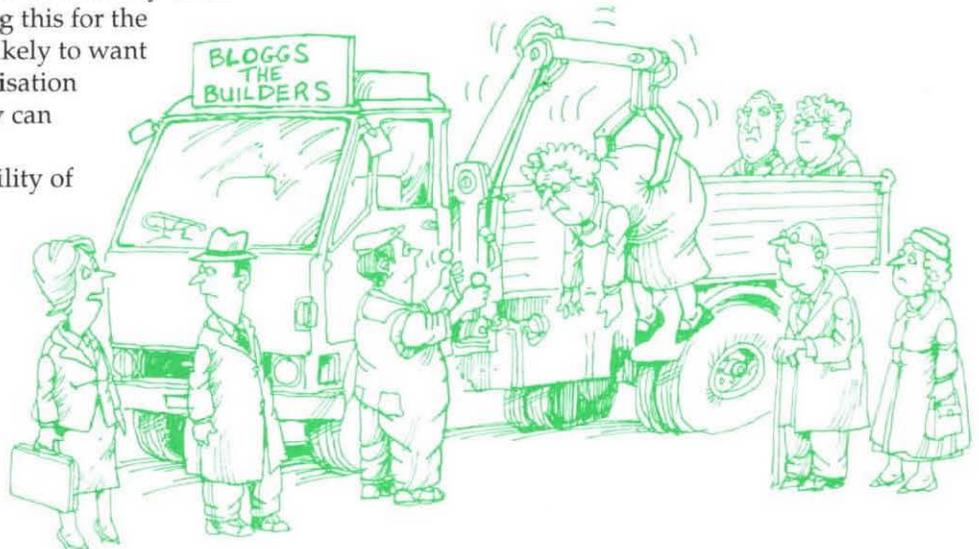
"best bets" using the information given earlier in Section 3.

## 7. Research Community Organisations

Develop a "best initial prospects" list of community organisations with whom you can link your foundation group of companies. Criteria to consider in developing this initial list may include

- \* good management of volunteers or secondees
- \* high visibility in the community (if the companies are trying this for the first time, staff are likely to want to work in an organisation whose purpose they can understand)
- \* variety and suitability of volunteer tasks
- \* variety of focus areas eg include environmental and arts organisations and schools as well as health and welfare agencies.

Gather together a file of descriptions of these organisations and their needs. You will need this to show to company representatives in order to interest them in participating in your programme.



"WHEN YOU OFFERED TO HELP WITH OUR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SCHEME, MR BLOGGS, WE DIDN'T REALIZE THIS WAS WHAT YOU HAD IN MIND"

## 8. Getting Started

When you approach your chosen companies, it is a good idea to keep your initial proposals simple. Even if you have ambitious long-term plans, you might like to start by suggesting that they participate in just one project. It is always much harder to interest someone in "volunteering" or "employee involvement" in the abstract than in one concrete project. If that project is a success, you might then raise the question of building an on-going structure (for example, appointing a part-time community liaison person or establishing an employee committee).

Operating Private Sector Partnerships Programmes can be time consuming. Integrating companies into projects you already run is one way of reducing the pressure.

There are two popular routes to starting up, both of which avoid the risk of organising a high profile and work-intensive launch event. These are starting with a 'Challenge' project and starting with a Christmas Tree project.

### Challenges

**Exeter Council for Voluntary Service & Volunteer Bureau** already run schemes linking business and community groups – a Gifts-in-Kind Scheme, Voluntary Sector Awareness days ('Exeter – Who Cares?') and a service advising donors on local needs ('Charity Begins at Home'). As the first step in extending these to include employee involvement, they have decided to organise a small number of 'challenge' projects with local companies. The projects are based on the Challenge Aneka format – something with which the employees are already familiar. The project is billed as a pilot called the 'Challenge Exeter Project', thus giving the first companies the satisfaction of feeling that they are pioneers in a discrete, well-managed project. It also gives the Volunteer Bureau the security of knowing that the project is manageable; it doesn't involve them in an open-ended commitment to provide brokerage services to a large range of businesses and organisations. The projects are not planned to run concurrently, so the Bureau's initial commitment is to develop one project and interest one company in it. The first project planned involves a local contractor refurbishing the building of an HIV and Aids organisation which is moving premises. The challenge is to get the building ready in the space of a weekend.

As it is an initial project, the Bureau plan to seek as much publicity as possible. This plan offers the employees excitement and the ability to make a visible difference to their community. The company is offered a team building opportunity and some substantial local publicity and recognition (they will be invited along to the opening of the new premises attended by the Mayor). The Volunteer Bureau will then follow up on the enthusiasm generated, by giving a talk exploring the possibilities for on-going involvement. One of the possibilities to be offered is a 'twinning' with the organisation helped in the Challenge. The publicity will also be used to inform other companies and interest them in the idea.

