

7 Best Practices of Prosocial Organizations in Youth Development

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Today's for-profit organizations are under immense pressure to remain competitive. Global pressure for reduced costs and domestic pressure to provide the latest product or the best service leave many organizations scrambling to work more effectively. Nonetheless, efficiency and competitiveness are not the only means by which organizations become attractive to investors and consumers. Organizations realize the importance of being seen as socially responsible or environmentally sensitive by consumers and investors. To enhance this perception, many companies over the past 20 years have turned to various forms of corporate social responsibility, including forming partnerships with communities in need, making contributions to various charities, and providing their employees with generous leave time for community service.

In this chapter we give an overview of some of the prosocial efforts that for-profit organizations undertake to provide services for youth. Although there are a number of excellent nonprofit organizations serving the needs of youth, this discussion is outside the scope of this chapter, and instead we focus on the considerable and yet often unheralded efforts of for-profit organizations. Recognizing and learning from these efforts are important because effective mobilization of adults for positive youth development is likely to require the contributions of all sectors of society.

We begin by reviewing three main reasons why organizations engage in prosocial activities: societal, economic, and human resource related. We give many examples of the best practices in addressing youth issues from various corporations. We offer an overview of some of the challenges in providing youth

programs. Finally, we highlight the need for evaluation research. Surprisingly, although many for-profit organizations describe the services they provide and the amount of money that is spent, there is little in the way of systematic evaluations of the programs they design or efforts they support, representing significant opportunities for researchers to partner with these businesses in the future.

Why Do Some Organizations Adopt a Prosocial Approach?

Societal Reasons

Although the U.S. federal government and a number of nonprofit organizations dedicate many resources to helping youth, there is still a tremendous gap between what is needed and what is provided. Federal and state monies available for youth programs are spread thin. Even in economic boom times the money is limited, but in economic downturns these types of programs suffer greatly. For example, federal spending directed to children under age 18 was about \$148 billion in 2000, or about 8.4% of the total federal budget, and that spending is expected to remain fairly constant—between 1.5% and 1.8% of gross domestic product—during the next decade (Congressional Budget Office, 2000). Therefore, rather than depending on tax monies, many organizations find their funding by other means. Prosocial organizations provide programs and resources to help fill that gap by providing such services as mentoring, tutoring, and assisting in school-to-work transitions. In fact, the Web sites of many top companies have a section dedicated to sharing with the public what it is they do for their communities and specifically for youth.

Another societal influence increasing the number of organizations focusing on community involvement is a renewed interest in volunteerism. Rather than relying on government agencies to administer assistance efforts, people in the United States are interested in making a difference on a more personal level. With recent cuts in income taxes, individuals have been encouraged to take the initiative to give back to their communities. Getting involved in one's community is encouraged through many different efforts, and numerous organizations exist to help individuals connect with volunteer agencies, many of which serve youth.

It is not just organizations that have a renewed commitment to philanthropy, it is also wealthy individuals. Wealthy individuals have always donated much, but recent efforts show a changing trend that is likely to affect the way in which for-profit organizations carry out their philanthropic activities. According to a *Business Week* special issue on philanthropy (Byrne, 2002), a number of changes characterize today's philanthropy: New philanthropy is more ambitious—it tackles large issues such as educational reform and finding a cure for cancer. Donors also are more strategic and tend to use systematic approaches similar to those they use in running their businesses. Philanthropy has become more global, with some donors pursuing international agendas. A final difference is that the new philanthropy demands results and requires that milestones

must be met or funding could be ended. Each one of these changes affects the way in which organizations will carry out philanthropy in the future.

Increased attention to the importance of volunteerism and the philanthropic efforts of wealthy individuals has increased the salience of community service efforts for large corporations. Whether they give of their employees' time or their organizational resources, organizations adopt a prosocial approach to provide for youth when other funds are not available and when corporate philanthropy fulfills a company's desire to do good (Smith, 2003). An added benefit of prosocial efforts is the opportunity for employees to help youth by volunteering their time or money, which may increase the feeling that they are contributing to society through their paid work.

