

# ***Performance Appraisals of Employees in Business and Industry Who Volunteer Their Time in Community Service Agencies***

*By Shelby D. Morton and Dale A.  
Level, Jr.*

## Introduction

Business organizations today have begun to recognize the benefits they receive when employees volunteer their time in community service activities and, therefore, encourage their employees to do so. There is an emerging thought that people who volunteer time in community service activities are more desirable to have as employees than those employees who do not volunteer their time. Consumer movements have prompted organizations to realize the importance of good public relations and believe that participation in community service activities is one way to enhance their image. Commitment of time and money, such as Xerox's program of giving employees time off from their work day if they volunteer their time, is one example of company recognition and commitment.<sup>1</sup>

Another company, Levi Strauss, has long been a pioneer in community involvement. Each plant of Levi Strauss has a Community Involvement Team (CIT) which consists of employees who raise money and give their time to projects in their hometown.<sup>2</sup> The company gives their CIT workers one hour of work time a month for team planning sessions. The plant manager can authorize more business hours for projects, but most of the actual volunteer work is done in off-work hours. Levis Strauss provides the team with \$1 per plant employee,

but money above that budget is raised by the team. Improved employee morale and fewer lost-time hours, the company surmises, were a direct result of this program.

## Benefits

One particular benefit to organizations in which employees volunteer their time in community service activities is that of leadership training. Many executives believe that real involvement with volunteer organizations can supplement other kinds of management development programs.<sup>3</sup> If employees are active in the management functions in volunteer organizations, they can utilize their experience and skills in their employing organizations as well. Participation in voluntary organizations gives the employee the opportunity to operate in an organizational setting; it gives people a chance to improve their ability to interact with others; it increases responsibility; and provides experience in the planning and decision-making process.

Participation in voluntary organizations is considered so important by some executives that this activity may even be required by some companies. Aileen Ross found such participation to be expected behavior of many executives.<sup>4</sup> A study by Fenn also shows a growing sense of obligation among high level American executives to participate in leadership

roles in voluntary organizations and programs.<sup>5</sup>

According to Toffler in FUTURE SHOCK, as our society becomes more complex, many institutions in our communities will depend more and more on voluntary assistance.<sup>6</sup> Companies are not only sanctioning participation, but in fact are encouraging it. There is a strong relationship between a person's opportunity for promotion and the employees' level of community involvement. Pay and promotional benefits are often built into the company policy favoring volunteerism as incentives, and many companies feel that if a good executive is on the way up, the employee almost has to be a leader in the community.<sup>7</sup> This may explain why many executives have a history of volunteering.

If this is true, it would seem relevant to determine if employees who volunteer their time in community service activities are perceived any differently in their job performance than employees who do not volunteer their time. If in fact these employees are also the highest performers on the job, this would be additional evidence to support the contention that management needs to be able to identify the potential volunteers. If companies do in fact desire such employees, would a company policy to that effect aid in attracting these employees? In other words, if employees are given support and encouragement to be active in community service activities, would this aid in attracting such employees to the organization? If the person who possesses the traits found in people who volunteer their time in outside community service activities are viewed as high producers by their supervisors, these are the people management will want to employ. Not only will they aid the company in public relations, but they will be higher producers than employees who do not volunteer their time outside of the business organization.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was

to identify and analyze the job performance of employees in business and industry who volunteer their time in community service activity as compared to employees who do not engage in voluntary activity off the job.

Specifically, the objectives of this research were to:

1. Determine if employees who volunteer their time off the job differ in their job performance, as perceived by their employers;
2. Determine if a company policy supporting voluntary activity on the part of our employees aids in attracting such employees;
3. Aid companies and institutions, who believe that one way to improve company image is through voluntary activities in the community, evaluate potential employees.

To accomplish these objectives, a wide variety of organizations that would be representative of the business world was obtained. Special care was taken to include representative organizations.

Hopefully, comparisons can be made, making this study more universally applicable and, therefore, relevant to the real world.