### Christmas Trees

**Westminster Volunteer Bureau**, like Exeter, wish to extend their existing Business Links Scheme to include employee involvement. They have developed a pilot scheme which involves approaches to four companies only. The plan is to develop a range of one-off individual and group opportunities which can be completed between late November and Christmas. These will be offered to employees in the four companies, written on cards hung on special Christmas trees. Again, they are making use of a proven and appealing technique to raise the initial interest. They are also making sure that the number of companies and community organisations involved in the pilot does not overstretch the Volunteer Bureau's resources. The schedule for the plan (and the follow up) is provided in Section 5.9.



Volunteers from Allied Dunbar's Finance Division undertaking a 'Challenge' – building a raised garden at a residential home for elderly people.

# Good Practice And Other Issues

There are a number of issues which have arisen when intermediaries (particularly Volunteer Bureaux) have developed programmes to stimulate employee community involvement.

These are in addition to the issues discussed in 'Managing Employee Involvement' in Section 3. You may wish to consider your feelings and opinions about these before you start.

## 1. Who Are Your Customers? Who Does Your Organisation Exist To Serve?

In many ways Volunteer Bureaux are 'naturals' to help companies to develop employee involvement. You have the opportunity to advise and consult with both parties, as do other intermediary agencies. But you are the only organisation whose focus is the volunteer. Creating new ways for those in employment to be involved in the community as volunteers is then a goal which might fit with your mission. However, you may feel that the emphasis of your work should not be providing opportunities for prospective volunteers but instead providing volunteers to fill the outstanding and existing needs of community groups. If this is the case, you may not choose to spend your resources developing group projects or assignments for professional advisors.

*"It's not my job to provide projects for companies. It's my job to find the volunteers needed by the groups the Volunteer Bureau exists to serve."*  
A Volunteer Bureau Organiser

Of course, the ideal is to do both things at the same time. But if you are being asked to develop something new (eg a group opportunity) for an organisation which you are not used to thinking of as a legitimate 'client' (eg a company), it is easy to dismiss the whole idea out of hand. After all, developing new projects and serving new clients means more work and hard choices about the use of limited resources.

## 2. Who Is 'The Community' And Is Your Definition The Same As The Companies You Are Working With?

Companies, and employees, rarely differentiate between voluntary and statutory agencies. If they are interested in working with adults with special needs, for example, it may be of no importance to them if the home they link with is run by Social Services or by a voluntary agency. But it may matter to you. Councils for Voluntary Service are primarily interested in helping their member voluntary organisations.

Volunteer Bureaux may only be interested in helping certain types of groups, especially if their funding is provided largely by Social Services. Neither of these intermediaries is usually interested in helping schools, struggling small businesses or even community businesses, whereas education and enterprise are often high on the list of a company's social priorities.

### 3. What Geographical Area Do You Serve?

If there are several Volunteer Bureaux or Councils for Voluntary Service in your city or area, it is almost certain that the particular geographical area you serve will not coincide exactly with the area in which the employees of

your local companies live. You may need to co-operate with neighbouring organisations. Alternatively, you may choose to establish a project on a company site.

### 4. Selection Versus Referral

Most companies which distribute news-sheets of volunteer opportunities do not operate an internal Volunteer Bureau. What they do is print a series of volunteer job advertisements, giving the contact information of the community agency which needs the volunteer. The volunteer then goes direct to that agency and any interviewing is done by them. Very few companies (BP in Scotland is one) pass volunteers on to a Volunteer Bureau where they receive the "full treatment" ie a general interview to discover which of the full range of possibilities would best suit them. In short, companies act as information and referral services. The language of employee volunteering is "referral", "information" and "volunteer opportunity" and not "selection and placement".

This may cause concern to Volunteer Bureau organisers who feel that the employees are being short-changed unless they do receive the full service. But do they want the full service? Sometimes the answer is an obvious 'no'. Employees volunteering for a one-off group project are hardly going to look kindly on an interview which takes almost as long as the volunteer task itself. Sometimes it may be a 'yes'. You may need to consider whether you are prepared to provide those people who want it with a full map and those who don't with just the one sign post. Perhaps volunteer opportunity newsletters could provide referral information for most people but offer a full diagnostic service for those who want it.

### 5. Contracts

Occasionally a company will contract with the staff of a Volunteer Bureau, Council for Voluntary Service or Council for Social Service to provide services to run its employee volunteering programme. For example, in Camberley and Linlithgow, Sun Microsystems pays for 12 hours per month of CVS staff time. For that, the company gets four special group projects per year, a newsletter of volunteer

opportunities and brokerage for employees who wish to volunteer as individuals. Such arrangements only happen where the company is committed internally to developing an employee volunteering programme. They do not make a good basis for an initial negotiation with a company with no previous interest in employee involvement.