Economic Reasons

In addition to societal changes, new economic ways of thinking about corporate philanthropy are providing the business case for corporate philanthropy (Smith, 2003). Not so long ago, the award-winning economist Milton Friedman reportedly said that it was immoral to give away the money of corporate shareholders and that nothing that reduced shareholder wealth should be done (Friedman, 1970). Today's organizations, while keeping in mind Friedman's words, look to engage in the type of corporate philanthropy or social responsibility that increases the "reputational" wealth of an organization. Moreover, the need to show themselves as positive contributors to society has never been greater. As Smith (2003) notes, there is pressure on companies to address societal needs because of mistrust of business, backlash against globalization, and economic struggles. Therefore, rather than merely touting the advantages of the marketed product, the organization also enhances its reputation by engaging in and highlighting its charitable activities. McDonald's, for example, is well known for the Ronald McDonald House, an organization that helps terminally ill children and their families. To enhance the company's reputation, it is not enough that McDonald's engages in this and other types of prosocial activities; the company must also advertise its commitment to these causes, and these efforts enhance the firm's reputation. Many firms today do not spend as much money on advertising their good deeds as does McDonald's, but a quick glance at many large companies' Web sites reveals on each a section called "Community." Within that section the organizations describe the varied philanthropic activities in which they engage to better their immediate or larger community. The funding for these efforts does not come exclusively from philanthropic budgets, but from marketing as well as human resource departments (Smith, 1994). This change underscores organizations' understanding of how philanthropy affects their bottom line.

Many organizations now are making concentrated efforts to show that their contributions to society are important to the bottom line. Corporate social responsibility is defined as "the obligation of the firm to use its resources in ways to benefit society, through committed participation as a member of society taking

into account the society at large and improving welfare of society at large independent of direct gains of the company" (Kok, Weile, McKenna, & Brown, 2001, p. 288, as cited in Snider, Hill, & Martin, 2003). If, in addition to benefiting society, the organization's efforts increase sales, this should in turn also benefit shareholders. Some corporate philanthropy efforts affect what is known as the triple bottom line, which includes the interrelationship of social, environmental, and financial factors (Aspen Institute, 2003). A recent meta-analysis of 52 studies of 33,878 organizations showed that both social responsibility and, to a lesser extent, environmental responsibility were strongly related to accounting-based measures of corporate financial performance and also, but less so, to market-based indicators (Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003). Consumers are becoming more cognizant of the triple bottom line and are willing to punish companies that are not socially responsible by switching loyalties to a competitor (Mracek, 2003). In fact, after years of listening to customers, Tom Chappell, CEO of Tom's of Maine (purveyor of natural personal care products), is convinced that there is a vast untapped market across the United States that cares enormously about Tom's values and will buy its products because of their quality and the company's values (Whitford, 2004, p. 30).

Human Resources Reasons

A third compelling reason why organizations adopt a prosocial approach is that it can effectively aid in the management of the organization's human resources. Recruiting and retaining talented people constitute one of the key challenges that organizations face in today's work environment. Several organizations, including top-rated UPS, lead the way in corporate volunteerism by providing managers time off from their regular duties to immerse themselves in a volunteer experience. Managers often return from these experiences changed for the better, according to their subordinates (Whitaker, 2000); the result is higher rates of retention, not only among the managers, but also among their employees. Retention is also facilitated as employees who participate in corporate volunteering projects get to know one another better, which increases their sense of being a team and results in better organizational citizenship behavior (Drury, 2004). Employees at Spectra Contract Flooring who participated in their organization's efforts for Meals on Wheels found that it was an excellent way to do team building without resorting to the much maligned ropes courses and trust falls that characterized many team-building retreats. At the same time that employees got to know each other better, they also gained a more positive sense of the organization that provided them with the time and resources to volunteer, thus enhancing their overall organizational commitment (Drury, 2004).