The sample selected for this study consisted of 156 supervisors in five organizations. All organizations were in Arkansas. All participants were first-line and middle-management supervisors from the following organizations: a financial institution, a unit of a major university, a public utility, a durable goods manufacturer, and a multinational food processor.

Data for the study were acquired through three methods: (1) classification questionnaire, (2) Gordon's Personal Profile and Personal Inventory, and (3) management's perception (evaluation) of the supervisor's job performance.

The classification question-

naire accomplished three purposes. The questionnaire was used to classify the employee as one who did or did not perceive their employer as encouraging voluntary activity in the community. Last, the questionnaire was used to obtain personal background information about the participants.

Gordon's Personal Profile and Personal Inventory were used to determine what differences, if any, there were in the personality traits of the respondents. The data secured were also used to determine any differences in personality traits of the highest versus the lowest rated employees. The personality traits were: ascendancy, responsibility, emotional stability, sociability, cautiousness, original thinking, personal relations, level of self-actualization, and vigor.

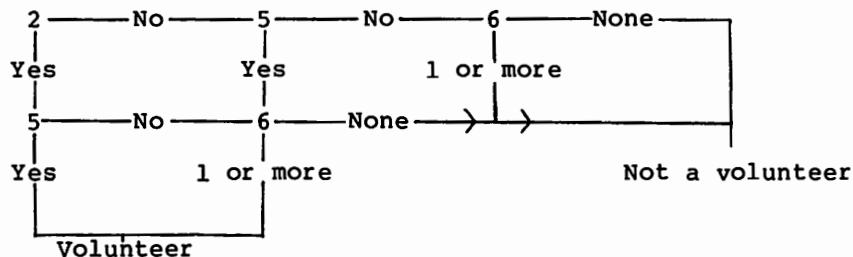
The participants in this study were rated by their immediate supervisor. They were instructed

to force rate the participants as "superior, above average or average" and to place approximately one-third of the participants into each group. The supervisors were instructed to use their regular in-house evaluation procedures in this evaluation process.

Data were analyzed by the use of regression analysis, chi square analysis, Kruskal-Wallis One-Way analysis of variance by ranks, the use of the t-test and simple correlation. A minimum significance level of .05 was established for all statistical tests.

Each employee was asked a standard set of questions. The responses to the questions in Chart 1 were used to identify the employee as either a volunteer or a nonvolunteer. The employees were then asked to complete the Gordon's Personal Profile and Personal Inventory questionnaires with the assurance of complete confidentiality.

Chart 1  
Decision Tree for Classification of Employees  
as a Volunteer



The questions used to classify the supervisors into a group are as follows:

2. Do you consider yourself a volunteer? Yes        No       

5. Are there any community service organizations in which you used to be active but have since dropped (within the last 5 years)? Yes        No       

6. How many community service organizations are you currently a member of?

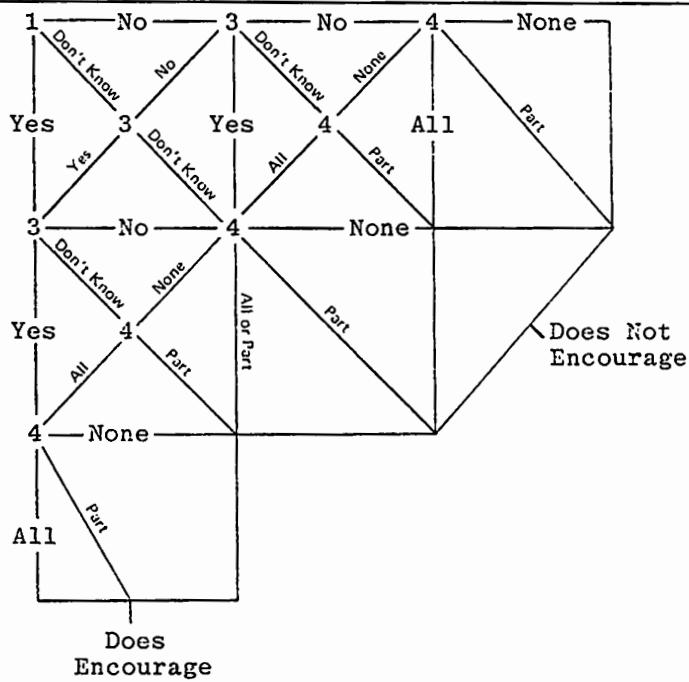
None        1        2        3        4        5 or more

The company representative was asked questions concerning the company philosophy on voluntary activity. The decision tree on

Chart 2 was used to classify the organization as encouraging or not encouraging voluntary activity.