# 5

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## Summary And Extra Resources

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1. Summary
2. Useful Contacts
3. Useful Publications
4. Summary of Good Practice in Employee Volunteering
5. Summary of Good Practice in Secondment
6. List of Resources which may be obtained from Employers
7. Sample Letter requesting a Secondee
8. Example of pages from a "Wish Book"
9. Example of a Development Plan for an Employee Volunteering Pilot run by an Intermediary Agency.

# 1. Summary

1. Corporate giving of all kinds is a minor source of support for the non profit sector compared with support from the statutory sector and the general public. However, it can be a useful extra. In particular it can provide scarce skills and the leverage to obtain resources from other sectors.

*“Minor” means between £1 – 2 billion a year in cash, kind and staff time.*

2. New forms of corporate community investment are emerging. One important change is a growing emphasis on employee involvement. While still in its early stages, the emphasis on employee involvement is already embedded in the thinking and policies of leading companies and is here to stay.

3. The emphasis on employee involvement is not simply a result of the recession (“We want to contribute but our budgets are shrinking”).

It is also the result of the discovery by those companies with the greatest commitment to, and experience of community activities, that their contributions are much more effective if people and skills are added to money.

4. Companies support employee involvement by giving information about community needs to their employees; by organising special projects; by making money or contributions in-kind available to organisations in which their employees are involved; by seconding staff to community organisations, sometimes as part of their staff development strategy.

5. Employee involvement works well when the projects bring benefits to all the parties involved – the employees, the community and the company.

6. To benefit, community organisations should  
\* find out where their supporters work and ask them to stimulate company involvement on their behalf

\* present projects for support which allow corporate contributions of people as planners, advisers and mainstream volunteers as well as financial contributions

\* design fundraising projects which involve employees in creative ways as project organisers or as hands-on-doers whose useful activities are also sponsored to raise money

\* wherever possible turn the need for money into the need for people plus a smaller amount

of money. Ask employers to find the people for them

\* use employee involvement as a ‘hook’ to stimulate company financial contributions.

7. Certain ‘boundary-spanning’ organisations which work intensively with companies have been very successful in recruiting large numbers of secondees and volunteers from them. These organisations have been in the areas of enterprise, education and the environment. However, increasingly their example is being followed successfully by organisations in the health and welfare field which have not traditionally worked in this way.

8. Successful methods of involving employees are often different from more usual ways of involving volunteers in general. They consist of creative ways of linking particular needs and resources.

9. Company-owned employee involvement programmes are usually pro-active rather than reactive. That is, the employees search for projects which suit what they have to give. Establishing a programme within a company involves support at the top of the company; internal motivation; a budget and some staff time; time to set up.

10. Community organisations will want to make employee involvement part of their strategy for approaching and working with companies which

a) have employee involvement programmes

b) are interested in developing such programmes.

It is worth asking any company you approach which has community investment activities if employee involvement is a concern for them. It is not recommended that organisations persist in approaching companies for whom community involvement is not of interest.

11. Business Partnership Programmes established by local intermediary organisations need

\* time to plan ahead effectively

\* clear objectives

\* a vision of the mechanisms which will enable local companies and community organisations to link together – ie a package of services to offer companies and community organisations

\* a person, staff or volunteer, to carry out follow up work

\* targeted, personally addressed invitations to companies to participate

## 2. Useful Contacts

### National Organisations

**The Volunteer Centre UK**, Jo Paton, Development Officer, Employee Volunteering, 29 Lower King's Road, Berkhamsted, HP4 2AB, Tel: 0442 873311. – UK resource agency for policy makers, managers, volunteer organisers and others whose work affects volunteers.

**Action Resource Centre**, Head Office, First Floor, 102 Park Village East, London, NW1 3SP. Tel: 071 383 2200. Regional offices in ten inner city areas plus two in London and one in Scotland. ARC is the leading broker of secondments and business volunteer placements to community projects. It also runs 'Recycled Resources' schemes. ARC gives advice on the management of secondments.

**The Directory of Social Change**, Radius Works, Back Lane, London, NWE 1HL Tel: 071 435 8171. Provides advice, information and training to charities and voluntary organisations.

**Business in the Community**, 227A City Road, London, SW1Y 6JJ Tel: 071 253 3716 – works with member companies (some 400 plus) to increase the quality and extent of business activity in the community. Supports network of regional offices and enterprise agencies.

**Employees in the Community**, Campaign Manager, 071 3216421.

**The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants** Operates a database of members willing to help charities with financial management – projects and advice, including how to maximise income; but members *cannot* audit accounts. A national scheme. Contact: Martin Nimmo on 071 637 2311.