Illustrative Examples

What socially responsible efforts have organizations developed to focus on youth issues? Among others, prosocial organizations reach out to youth by

tutoring, mentoring, and helping them acquire life skills. Some organizations provide comprehensive youth programs that incorporate all three activities. Following an analysis process utilized by Snider et al. (2003), we used the Internet to examine the community-based programs focused on helping youth in a number of organizations to glean the key characteristics of these successful programs. We started with *Fortune* magazine's list of most admired companies, which in addition to ratings of overall admiration provides ratings of companies with respect to how they stack up on the dimension of social responsibility. In 2004, the 10 most admired companies with respect to social responsibility, in descending order, were United Parcel Service, Alcoa, Washington Mutual, BP, McDonald's, Procter & Gamble, Fortune Brands, Altria (Philip Morris), Vulcan Materials, and American Express ("Most Admired Companies," 2004). Through a review of written and electronic literature, we also identified a number of other organizations that were leaders in these arenas, including Ben & Jerry's, Tom's of Maine, Patagonia, REI, and the Body Shop. We visited the Web sites of these companies looking for programs specifically targeted for youth. The lessons provided by these leading-edge companies should be useful to other organizations setting up similar programs.

Comprehensive Programs Can Be Used to Develop Management Talent

United Parcel Service receives the top spot for a number of efforts, but a glance at the company's Web site underscores why it is perceived as the most socially responsible company in the 2004 poll. Its corporate sustainability statement—"At UPS, we believe our business success depends upon balancing economic, social and environmental objectives"—shows a deep commitment to what the organization does. UPS, a company of 340,000 employees, has some of the most comprehensive volunteer programs available. UPS invests approximately \$500,000 a year to send managers through its 4-week Community Internship Program, which was created in 1968 during the civil rights movement. Each year about 50 employees participate by working with nonprofit organizations in one of four locations—New York City, Chicago, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and McAllen, Texas—in a range of activities. They may build houses with Habitat for Humanity, mentor, assist adults with physical disabilities, or work with teachers in classrooms. What does UPS expect to get out of its volunteer programs? For one thing, there is the opportunity for managers to learn compassion for those who live in harsh circumstances. Second, this compassion translates directly to managers' ability to listen to and be more understanding of their employees (Whitaker, 2000).

Organizations Leverage Their Technical Strengths

Many companies try to focus on their technical strengths in providing youth programs. The lesson here for organizations thinking about how best to serve

their communities is to engage in activities that allow them to use what they know. Specifically, their employees work to share their specialized knowledge. For example, banks tend to provide financial services, whereas technology companies share technology. Washington Mutual provides examples of working with youth in two programs that call on their financial and banking knowledge. The first, a high school internship program called HIP, includes extensive job training and work experience, but also helps Washington Mutual recruit and mentor new talent. In 2003 nearly 800 high school students across the country graduated from the two-year program (Washington Mutual, 2003). To become involved in the program, HIP interns must have at least a 3.0 grade point average and be actively involved at school. Interns also receive career development and life skills training, including how to manage personal finances, write a résumé, and navigate job interviewing processes. After successful completion of the program, interns may apply for open positions at Washington Mutual. Students also are offered counseling for financial assistance for college through the company's education loan program. According to Washington Mutual, approximately 15,000 students received counseling in 2003. The second program that capitalizes on Washington Mutual's technical knowledge is its Financial Education Advisory Team, which recommends curriculum development to improve financial literacy in schools.

The efforts of EDS (Electronic Data Services), an information technology and business process outsourcing company based in the Dallas, Texas, suburb of Plano, take advantage of the firm's excellence in technology. Its 132,000 employees have a chance to spread their talents in a number of ways supported by the organization. For example, they partner with more than 100 schools in 10 countries through an education outreach program. The volunteer opportunities include mentoring, e-mentoring, tutoring, reading, providing technical and consulting assistance, and providing job-shadowing opportunities, as well as involvement in organizations such as Junior Achievement and I Have a Dream. In fact, EDS does this all so well that it received the Points of Light Award for Volunteer Programs in 2001 for the 21,500 employees who volunteered 58,000 hours. EDS ensures effective goodwill to enhance its reputation by using its technology to help others.

Organizational Tactics That Contribute to Positive Youth Development

The previous examples show some of the varied ways in which organizations provide assistance to youth. We suggest the following typology for more systematically examining the youth development efforts of socially responsible organizations. Organizations can provide help by (1) giving employees paid time off to volunteer their time with charities or organizations of employees' choice, such as Tom's of Maine; (2) developing internal programs to aid youth in their development, such as the Los Angeles Times Summer Jobs Training Program; (3) becoming a partner with selected programs by providing ongoing financial resources and employee time and commitment, such as those technology organizations who participate in MentorNet; and (4) raising

money for designated organizations and/or donating supplies to schools or youth programs.