Chart 2

Decision Tree for Classification of Employees' Perception of Employing Organization as to Their Philosophy on Voluntary Activity



1. Does your company have a stated policy encouraging volunteer work? Yes        No        Don't know
3. Is volunteer work considered by your supervisor or company as a factor in promotion and/or pay raises? Yes        No        Don't know
4. To what extent would your employer cover expenses you incur in your volunteer work? All        Part        None

### Personal Background Information

Personal background information was obtained from the entire population of the 156 participants that were surveyed. The background information for the group is presented in Table I.

(See Table I on Page 32.)

Of those surveyed, the majority (89 percent) were males. The age group reporting the largest number was 36 to 45, with 32 percent of the participants in this category. The second largest group was 26 to 35 (27 percent), followed by 46 to 55 (20 percent), and 56 and over (14 percent). A relatively small number of participants (6) were 18 to 25 years old. Ninety percent, or 141 of the participants, were married.

Except for one organization where a graduate degree is a prerequisite for the job, the majority of the participants were high school graduates. Fifty of the 51 participants with a graduate degree were from one organization, making this the largest category with 33 percent of the total. High school graduate was a close second, with 27 percent of the respondents. Nineteen percent of the participants were college graduates; 17 percent of the participants had some college and 3 percent indicated they had some graduate study. Only two participants (1 percent) did not have a high school diploma.

With respect to length of service with each organization, the majority of the participants (67 percent) had been employed in their organization more than 5 years. Fifteen percent of the participants were employed 3 to 5 years and 14 percent were employed between 1 to 3 years. Six employees (4 percent) had been with their organization less than one year.

Responses to total yearly family income indicated the ranges of \$30,000 or more, and \$15,000 to \$19,999 were the two largest groups with 27 percent and 26 percent of the participants in each respective

category. The income of \$20,000 to \$24,999 was third, with 22 percent, followed by \$25,000 to \$29,999 and \$10,000 to \$14,999 a year -- 17 and 8 percent. Two participants, or 1 percent, indicated yearly family income to be under \$10,000.

Chart 1 was used to classify the employees as to their voluntary activity. Ninety-six participants (62 percent) engaged in voluntary activity off the job, while 60 participants (38 percent) did not engage in voluntary activity.

Seventy-two percent did not perceive their company encouraging volunteer work, while 28 percent did perceive their company as one that encouraged volunteer work.

### Personal Background of Volunteers and Nonvolunteers

Table II compares the personal background information obtained from the volunteers with the employees not considered to be a volunteer. Of the males in the study, a larger percentage were classified as volunteers (92 percent) as opposed to nonvolunteers (85 percent). There also was a relationship between age and voluntary activity. The older the participant, the more likely she or he was a volunteer. Seventy-three percent of the volunteers were 36 years of age or older while only 55 percent of the nonvolunteers were over 36 years of age.

Ninety-four percent of the volunteers were married while the percentage of married people who were not volunteers fell to 85 percent. There was also a relationship between voluntary activity and education. Thirty-seven percent of the volunteers had graduate degrees and all had at least a high school education. Four percent of the nonvolunteer group (all non-high school graduates in this study) were not volunteers, while only 25 percent of the nonvolunteers had a graduate degree.

(See Table II on Page 33.)