**Business in the Arts**, Tim Stockill, Director, Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, Butlers Wharf, London, SE1 2NY. Tel: 071 378 8143 – Recruits business executives and prepares them to work with arts organisations as management advisers. Offices cover London, West Midlands, North West, Milton Keynes and Scotland.

**The Industrial Society**, Robert Hyde House, 48 Bryanston Square, London, 7LN. Tel: 071 262 24901. Aprox 22 branches. The Society is a

leading advisory and training body in the management of people and industrial relations.

**CRAC – Careers Research & Advisory Centre**, Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge, CB3 OAX. Tel: 0223 460277. CRAC provide meeting points and means for employers to develop their relationships with education.

**The Rotary Club of Great Britain and Ireland**, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 6BP. Tel: 0789 400590 Members organise fundraising. Some branches organise management assistance volunteer schemes.

**The Trustee Register**, 53 Peascod Street, Windsor, Berks, SL4 1DE. Tel: 0753 868277. – Operates a matching service placing volunteers, many from senior positions in business, willing to serve as trustees of charities. A national service supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Charities Aid Fund, sponsored by Reed Charity.

**Retired Executives Action Clearing House (REACH)**, 89 Southwark Street, London, SE1 OHD. Tel: 071 928 0452 - matches voluntary opportunities with retirees with executive or administrative skills.

**Volunteer Development Scotland**, Liz Burns, 80 Murray Place, Stirling, FK8 2BX Tel: 0786 79593 – Resource agency for volunteering in Scotland. Supports the network of Volunteer Bureaux in Scotland. Co-ordinates Scottish Employee Volunteering Working Group.

**Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)**, Llys Ifor, Crescent Road, Caerffili, Mid Glamorgan CFS 1SL. Tel: 0222 869224 – provides information and services to voluntary groups.

**Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Resource Unit**, 127 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 1SH. Tel: 0232 321224. NIVDRU provides training, advice, information services and development support to the voluntary sector.

**National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)**, PO Box 717, Sheffield SN1 1NL. Tel: 0742 786636. – Umbrella group for CVSs which support local voluntary groups and promote community action.

**Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations**, 18/19 Claremont Crescent, Edinburgh, EH7 4QD. Tel: 031 556 3882 – Provides advice, representation and training to voluntary groups; supports Councils for Social Service in Scotland.

**National Association of Volunteer Bureaux**, St Peter's College, College Road, Saltley, Birmingham, B8 3TE. Tel: 021 327 0265 – Umbrella group for Volunteer Bureaux; provides support and training to Volunteer Bureaux.

**The Institute of Charity Fundraising Managers**, Rooms 208 – 210, Market Towers, 1 Nine Elms Lane, London, SW8 5NQ. Tel: 071 627 3436 promotes professionalism in fundraising management and practice.

**Charities Aid Foundation**, 48 Penbury Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2JD Tel: 0732 771333. CAF offers discretionary covenant services for individuals or companies; trust services; Give As You Earn service; interest-free loan scheme covenant administration for charities

## Local

**London:** Business in the Community's **Professional Firms Group** – co-ordinates firms, mainly in the London area, willing to donate professional services to community organisations – contact Caroline Clark, BITC on 071 253 3716

Schemes to link together the resources of business and the needs of the community exist in many areas. They may be organised by **Action Resource Centre**, **Business in the Community**, **The Industrial Society**, a **Volunteer Bureau** or a **Council for Voluntary Service** (in Scotland, **Council for Social Service**). Addresses of the national offices of these organisation or their national umbrella bodies are given above.

Areas in which there are formal programmes include:

**Birmingham** – Business in the Community and Birmingham Volunteer Bureau,

**The Cynon Valley, Wales** – Business in the Community,

**Cleveland** – Cleveland Council for Voluntary Service and Industrial Society,

**Edinburgh and Glasgow** – Volunteer Development Scotland,

**Exeter** – Exeter Volunteer Bureau,

**Hartlepool** – Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency,

**Leeds** – Action Resource Centre and Business in the Community,

**Leicester** – Action Resource Centre,

**London** – Kensington & Chelsea Volunteer Bureau and Westminster Volunteer Bureau,

**Milton Keynes** – Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Organisations and Milton Keynes Rotary Club,

**North Tyneside** – Northern Voluntary Organisations Development Agency,

**Redbridge** – Redbridge Volunteer Bureau.

Check with your local Council for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Bureau to see if either informal support or a formal programme exists in your area.

## 3. Useful Publications

### *Employee Involvement*

#### **Getting the Best from Secondment: Guidelines for Community Organisations.**

Published by Action Resource Centre, 1st Floor, 102 Park Village East, London, NW1 3SP; Price £3 post free

**Working Out** – magazine about employee volunteering and secondment. Published by The Volunteer Centre and Action Resource Centre. Available free from either organisation.

