

# COMMUNIQUÉ

*Trends, Best Practices, and Opinions on Community Involvement*

## **Pro Bono Today: The Growing Partnership Between Citizenship and HR** *Part 4 of a 5-Part Series*

One finding from our report “Pro Bono Today: What’s New, What’s Working” that we are really happy about is the recognition that pro bono can be a valuable tool for talent development. Where once the mindset was, we think pro bono is good for our employees, now the thinking in some companies is, pro bono is an important professional development tool that we need to actively use.

As a result, pro bono projects are being integrated into managerial and leadership development programs for high-potential employees. Prior to the assignment, the selected employees sit down with their managers and/or the talent development team and set specific development goals and objectives surrounding the project work. After the project, the employees are asked to assess their personal and professional skills development and how they can apply their enhanced skills to their regular jobs.

To make this work, human resources and talent development are working in tandem with corporate citizenship. In some cases, HR and management are solely responsible for identifying and vetting the volunteers while citizenship works with the nonprofit partners to scope projects. Then the two departments work together to match the volunteers and the nonprofits.

And that brings up an interesting question: What’s the best way to match employees to nonprofits? The answer may lie in the motivation for doing pro bono. Companies focused on pro bono as talent development may select employee volunteers and then look for nonprofits with projects that need those employees’ skills. Companies focused on nonprofit service may start with their nonprofit partners’ needs and then source appropriate employees. Sourcing employees and nonprofits simultaneously also works. There’s no right or wrong way, and the only frustration expressed by the companies in the study is that sometimes employees and nonprofits have to wait longer than they would like to be matched up.

If you are having trouble convincing HR that pro bono is a great talent development tool, you might want to do some research to back up your assertion. We recommend you survey employees who have served and their managers about how the employees’ skills were enhanced by doing pro bono. You can then take that to HR to make your case. You can also recruit members of your HR staff to serve on pro bono projects.

Then they can see for themselves the value of the experience. Either or both of these strategies might lead to a great partnership in pro bono.

The full report can be downloaded for free at [www.lbg-associates.com](http://www.lbg-associates.com).

Previous issues in this series can be viewed [here](#).

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*Coming next: How Companies Are Moving the Practice Forward*

**About LBG Associates**

*LBG Associates is a woman-owned consulting firm focused on designing, implementing and managing corporate citizenship and employee engagement programs and initiatives. Founded in 1993 by Dr. Linda Gornitsky, LBG Associates drives social change through advice, implementation, research and training. Find more information at: [www.lbg-associates.com](http://www.lbg-associates.com).*

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