



# 2016 Deloitte Impact Survey

## Building leadership skills through volunteerism



June 2016

# Executive Summary

Why is it that volunteering has drifted to a 10-year low<sup>i</sup> while research increasingly shows that corporate philanthropy and volunteerism help businesses attract, develop and retain talent<sup>ii</sup>?

According to the results of Deloitte's 2016 Impact Survey, businesses and individuals may be undervaluing the benefits of volunteerism. From engaging talent to creating more competitive résumés, volunteering may have an impact on the success of an individual and an organization.

## Survey background

The 2016 Deloitte Impact Survey, the 10<sup>th</sup> in a series of Deloitte research studies exploring the impact of key volunteerism issues, demonstrates Deloitte's commitment to being a leading voice in helping our communities thrive.

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“At Deloitte, we have experienced the importance of volunteering and understand that it helps build skill sets that are critical to developing well-rounded leaders across our organization.”

Doug Marshall  
Director, Corporate Citizenship  
Deloitte Services LP

This year's survey targeted individuals who are currently employed and have the ability to either directly influence hiring or indirectly influence the person making the hiring decision. In surveying members of this population, we aimed to examine how they define leadership, how volunteerism drives leadership skills, and how volunteerism impacts the perception of job candidates during the interview process.

The online survey interviewed 2,506 respondents in 13 major metropolitan areas across the United States: Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New York Metro (NY/CT/NJ), Philadelphia, Bay Area (San Francisco/San Jose), Seattle, and Washington, D.C.<sup>iii</sup> The survey was administered from April 18-22, 2016.

## Key research findings

### Impact of volunteerism for businesses

In the 2016 Impact Survey, respondents reported that they see volunteer experience listed on only 30 percent of the résumés they receive. At the same time, the majority (82 percent) of respondents said they would be more likely to choose a candidate with volunteer experience on their résumé.

While all types of volunteerism were found by the majority of respondents to be beneficial, respondents slightly preferred skills-based volunteering for building skills that respondents see as “must haves” for leaders. (See figure 1 for the types of volunteerism that were discussed in the survey, as well as figure 2 for the leadership skills that were discussed.)

- 85 percent of respondents found skills-based volunteering to help talent advance their communication skills vs 77 percent for non-skills-based volunteering
- 88 percent of respondents found skills-based volunteering to play a key role in developing strong character vs. 84 percent for non-skills-based volunteering

Given there is a strong interest in candidates with volunteering experience, businesses may need to do more to communicate to potential talent how much they value the critical professional skills developed through volunteer activities.

Results indicate that corporate volunteer programs may be able to help employees develop stronger professional and leadership skill sets and better prepare employees for leadership roles:

- 92 percent of respondents agree that volunteering improves employees' broader professional skill sets
- 92 percent of respondents agree that volunteering is an effective way to improve leadership skills
- 80 percent of respondents said that active volunteers move more easily into leadership roles

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**“As the battle for talent continues, volunteering can be a strong leg-up on the competition for both prospective employees and employers. Companies that create a culture committed to making an impact and to tapping into their employees’ sense of purpose have the ability to attract and retain top talent.”**

**Mike Preston**  
Chief Talent Officer  
Deloitte LLP

Despite these results indicating that volunteerism is a valuable tool for developing talent, nearly half (47 percent) of respondents said their workplace does not offer a volunteer program.

And 66 percent of respondents who reported that their employer does not have a workplace program would like their company to offer one.

#### **Impact of volunteerism for individuals**

If you're looking for a job, not including volunteerism on your résumé may be a missed opportunity since survey results showed that:

- 82 percent of respondents are more likely to choose a candidate with volunteering experience, and
- 85 percent of respondents are willing to overlook other résumé flaws when a candidate includes volunteer work on a résumé

Furthermore, volunteering may not just help you land a job – it might also help you grow your career.

Survey results indicate that skills learned through volunteering may make it easier for people to move into leadership roles:

- 80 percent of survey respondents agree that active volunteers move into leadership roles more easily

And when it comes to skills-based volunteering, the majority of respondents believed that it improves communications skills, strengthens accountability and commitment, and helps individuals develop strong character, all traits that respondents identified as leadership “must haves”:

- 85 percent believe that skills-based volunteering helps employees improve communication skills
- 88 percent believe that skills-based volunteering helps employees develop strong character traits
- 85 percent believe that skills-based volunteering helps employees demonstrate accountability and commitment

#### **Conclusion**

Volunteerism can offer many benefits to nonprofits, communities the nonprofits serve, and individual volunteers.

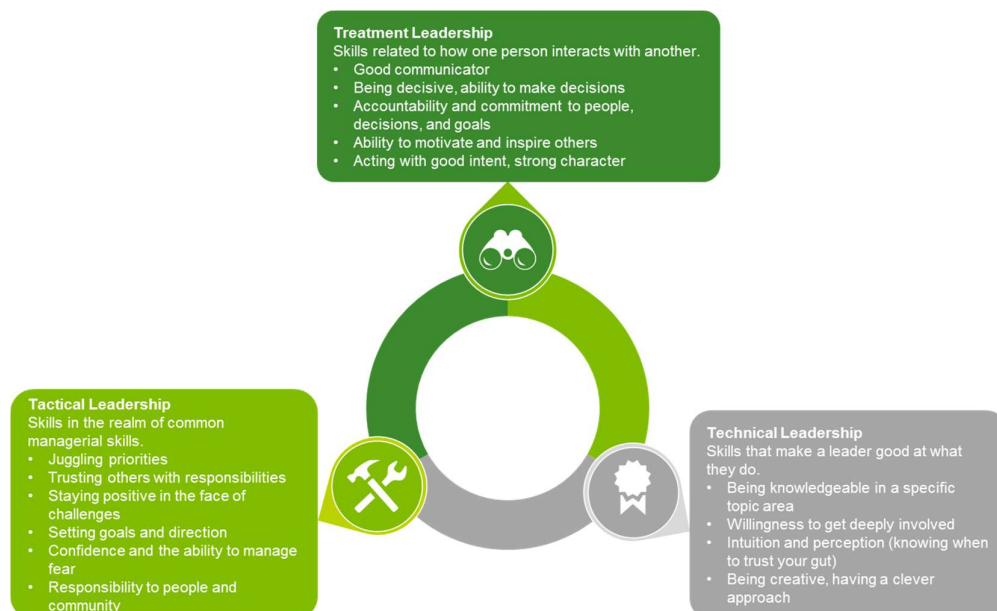
For individuals, volunteerism may play an important part in terms of getting a leg up on the competition when applying for jobs, as well as building skills to advance professionally. Individuals may do well to consider incorporating volunteering into their professional development plans, as well as making it known to potential or current employers that they have volunteer experience.

For businesses, volunteerism may play a key role in helping attract, retain and develop skilled talent, as well as growing tomorrow's leaders. Businesses may want to consider implementing their own volunteer programs if they do not already have them in place, as well as doing more to communicate the value they place on volunteering to potential and current talent.

Figure 1 – Types of Volunteerism



Figure 2 – Leadership skills



Learn more about Deloitte's social impact efforts:  
[www.deloitte.com/us/corporate-citizenship](http://www.deloitte.com/us/corporate-citizenship)

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<sup>i</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Volunteering in the United States, 2015,” released February 25, 2016.

<sup>ii</sup> William D. Eggers, Nate Wong and Kate Cooney, “The purpose-driven professional,” Deloitte University Press, September 8, 2015.

<sup>iii</sup> This survey is not intended to provide a broad representation across the entire US.

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