**Understanding Employee Volunteering** – short overview of employee volunteering programmes, benefits to employers, how to implement them and how much they cost, plus case studies. Written for employers. Produced by Business In The Community and The Volunteer Centre UK. Price £9.99

### *Corporate Giving*

**The Corporate Citizen** – quarterly magazine about corporate community investment of all kinds, written for all sectors. Subscription £55 per year corporate; £30 voluntary sector. Published by the Directory of Social Change, 169 Queen's Crescent, London, NW5 4DS

**High Street Giving** – getting support for local charities from High Street Shops and other businesses. £7.95 plus £1.50 postage per order. Published by the Directory of Social Change, 169 Queen's Crescent, London, NW5 4DS

**The Major Companies' Guide** – Published by the Directory of Social Change. £14.95 plus £1.50 postage (per order not per book)

**A Matter of Approach** – Guide on how to attract resources from business. Sponsorship and donations included. By Peter Whates. Published by The Volunteer Centre UK, 29 Lower King's Road, Berkamsted, HP4 2AB. Price £1.50 post free.

**Payroll Giving.** NCVO, 26 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3HU.

### *Volunteer Management*

**Volunteers First:** the personnel responsibilities of people who manage volunteers. £1.50 post free. Published by The Volunteer Centre UK, 29 Lower King's Road, Berkamsted, HP4 2AB.

**Managing Volunteers** (pamphlet) by Elaine Willis, The Volunteer Centre UK

**Managing Volunteers** by Mark Rankin – describes all aspects of volunteer management and provides essential illustrative training material. Published by The Volunteer Centre UK, price £10 post free.

**Protecting Volunteers** – a good practice guide to insuring volunteers. Published by The Volunteer Centre UK, price 50p post free.

**Secrets of Motivation** by Sue Vineyard, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1807 Prairie Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA.

# 4. Summary Of Good Practice In Employee Volunteering

## *For The Organisation In Which The Volunteer Works*

Good practice procedures for managing volunteers in general are largely appropriate to employee volunteers as well. This summary of good practice guidelines, highlights those areas where you may need to review, adapt or add to your usual procedures.

1. Ensure that employee volunteers are welcome to staff. Resolve in advance any major doubts about the ethics of working with a particular employer to recruit volunteers, or about volunteers threatening paid jobs.
2. Design a range of volunteer jobs which provide interesting and worthwhile work. Bear in mind the time constraints of working people. Consider rotas, groups and opportunities for skilled and professional volunteers.
3. Make clear the responsibilities and time commitment required.
4. Review selection procedures. Keep all bureaucracy to a minimum.
5. Provide a named person who will be available to the volunteers to answer questions, and provide support as required.
6. Offer training as needed. You may need to adapt the time and place of the training to suit the volunteers.
7. Make time to learn from volunteers particularly ones carrying out skilled tasks.
8. Give volunteers a voice in how jobs are done and a chance to contribute ideas to the organisation as a whole.
9. Provide out of pocket expenses. If the project has been developed just for the company, check whether the company will pay volunteers' expenses. Occasionally (as in the case of a one-

off project with a company made up of highly paid professionals) it may not be necessary to pay expenses.

10. Provide insurance cover to volunteers. Check that the employer's policy covers projects which take place on the company site.
11. Say "thank you" to the employees and to the person who helped you recruit them. If the company made a major contribution to your work consider acknowledging this publicly.
12. Provide feedback to the employer about the number of employee volunteers and the usefulness of their work. Check with the employees about how to do this in a way acceptable to them.
13. Maintain contact with the company. Provide reports about how your work is going and further ways they can be involved.
14. For projects developed just for a company: clarify in advance who will provide and pay for materials, volunteers' expenses, training, supervision and insurance.

## *For The Employer*

1. Involve senior managers in the programme.
2. Ensure that line managers recognise the benefits of employee volunteering to the company and the employees as well as to the community.
3. Appoint a central co-ordinator of activities – part time or full time. Responsibility for the programme must be in someone's job description.
4. Involve employees in decision-making as fully as possible. Activities should be freely undertaken and initiated either wholly by employees or co-operatively with management.
5. Provide regular publicity to keep employees and community groups informed.

6. Provide resources to meet necessary administrative costs.

7. Provide visible, practical support for employees' activities. Provide clear guidelines governing the availability of this support and any limitations on it.

8. Involve partner community organisations as fully as possible in planning projects and in the evaluation of them.

9. Begin modestly:

- a) pilot the programme in one or two locations
- b) hold the PR launch **later** rather than **earlier**.

10. Respect the wishes of any employees who do not want any company involvement in, or publicity about, their voluntary work. A general comment recognising "employees doing unspecified voluntary work" should be included in general publicity about the programme.