Giving Employees Time Off for Volunteer Efforts

Some organizations offer paid time off in the form of sabbaticals or as part of their employee development programs to employees who volunteer to help youth or other needy groups. Tom's of Maine offers several innovative volunteer opportunities to employees who want to help youth ("Tom's of Maine Natural Care Community," 2004). The company's commitment to social responsibility is substantial: 10% of pretax profits goes to charitable organizations, and management provides support for employees to spend 5% of their time volunteering in the community. The commitment to helping youth is extraordinary: The company also offers grants to organizations that help youth.

Tom's of Maine supports—both financially and with employee time and effort—Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots, an environmental and humanitarian program for youth from preschool through university levels. Roots and Shoots groups are involved in projects as diverse as developing recycling programs, building habitat gardens, and collecting food and clothing for homeless people.

Developing Internal Programs

While some organizations lend out their employees to help youth or other needy groups, other organizations develop their own internal programs to help youth, such as the school-to-work programs offered by Washington Mutual. A national study in 1997 found that 37% of employers provided some school-to-work programs, up from 25% the year before (Hulsey, Van Noy, & Silverberg, 1999). One organization, the Los Angeles Times, designed and implemented a school-to-work program to respond to a particular need in its community. The Summer Jobs Training Program was developed after the Los Angeles riots in 1992 ("Facts about the Los Angeles Times," 2003). The program is intended to provide high-potential, low-opportunity youth not just with a summer internship but also with new skills, connections, and scholarships. It is also an excellent way for the Times to partner with community service agencies and give back to the communities it serves. Typically, the program provides between 50 and 100 young people a year with full-time internships as well as life skills training sessions, personalized career counseling sessions, opportunities to compete for a scholarship, and a one-on-one mentor. The program is evaluated every year and, according to the Times, continues to be effective. As one young participant stated, "The most important thing to me was that the internship at the Times was a real pick me up. It changed my life. I'm more responsible and know how to deal with the corporate world better" (Ensher & Murphy, 1997).

Research shows that school-to-work programs benefit youth. As a result of the School-to-Work Act of 1994, nearly \$1.5 billion in grants was available between 1994 and 1998 to develop partnerships involving schools, employers,

organized labor, and other entities. Follow-up research on the effectiveness of the programs receiving these grants has yielded somewhat mixed results. A study using the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that 529 young people who participated in school-to-work programs were more likely than nonparticipants to engage in job-seeking behavior and had stronger positive expectations about the future (Riggio & Riggio, 1999). The participants did not engage in fewer "delinquent" behaviors than the nonparticipants. The variety of school-to-work programs most likely contributed to the mixed results on program effectiveness. These research studies underscore the need for careful program development, keeping in mind appropriate goals and evaluation procedures.

Partnering with Nonprofits

A third way in which organizations help youth is to partner with nonprofit organizations by providing ongoing financial support or employee time and commitment. MentorNet is an excellent example of an innovative partnership between a youth-oriented nonprofit organization and for-profit sponsors. The purpose of this electronic mentoring program is to match female science students (science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines) with a professional mentor in a specific field (MentorNet, 2004). Since 1998 MentorNet has matched 20,000 mentors and protégés. MentorNet was initially funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation and founding partners such as AT&T and Intel. It also maintains strong financial partnerships with Alcoa, IBM, Microsoft, and 3M.

MentorNet is a standout, not only in the scope and service it provides, but also in its in-depth approach to program evaluation. In the past several years, protégés have consistently reported increased confidence in their success in science and engineering as well as an increased desire to pursue a career in their field. This is very important as the field of science has difficulty attracting and retaining young women. Mentors report significant rewards as well. Mentors found that they increased their own professional development, increased their commitment to their field and their employers, and found both an opportunity for self-reflection and a sense of satisfaction through being an e-mentor (MentorNet, 2004). In sum, this innovative program offers a valuable and flexible way for working adults to help youth (including both undergraduate and graduate college students) from the convenience of their workstations or laptops, anywhere, anytime.