TABLE I  
PERSONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING  
SUPERVISOR PARTICIPANTS

Factors	Responses	
	Number	Percent
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	139	89
Female	17	11
<b>Age:</b>		
Under 18	0	0
18 to 25	6	4
26 to 35	42	27
36 to 45	50	32
46 to 55	31	20
56 and over	22	14
<b>Marital Status:</b>		
Married	141	90
Not married	15	10
<b>Education:</b>		
Under 9 years	1	.5
9 to 11 years	1	.5
High school graduate	42	27
1 to 3 years college	27	17
College graduate	30	19
Graduate studies	4	3
Graduate degree	51*	33
<b>Length of Service with Organization:</b>		
6 months or less	2	1
More than 6 months to 1 year	4	3
More than 1 year to 3 years	22	14
More than 3 years to 5 years	23	15
More than 5 years	105	67
<b>Total Yearly Family Income:</b>		
Under \$10,000	2	1
\$10 to 14,999	12	8
\$15 to 19,999	40	26
\$20 to 24,999	34	22
\$25 to 29,999	26	17
\$30,000 or more	42	27
<b>Volunteer:</b>		
Yes	96	62
No	60	38
<b>Perceived Company Policy Encouraging Volunteer Work:</b>		
Yes	44	28
No	112	72

\*All but one of these respondents are employed by the College of Agriculture.

TABLE II  
PERSONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING  
VOLUNTEERS AND NONVOLUNTEERS

Personal Background Factors	Volunteers		Nonvolunteers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Sex:</b>				
Male	88	92	51	85
Female	8	8	9	15
<b>Age:</b>				
Under 18	0	0	0	0
18 to 25	4	4	2	3
26 to 35	22	23	25	42
36 to 45	35	36	15	25
46 to 55	19	20	12	20
56 and over	16	17	6	10
<b>Marital Status:</b>				
Married	90	94	51	85
Not married	6	6	9	15
<b>Education:</b>				
Under 9 years	0	0	1	2
9 to 11 years	0	0	1	2
High school graduate	25	26	15	25
1 to 3 years college	19	20	10	17
College graduate	13	14	17	28
Graduate studies	3	3	1	2
Graduate degree	36	37	15	25
<b>Length of Service with Organization:</b>				
6 months or less	0	0	2	3
More than 6 mo. to 1 yr.	2	2	2	3
More than 1 yr. to 3 yrs.	12	13	10	17
More than 3 yrs. to 5 yrs.	8	8	15	25
More than 5 yrs.	74	77	31	52
<b>Total Yearly Family Income:</b>				
Under \$10,000	1	1	0	0
\$10 to 14,999	6	6	6	10
\$15 to 19,999	20	21	20	33
\$20 to 24,999	20	21	14	23
\$25 to 29,999	19	20	7	12
\$30,000 or more	30	31	13	22
<b>Perceived Company Policy Encouraging Volunteer Work:</b>				
Yes	33	34	11	18
No	63	66	49	82

The person who was with the organization for a long period of time tended to be a volunteer. Seventy-seven percent of the volunteers had been with their company more than 5 years while the percentage of nonvolunteers in this group fell to 52. There was no significant difference in yearly family income and voluntary activity.

An interesting and important fact was revealed by the employee's perception of their company's policy regarding volunteer work. The participants who perceived their company as encouraging volunteer work were much more likely to volunteer their time in community service activities than participants who did not believe their company encouraged such activity. Only 18 percent of the nonvolunteers felt their company encouraged voluntary activity, while 34 percent of the volunteers said their company encouraged such activity. Eighty-two percent of the nonvolunteers did not believe their company encouraged voluntary activity. This percentage dropped

to 66 percent for the volunteers. There is, therefore, an implication that a company policy might result in more employees engaging in voluntary activity off the job.

#### Job Performance and Voluntary Activity

Regression analysis was used to determine if the job performance was related to whether or not an employee was a volunteer. While there were marked differences among each organization, as indicated in Table III, the results were not significant at the .05 level. To further substantiate these findings, all employees were considered as one group and the chi square test was conducted on voluntary activity and job performance ratings. As shown in Table IV, there was no significant difference between voluntary activity and job performance. The conclusion is that we cannot predict employees' job performance ratings by looking soley at whether or not the employee is a volunteer in community service activities.