11. Base communications to employees on the underlying messages:

- "We support you in what you want to do"
- "We want to share with you what we are doing"
- "We want to create a community programme together" (for companies with no previous community programme).

Avoid communications which could be interpreted as "Employee volunteering (in the abstract) is a good thing. We think you ought to be involved in the community. When you are involved it will be as a company representative."

12. Recognise the contribution of volunteers – through profiles in staff magazines, an award scheme or special celebration events. Recognition for skills developed during voluntary work can be provided by including mention of such work in appraisals on a voluntary basis.

13. In new volunteer projects developed by the company in partnership with a community organisation, negotiate in advance who will provide and pay for materials, volunteers' expenses, insurance, supervision and training if needed.

14. Apply normal good management practices to company organised projects:

- provide project leaders with line management support
- draw up clear job specifications for volunteer tasks where appropriate.

## 5. Summary Of Good Practice In Secondment

Analyse your own organisation to establish if there is a real need for a secondee.

Draw up a short policy statement outlining why secondment is considered appropriate for your organisation and why you wish to develop a partnership with other sectors.

Ensure this is accepted by your management committee and relevant staff.

Continue to pursue other options towards meeting the need.

Decide which organisations would be the most likely source of supply.

Establish what resources you have available to support a secondee and decide who would manage the secondment.

Draw up a detailed job description and person specification (complete ARC Request Form if using Action Resource Centre as a broker) but remain flexible.

Select a secondee with the same care as you would an employee; allow opportunity for a potential secondee to visit your organisation several times.

Ensure that all parties clearly understand what each seeks from the secondment.

Agree objectives for the secondment with the secondee and seconding organisation.

Ensure that written agreements between the parties before the secondment begins cover:

- a job description and objectives
- the period of secondment, including start and finish dates
- terms and conditions of employment as they apply to the secondee (for instance salary, pay increase policy, benefits, holidays, hours of work and overtime arrangements; usually these will be unaltered and in any case the secondee should not be worse off)
- insurance arrangements
- company car, secondee's car or no car
- expenses relating to any extra travelling to work

- expenses and class of travel (unless specified otherwise, you are responsible for out-of-pocket expenses during the conduct of a secondee's business)

- procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest, confidentiality and business practice issues

- probation and notice of termination if applicable

- a statement as to whether wider resources of the seconding organisation are to be made available

- the identification of clear communication channels between all parties, agreeing the key contacts in the seconding and your organisation

- procedures for performance appraisal

- return arrangements (if applicable) including debriefing processes.

Arrange a carefully planned induction programme and be prepared to spend time with the new secondee.

Monitor and appraise the performance of the secondee at regular intervals to ensure maximum effectiveness, conforming to the seconding organisation's requirements as necessary.

Encourage the secondee to maintain contact with the seconding organisation or do so yourself.

Take appropriate opportunities to publicise the secondment and the seconding organisation's contribution and ARC's where appropriate.

Ensure that the return arrangements are discussed well in advance, and that adequate debriefing takes place.

After the secondment evaluate the benefits for all parties.

Keep in touch with the secondee and the seconding organisation afterwards.

## 6. List Of Resources Which May Be Obtained From Employers

### *People/Skills*

- \* Management committee members
- \* Trainers
- \* Consultants: public relations and media, finance, computing, premises, survey design, strategic planning, market research, office administration, personnel policies
- \* Technical Experts
- \* Skilled tradespeople
- \* 'Helping hands'
- \* Organisers of fundraising events

### *Services And Facilities*

- \* Graphics and design help
- \* Copying and printing
- \* Audio-visual equipment
- \* Computing assistance
- \* Surplus office equipment
- \* Loan of meeting rooms
- \* Tools and supplies
- \* Donated products
- \* Loan of transport
- \* Premises for office space on an on-going basis

### *Money*

- \* Grants to agencies in which employees volunteer
- \* Matched employee fundraising
- \* Payment of admin costs of projects in which employees are involved
- \* Sponsorships
- \* Donations
- \* Matched Payroll Giving or deductions schemes
- \* Loans – interest free or below market rate
- \* Joint promotions

### *Other*

- \* Work experience places
- \* Organising collections eg of materials, food, toys, clothes on company premises
- \* Publicising community groups to the public – eg displays in shop windows
- \* Places on training courses
- \* Host and organise special events
- \* School-business link or agency-business link
- \* Reverse secondments – job swap schemes

# 7. Sample Letter Requesting A Secondee

*This letter is taken with permission from "Getting the Best from Secondment" by Action Resource Centre*

1 December 1991

Mr Martin Lloyd  
Personnel Director  
Tyneside Building Society  
Eldon Street  
Newcastle N1 9UR

Dear Mr Lloyd

## **PERSONNEL OPPORTUNITY**

Newcastle Association for Special Needs Housing (NASNH) is looking for a Recruitment Adviser for 3-4 months to improve our staff recruitment procedures. NASNH runs well-established housing projects for those with special needs, such as the mentally ill and disabled, ex-offenders and battered wives, as well as initiating new projects (see attached Annual Report).