A wholly different example of for-profit and nonprofit partnering comes from Ben & Jerry's ice cream. Ben & Jerry's has a social and environmental assessment (see "Social and Environmental Assessment," 2002) in which philanthropic and corporate social responsibility aims are made explicit. The company contributed \$1,206,412 to the Ben & Jerry's Foundation in 2002 and continues to offer grants to needy organizations. One of its more innovative approaches to helping youth is through its PartnerShop program, which uses Ben & Jerry's scoop shops to provide job and entrepreneurial training to young people who

face barriers to employment, such as mental illness, homelessness, or past conviction. Not only can participating nonprofits provide work to their clientele, they can also generate profits to sustain the job training program for the future. Nearly 1,750 youth have been trained through PartnerShops since 1987, and although such stores are not as profitable as the regular scoop shops, Ben & Jerry's has recently taken steps to improve overall profitability for participating shops.

Some organizations work through local school districts to provide opportunities for high school students. A work-based learning program in the Philadelphia school district paired high school students with adult mentors at their work site. Linnehan (2001) found that students who participated in the program for more than half a year had higher grades and improved attendance records. Those who participated for a shorter time did not reflect the same benefits. In a longitudinal study of the same program, Linnehan (2003) compared students who were in informal mentoring relationships at work, those who worked without a mentor, and those who did not work during the academic year. Students who were more satisfied with their mentors were more likely to believe that school was relevant to the workplace in addition to having higher self-esteem at the end of the academic year than students who did not work. These studies showed the tangible benefits of company and school partnerships, as well as proper program evaluation techniques.

Donating Money or Supplies

A fourth way in which organizations help youth is by raising money for designated organizations or by donating supplies. Microsoft, a leader in this area, in 2003 contributed more than \$40 million in cash and \$224 million in software to nearly 5,000 nonprofit organizations ("Microsoft Citizenship Community Affairs Fact Sheet," 2004). The company's global program, Microsoft Unlimited Potential, focuses on providing technology skills for underserved young people and adults through community-based technology and learning centers. Microsoft has donated \$88 million in software and \$12 million in cash to Boys and Girls Clubs of America ("Microsoft Community Affairs in the News," 2004). Efforts such as these help bridge the digital divide among youth across society.

Summary

As shown in our many examples, prosocial organizations are helping youth in a wide range of activities through various methods. Companies can either pay individuals or groups to volunteer with agencies that assist youth or they can develop programs alone or by teaming with nonprofits specifically aimed at helping youth. In addition, many organizations choose to donate money or supplies, or have their employees raise funds for youth-related causes. Although all of these efforts provide optional ways for companies to enhance their corporate reputations, fulfill their social responsibilities, and improve their communities,

companies can take many more steps to ensure that their efforts are effective. In the next section we turn to ways in which these efforts can be enhanced to assist as many youth as possible to the fullest extent.

Improving Organizations' Efforts in Youth Programs

The efforts of many organizations are to be applauded. The sheer volume of hours, money, and supplies contributed to helping youth in the United States as well as globally is phenomenal. However, these efforts can become all-encompassing and detract from bottom-line profits. Moreover, these efforts are not simple to devise, implement, or evaluate, and are sometimes difficult to explain to shareholders and employees. Employees who may be laid off do not look favorably on corporations giving away money (Smith, 1994). In addition, employees who are asked to increase their workload to meet competitive pressures may not have the time or energy to spend extra hours volunteering. Shareholders may not see the benefits of the efforts. Take the example of Timberland. In 1995, after a number of years of growth, sales began to decline sharply, and the company's community involvement efforts were criticized by shareholders and employees (Austin & Elias, 1996). Communicating to employees the importance of Timberland's service programs as part of its mission helped the company weather the criticism, but it was not an easy time for the organization. Eventually management was able to show a balanced approach that satisfied all stakeholders.