TABLE III  
REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Organization	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	Probability F
A: Financial Institution	1	.9643	1.57	.22
B: College of Agriculture	1	.1300	.20	.65
C: Electric Company	1	.0079	.01	.91
D: Office Forms Manufacturer	1	.0438	.08	.78
E: Multinational Food Processor	1	1.5666	2.60	.11

TABLE IV  
 CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY  
 AND JOB PERFORMANCE FOR ALL  
 ORGANIZATIONS COMBINED  
 AS A GROUP

Job Performance Rating	Volunteer	Nonvolunteer	Total	Percent	Likelihood Ratio Chi Square
Superior	33	18	51	.33	.742
Above average	33	22	55	.35	
Average	31	19	50	.32	

Job Performance and Company Policy Toward Voluntary Activity

Volunteers and nonvolunteers were separated according to whether or not they perceived their organization to encourage voluntary activity. This was done so that meaningful statements could be made on how a company policy might affect the types of people who volunteer. As shown in Table V, volunteers working in companies they perceived to encourage such

activity were more likely to be rated higher than volunteers working in companies perceived not to encourage voluntary activity. Although this was not significant at the .05 level of confidence, the trend was in that direction. The indication here is that if the company has communicated to the employee they desire voluntary activity, the volunteer tends to be rated higher than the nonvolunteer in that company.

TABLE V  
 REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY AND  
 JOB PERFORMANCE FOR ORGANIZATIONS PERCEIVED  
 NOT TO AND TO ENCOURAGE  
 VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY

Organizations	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	Probability F
Perceived Not To Encourage	1	.6706	.38	.53
Perceived To Encourage	1	.6203	2.62	.11

### Personality Traits and Voluntary Activity

The objective of this part of the study was to determine if there were any differences in personality traits and job performance ratings of volunteers and nonvolunteers. Summary results are presented in Table VI. When considering personality traits, the "superior, above average and average" rated employees did score differently on some traits in each organization.

When analyzed by type of goods or service, only the traits of ascendancy and emotional stability did not show a significant difference.

When all employees were analyzed together, three personality traits proved to be different at the .05 level of confidence or greater. Highest rated employees were more sociable, less cautious and more vigorous than the lowest rated employees. The conclusion drawn is that, while there is no

TABLE VI  
SUMMARY TABLE

	<u>Superior Rated Employees</u>	<u>Average Rated Employees</u>
Differences in Personality Traits According to Rating	More Sociable Less Cautious More Vigorous	Less Sociable More Cautious Less Vigorous
	<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Nonvolunteers</u>
Differences in Personality Traits According to Voluntary Activity	More Ascendant More Sociable* More Original in Thought More Vigorous	Less Ascendant Less Sociable Less Original in Thought Less Vigorous
	<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Nonvolunteers</u>
Differences in Personality Traits of Volunteers and Nonvolunteers Who Perceive Their Employers to Encourage Voluntary Activity	More Ascendant More Sociable* Less Cautious* More Original in Thought More Vigorous*	Less Ascendant Less Sociable More Cautious Less Original in Thought Less Vigorous
	<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Nonvolunteers</u>
Differences in Personality Traits of Volunteers and Nonvolunteers Who Perceive Their Employers Not to Encourage Voluntary Activity	More Original in Thought More Vigorous*	Less Original in Thought Less Vigorous

\*Scores same as Superior rated employees all significant at the .05 level of confidence.

significant difference in voluntary activity and performance on the job, there is a significant difference in performance on the job and certain personality traits.

When investigating differences in personality traits of employees who were volunteers as compared to employees who were not volunteers, significant differences were also found. The volunteers in the financial institution were more ascendant, more sociable, more original in thought, more vigorous and more self-actualized--all at the .05 confidence level--than the employees who did not volunteer. The volunteers in the unit of a major university were, at the .10 level of confidence, responsible and, at the .20 confidence level, high on ascendancy, lower on emotional stability and more vigorous than nonvolunteers. The volunteers in the utility company were higher on ascendancy and sociability at the .05 level of confidence, higher on vigor at the .10 level of confidence and more responsible at the .20 level of confidence than nonvolunteers. The volunteers in the manufacturing organization were higher on ascendancy--at the .20 level of confidence--than the non-volunteers. The volunteers in the food processing company were more sociable at the .05 level of confidence and more self-actualized at the .20 level of confidence than nonvolunteer.