We feel that our ability to meet our objectives is hampered by our recruitment procedures. With the planned expansion of our organisation and anticipated increase in staff we need seriously to review and improve our procedures.

We believe there is a real opportunity for a secondee to gain valuable practical experience of developing and presenting personnel and recruitment policies. Of equal importance, the secondee would gain knowledge and understanding of the existing and planned provision for housing those with special needs (see attached full job description). After jointly agreeing suitable job objectives NASNH would carry out a structured induction and appraisal procedure.

The secondment would also provide a useful way of showing your organisation's interest and involvement in the local community. NASNH has a high profile with local agencies and groups in the Newcastle area and is well represented on national bodies (see attached background details). We would of course want to publicise your organisation's contribution to our work.

The details of the job description and the length of the placement are flexible (eg it could be part-time over a longer period), and we would be pleased to discuss options that may be more suitable for your own staffing needs.

Please contact me if you have any questions at all. I will, in any case, telephone you next week to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Carol Irving  
Chief Executive

# 8. Example Of Pages From A "Wish Book"

In the USA it is an established practice for community organisations to compile and distribute regular "wish lists". A "wish book" is a compilation of these lists distributed by an intermediary or umbrella organisation. Some organisations produce special "wish books" just before the Christmas season. Many community groups have found Christmas a good time to launch a new appeal of this kind. It is then important to follow up on the links established, after the season of goodwill has passed. These pages are taken from The Wish Book published by the Volunteer Centre of Memphis. An introductory page tells readers how to use it, as follows:

"This book has been compiled to match agency needs with people in the community who are

looking for a community service project....The Wishbook contains a listing of agency needs and the name of a person to contact about the project. If you are an individual, or belong to a club, corporation, organisation or church group that wants to do something for someone – then call the person listed under that project to make your arrangements....*Some agency requests are quite large* (eg 60 food baskets, or cookies for 200 people). Your club or organisation is welcome to fill a portion of the need....The staff of the Volunteer Centre of Memphis would like to know how this book has been used and its impact on the community. Please call on (tel no) or complete the **Wishes Fulfilled** form at the back of this book and mail it to: (address)"



#### HOME HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

(Non-profit agency providing healthcare in the home for people without medical coverage and who are below the poverty level)

1052 Oakhaven  
Memphis, TN 38117  
Waddy West, 763-3610

- Volunteers to help with bulk mailings in early November (must know how to bag mail)
- Part-time file clerk
- Future need: volunteer computer operator
- Computer and printer
- IBM electric typewriter

#### HOOKS/DIMMICK EUCLID DAY CARE CENTER

(Federally-funded center for low income working/ students/trainee parents)

1671 Euclid Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38114  
Deloris A. Walker, 272-2736

- Gymnastics Instructor, 11 A.M. & 2:30 P.M.
- Music or Arts & Crafts Instructor
- Clothing for young children (15 mos.-5 yrs.)
- Halloween Party, Oct. 31st
- Christmas Party, Dec. 19th



#### JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

(Provides counseling, adoptions, family life education and refugee resettlement services)

6560 Poplar Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38138  
Robert Silver, 767-8511

- Vacuum cleaners and furnishings for recently resettled Soviet refugees

#### JUSTICE MINISTRIES, INC.

(Bettering the conditions of the homeless, jobless, hungry, & uneducated; provides counseling)

2400 Poplar Ave., Ste. 514  
Memphis, TN 38112  
Rev. Bessie O. McGee, 327-3137

- Clerical help, counselors, carpenters, plumbers, painters & fund-raisers
- Typist, Bookkeeper
- Stoves, refrigerators, washers/dryers,
- Living room suites, chests, dressers
- Heaters & ceiling fans

## 9. Example of Intermediary Agency Development Plan

This plan was produced by Westminster Volunteer Bureau. It outlines a six-month pilot scheme, designed to be feasible without the need to recruit extra staff or volunteers and within the VB's existing budget.

### *Westminster Employee Volunteering Pilot Project 1992/93*

#### *For Discussion*

at special sub-committee of the management committee in March 92

#### *Overall Aim*

To pilot a specific volunteering project in Westminster as the initial stage of a wider campaign to involve companies in the activities of the voluntary sector to the mutual benefit of both and to build up a company forum to support these initiatives.

#### *Specific Aim Of Pilot Project*

To encourage four local companies to work towards employee involvement in a choice of specific activities designed by voluntary organisations through the VB.