When companies are actively engaged in a wide range of activities that benefit youth, it is exceedingly important for them to conceive, implement, monitor, and evaluate their programs carefully. In other words, it is not enough to offer programs; it is even more important to ensure the quality of the programs. There are a number of ways in which organizations can make sure their efforts to help youth are in fact effective. First and foremost is taking time to understand the specific needs of young people and to recognize the specific challenges one might face in working with youth. Individuals and organizations must understand the issues of working with youth populations. Organizations can help through training and realistic previews of the volunteer efforts to ensure success for the individual. Overcoming barriers one might experience as organizations encourage increasingly more volunteer efforts is also important. Finally, organizations must conduct and publish appropriate program evaluations.

Understanding Special Needs of Youth

We must recognize the strong need of those just emerging from childhood for supportive adults and settings in which young people can develop a secure identity, explore the world beyond the self, and learn the skills for responsible, productive, and fulfilling adulthood.

—Carnegie Foundation Report on Developing Adolescence, 1995

Adolescence is a special time for youth. Because of developmental processes, the needs of elementary school children differ from those of middle school youth, and both differ from those of high school students. For example, according to Havighurst (1972, as cited in Cobb, 2003), the most important developmental tasks for students in early adolescence involve achieving emotional independence from their parents and establishing a masculine or feminine social role, while for younger children basic school skills and getting along with age mates are very important. By the time a youth reaches high school, another group of issues become salient, especially those surrounding choices about college and vocation. Recent reviews of the concerns facing youth, especially adolescents, show that issues today are very similar to those seen in the past. They include substance use and abuse, failure in school, poverty, delinquency, family problems, and physical and mental health problems (Lerner & Galambos, 1998). Many youth programs are aimed at increasing resiliency factors or building them into the youth's environment. These positive influences include supportive families, caring communities and schools, effective coping strategies, and supportive adult network structures (Cobb, 2003). Exposure to work is an important feature of effective youth programs because work is central to adolescent identity, and programs that give them work experiences help prepare them to enter the labor force (Dryfoos, 1990).

Organizations should hire outside consultants or local school district personnel to become acquainted with the youth population they serve. Although the needs of youth are homogeneous in many respects, there are unique challenges for particular communities. When one of us developed a service-learning mentoring program for our college students, the Kravis Mentoring Program at Claremont McKenna College, we worked closely with the community to determine which children needed what type of assistance. The city's human services department had compiled survey data and demographic data in collaboration with the school district to determine which age students were in particular need of an after-school mentoring program. The mentoring was not generic: A combination of team and one-on-one mentoring was developed to address some of the social issues many of the students were facing as they made the transition from elementary school to a large junior high school. Not only did our background research help in picking the target population and the overall design of the mentoring program, it also gave the mentors a comprehensive background on students, providing them knowledge they needed to make them effective mentors. From our review of many of the company-based youth programs such as those found at EDS, it is clear that these companies have worked closely with the community schools to ensure that the programs that are developed meet the unique needs of the youth population.

Overcoming Challenges in Working with Youth

Regardless of the type of program, working with youth is often challenging; especially youth from backgrounds other than those of adult volunteers. What

can organizations do to ensure that employees are prepared to contribute their time in youth programs? For the Los Angeles Times program there was specific training to prepare the supervisors and mentors to help encourage the interns over the course of the summer. The training acquainted the mentors and supervisors with some of the thinking that youth bring to the workplace, as well as reminders that they would be working with very young students and needed to model appropriate behavior. The interns received training in appropriate work behavior. Although some had held jobs previously, this environment was new to them. The Times used role playing and other experiential activities to let interns know what to expect on the job.

In talking with organizations that run youth programs, we discovered that they recognize the importance of having a helpful staff that serves as a supervisory resource. Organizations that have been in their communities for a number of years will have access to other resources to prepare individuals to get involved in their youth programs. It is incumbent on organizations to provide a positive experience for youth and for their employees. The trust that is developed between the community and the organization cannot be jeopardized through shoddy program implementation and follow-through. In this section we describe some of these challenges and what organizations have done or might do to address them.

According to a review, 37% of all students participating in school-to-work partnerships were either African American or Latino (Hulsey et al., 1999, cited in Linnehan, 2001); these programs focused on non-college-bound disadvantaged student populations (Lewis, Stone, Shipley, & Madzar, 1998). Some individuals have a difficult time understanding how different some children's backgrounds might be from their own; there are many things that middle- and upper-middle-class individuals take for granted.