When all supervisors were combined into one group, the following conclusions can be drawn: volunteers are more ascendant, more sociable, more original in thought and more vigorous than nonvolunteers. All of these scores were significant at the .05 level of confidence or greater.

Volunteers working for companies perceived to encourage voluntary activity were found to be: more ascendant, more sociable, less cautious, more original in thought and more vigorous than the nonvolunteers, all at the .05 level of confidence. Volunteers working for companies perceived not to encourage voluntary activity were found to be more original in

thought and more vigorous (at the .05 level of confidence) than the nonvolunteers in this group.

Many of the personality traits of volunteers are the same as those of the superior rated employees. In no instances were any personality traits on nonvolunteers the same as those of the superior rated employees. Nonvolunteers' traits were the same as the "average" rated employees, which are the lowest rated employees in this study.

#### Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions seem appropriate:

1. Job performance cannot be predicted according to whether or not the employee is engaged in voluntary activity off the job.
2. Superior rated employees are more sociable, less cautious and more vigorous than the lowest rated employees.
3. Volunteers are more sociable, more original in thought and more ascendant than nonvolunteers. To a lesser degree (.10 level of confidence) volunteers are more vigorous than nonvolunteers.
4. Volunteers who perceive their employers to encourage voluntary activity are rated higher than nonvolunteers who perceive their employers to encourage voluntary activity. This tends to be true, but is not significant at the .05 level of confidence.
5. Volunteers who perceive their employers not to encourage voluntary activity are not rated higher than nonvolunteers who perceive their employers not to encourage voluntary activity.
6. Volunteers who perceive their employers to encourage

voluntary activity are more ascendant, more sociable, less cautious, more original in thought and are more vigorous than nonvolunteers in this group.

7. Volunteers who perceive their employers not to encourage voluntary activity are more original in thought, score higher on personal relations, and are more vigorous than nonvolunteers in this group.
8. Having a stated policy, or making sure the employees perceive their company to encourage voluntary activity may have an effect on the types of people who volunteer their time in community service activities.

#### Recommendations

The conclusions from this study serve as the basis for the following recommendations:

1. Since volunteers tend to have similar personality traits as the highest rated employees, business and industry may want to employ such persons.
2. If the organization is interested in improved community relations, that organization would do well to employ persons who volunteer.
3. Organizations that want social, ascendant, vigorous employees, and people who are original in thought, should seek out volunteers.
4. Organizations who are looking for employees with the previously mentioned characteristics may want to seek out that information about the potential employee.
5. Companies who desire community involvement on the part of their employees should have a policy to that effect.

From a practical point of view, there are some distinguishing characteristics that the highest rated employees possess. Many of the characteristics are also possessed by people who volunteer in community service activities. If a company is looking for employees who have similar characteristics as their "best" employees in their organization, it might be advisable for them to look for a person who is involved in community service activities.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Steven V. Roberts, "The Employee As Volunteer, With Company Support," THE NEW YORK TIMES, November 19, 1978.

<sup>2</sup>Pat T. Patterson, "Levi's Workers Give Time, Funds To Help," ARKANSAS GAZETTE, June 27, 1979.

<sup>3</sup>Christopher J. Quartly, "Upgrade Your Leadership Skills In A Voluntary Organization," PERSONNEL JOURNAL, 52:9 (September, 1973), 811.

<sup>4</sup>Aileen Ross, "Philanthropic Activity In The Business Career," MAN, WORK AND SOCIETY, eds. S. Nosow and W. Form, (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 515.

<sup>5</sup>Dan H. Fenn Jr., "Executives As Community Volunteers," HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW (March-April, 1971), 4-13.

<sup>6</sup>Alvin Toffler, FUTURE SHOCK (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971), pp.112-135.

<sup>7</sup>Fenn, op. cit.