#### *Volunteer Bureau Objectives*

- \* To promote VB services to the volunteer community
- \* To extend VB services to the volunteer community
- \* To keep County Council (funder) supportive and involved in our work.

#### *How*

By initiating a six month pilot project of publicising a range of voluntary opportunities to employees in the workplace  
The project will be launched with Christmas tree challenges and followed by issuing a monthly voluntary opportunities list

#### *Schedule*

##### **APRIL/MAY 92 REPARATION OF VB AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

##### **Initial research:**

- \* Local voluntary organisations who are known to have involved volunteers from companies already (through the Business Links Scheme) to be contacted and asked for their experience.
- \* Co-ordinator of Leeds Employee Volunteering Initiative to be contacted re his experience of Christmas tree challenges

##### **Decisions re the scope of the project**

- \* The voluntary organisations, company sites and projects all to be within the area served by the VB. No attempt at networking with other VBx in order to place volunteers wishing to work near their homes can be undertaken during the pilot period
- \* The VB will clarify how much development work can be offered to the companies within the project (ie for free). It will clarify what it can offer should any company want more than this, on a consultancy basis.

\* Opportunities offered to companies will be ones which offer involvement which goes beyond fundraising

### Voluntary Organisation Meeting

A group of voluntary organisations selected on basis of range and location of activities on offer, likely interest in schedule, effective organisation, existence of volunteer co-ordinator and good practice in volunteer management.

A meeting will be held to consider appropriate placements for employee volunteers, the organisations' participation in the scheme and subsequent evaluation/continuation. Also to cover likely over-expectation in terms of numbers of volunteers recruited by scheme.

Meeting leaders: (names)

Continuous support will be offered by the VB to this group, as also to the group of companies.

### JUNE/SEPT 92

#### APPROACHES TO COMPANIES

(Names of seven target companies, of which five are known to have some prior interest in employee volunteering and one has a rep sitting on the VB's management committee, plus the City Council and a large voluntary organisation – Business in the Community)

Aim to get working contact in each participating organisation (target is 4 organisations) plus agreement on their objectives and methods of feedback and evaluation. Aim to get each participating company to nominate a rep to sit on a planning group.

### SEPT/OCT 92

Agreement with voluntary organisations on Christmas challenges and future voluntary opportunities for monthly bulletins. Also on guidelines for working with employee

volunteers.

Designer to produce bulletin and Christmas trees. (Companies to be asked to pay for Christmas trees and offered ones made-up by VB contact).

Advance information/publicity agreed with companies.

### LATE NOVEMBER

Christmas trees into companies

### JAN-JUNE 93

Monthly bulletins and/or developing a group project for each company on a three monthly basis. Stress to companies the need for a concerted promotion of the bulletins or projects within the company (not just relying on notice boards).

### MAY-JULY 93

#### Evaluation:

Review and decisions re:

\* Continuation

\* Development and Extension

Extension to include developing volunteer committees within participating companies (Whitbread to be asked to make a presentation on this theme).

### Note

The voluntary opportunities should particularly include:

\* one off tasks for groups and individuals

\* some using office type skills

\* fundraising activities which are office based eg collecting presents; raffle of unwanted Christmas gifts



## About The Volunteer Centre UK

The aim of The Volunteer Centre UK is to promote volunteering and to encourage good practice in the involvement of volunteers, whether in the statutory, voluntary or private sectors. We are a UK resource agency for policy makers, managers, volunteer organisers and other staff whose work directly or indirectly affects volunteers.

The Centre provides information, training, publications, development advice and consultancy and conducts research. We also co-ordinate UK Volunteers Week, the annual celebration of volunteering and run conferences and seminars that are of practical help to anyone who works with volunteers.

The Volunteer Centre UK was founded in 1973. A registered charity, we are funded by the Voluntary Services Unit of the Home Office, by sponsorship, by charitable grants and by the sale of our products and services.

For a free catalogue, please contact:

The Volunteer Centre UK,  
29 Lower Kings' Road,  
Berkhamsted, HP4 2AB.

Tel: 0442 873311.

Fax: 0442 870852.

E mail [Greennet/Voluk](mailto:Greennet/Voluk)



## *Community programme*

This handbook  
has been sponsored by the  
**BT Community Programme**  
to help stimulate voluntary and  
non profit groups to make best use  
of employee involvement  
in the community.

It forms part of the  
**Employees In The Community**  
national initiative.

This book describes:

- how employees are involved in the community as skilled and professional helpers, as general volunteers and as fundraisers
- why employers, employees and community groups are involved and what they get out of it
- examples of innovative projects involving employees in the community
- how to obtain and manage employee volunteers and secondees.



29 Lower King's Road, Berkhamsted  
Hertfordshire HP4 2AB  
☎ 0442 873311 Fax 0442 870852