In one of our experiences with a tutoring program, a tutor was attempting to help a child develop better homework habits. He told the child that he would be more successful in completing his homework if he sat at his desk every night in his bedroom from 6:00 to 8:00. The boy gave him a puzzled look. The tutor asked the child, "Don't you have a desk?" Not only did he not have a desk, the boy told him, but he did not have a bedroom. He shared a bedroom with a number of family members and did his homework on the front porch. At that moment, the tutor realized that he would have to listen carefully to the child to understand what types of hints he could offer for improving the child's grades that would be effective given his home situation. The tutoring program later developed a training program for future volunteers based on the lessons the tutors had learned in previous years.

To ensure a positive experience both for volunteers and the young people who receive help, prosocial organizations should prepare employee volunteers for the challenges they may face before they begin their volunteer assignments. Some adults may find it difficult to relate to students of certain ages. Although younger children may be more outgoing and trusting of an unknown adult, they may also be wary of a stranger. The adult may need to win their trust before mentoring, tutoring, helping with homework, or reading can occur. Mentors,

tutors, and those helping with other youth tasks need to appreciate the time it may take to get to the real work of the partnership. Numerous online and print resources address some of the challenges and may be useful in helping organizations ensure program success.

Beyond differences that may exist in age and social class, prosocial organizations need to make volunteers aware of the potential challenges ethnic differences can play in a relationship. Training on the Web site of the National Mentoring Partnership (Mentoring.org) might be useful for organizations embarking upon programs in which employees meet one-on-one with youth. In addition, organizations may conduct their own evaluation projects to look at the effects of ethnicity in their volunteer efforts.

In one study, we found that the summer internship program at the Los Angeles Times was cognizant that ethnicity in pairing of interns with mentors might be important. The data revealed that while same-race protégés initially liked their mentors more than those paired with different-race mentors, if, over time, the interns perceived their mentors to hold similar values or goals, then they were just as satisfied with different-race mentors (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). An example of different-race pairing comes from a Vietnamese American colleague of ours who was paired with an African American young man through Big Brothers. When they met, the mentor noticed that the boy looked disappointed. He made a joke, saying that he bet that the last person the boy expected to mentor him would be, as he put it, "an Asian dude." In spite of their different ethnic backgrounds, they quickly bonded over their love of video games and the same type of popular music.

It is also important that in pairings for tutoring, mentoring, and other types of relationships, the parties involved work to build rapport and overcome initial, perhaps stereotypic, beliefs that may impede the relationship. Prosocial organizations can build in exercises that many youth programs use to help the student and the employee get to know one another on a deeper level so that a connection can be made. Previous research shows some benefits to same-race as well as cross-race matching (see, for example, Linnehan, Weer, & Uhl, 2005). However, Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, and Lee (2002) found that same-race matching was differentially valuable for minority boys and girls involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America program. Therefore, race and gender remain important factors to consider when prosocial organizations design youth programs.

Another way in which prosocial organizations can ensure high-quality programs is to screen employee volunteers who will work with children. Not everyone is equally effective in working with children. Prosocial organizations can help prepare volunteers by having experienced volunteers talk to them about realistic objectives for what they may accomplish in their relationships. As much research has suggested, a bad relationship with an adult volunteer can be exceedingly harmful to a child who may already face a number of life stressors (Murphy, Johnson, Soto, & Gopez, 1997; Rhodes, 2002). Some adults may have a difficult time identifying with youth, especially if they have no children or their own children are of a different age. Music and clothing trends may seem very foreign to them. In addition, those who volunteer often have unrealistic

expectations about what they can accomplish with the child they set out to help. Some volunteers think they may be able to somehow “save” the child from whatever problems have led to the child’s present situation, or they become disenchanted with their efforts when they see no immediate changes in the child’s grades, behavior, or achievement.

Unfortunately, there is a rare possibility that something worse than unmet expectations or misunderstandings due to a so-called generation gap may happen. To prevent child abuse, agencies that have volunteers working with children use many different approaches. The Boy Scouts of America, for example, have developed effective procedures that other organizations could emulate (Potts, 1992). They include preventive leader selection procedures, creating barriers to child abuse, encouraging scouts to report improper behavior, and immediate removal of alleged offenders. Prosocial organizations must develop procedures before a problem arises.

Working with youth is very rewarding for most volunteers, but it takes a degree of preparation that organizations should provide for their employees. Educating employees about the reality of what might happen in relationships with youth and what goals are realistic should go a long way toward enhancing these efforts. Many best-practice prosocial organizations make a considerable effort to provide proper training and guidance to employees, and other organizations considering working with youth should look to them for guidance.

Overcoming Internal and External Organizational Barriers

Corporate volunteerism can boost workers’ productivity and morale, and, as we noted earlier, employees who are encouraged to give back to their communities and do something that they might not have done before are more likely to stay with their employer. Moreover, one author notes that employees who volunteer to teach literacy, English as a second language, or time-management skills can help others become more valuable workers and at the same time have an opportunity to demonstrate skills they have not been allowed to exercise in the workplace (Reardon, 2003).

Despite the advantages of volunteering, some employees, managers, and communities resist engaging in these efforts. Management might feel that resources of time and personnel are being diverted while also worrying that the causes they choose may become controversial. A community might worry about becoming dependent on the volunteer efforts of a business that could choose to relocate or to donate its efforts elsewhere (Reardon, 2003).

One way to reduce internal and external organizational barriers is to follow the lead of best-practice organizations and be very up-front in all efforts. For example, McDonald’s recently started an annual *Social Responsibility Report* in which the company provides information about the part of the business that is related to the communities it serves, the environment, employees, and relationships with suppliers (www.mcdonalds.com). Another way to reduce organizational barriers is to enlist the support of top management. Of course, no efforts for youth are approved without top management’s authorization, but active top

management participation in programs is a useful tool for getting employee buy-in for volunteering. According to some reports, a large percentage of executives take time to volunteer, providing invaluable role modeling.

The companies we outline here have done a great job of increasing volunteerism in their organizations. There are, however, many organizations that have to overcome resistance from many different angles. We find that carefully designed programs with specific goals for the company as well as for employees and the youth involved seem to be the most effective in improving general attitudes toward the program. A final tool for overcoming resistance and focusing on effectiveness is discussed in the next section.

Encouraging Evaluation and Sharing Research Results

Many business schools are encouraging research that focuses on both the environmental and the social impact of business decisions. For now, a handful of professors are spearheading that effort. The Beyond Pinstripes study is an ongoing effort to compare the approaches taken by MBA programs and professors to prepare students for a more comprehensive approach to social and environmental stewardship (Aspen Institute, 2003). For example, the study considers the extent to which courses in ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and business and society are offered, as well as whether those topics are integrated into standard business courses such as accounting and economics. As part of the research effort, "Faculty Pioneers" and M.B.A. programs from many institutions (Michigan, Stanford, Yale, and elsewhere) are selected on the basis of producing cutting-edge research on the environmental and social impact of business decisions (Aspen Institute, 2003).

Although the efforts of socially responsible organizations are laudable, making available comprehensive program evaluations, which might suggest important improvements and be used as a communication tool, would enhance these efforts tremendously. The efforts of many organizations should be compiled in common evaluation practices so that others could learn from lessons about effectiveness and challenges. Evaluation of the effectiveness of youth programs is difficult for a number of reasons: finding a control group, collecting the appropriate outcome data (if collecting data is allowed at all), needing to work closely with a school, understanding when change in outcomes should be assessed, and so on. All of these factors contribute to the reluctance of organizations to evaluate youth programs. The dearth of published research and the challenges in conducting evaluation research provide significant opportunities for researchers to partner with socially responsible organizations to conduct program evaluations.

Summary and Conclusions

The increased emphasis on corporate social responsibility has provided much-needed efforts in helping young people in a wide variety of ways. Societal,

economic, and human resources reasons have encouraged more organizations to help youth. In addition, many forward-thinking organizations have done much to volunteer their employees' time, develop programs, and donate resources. There are countless examples of companies that support youth development; however, the results of their programs are not widely disseminated, leaving companies that want to start their own efforts often either duplicating what might already be available or developing a program that will be less than effective. Many of the best-practice companies realize the steps necessary to lead to successful programs and have partnered with existing agencies to serve those who need it most. Their accomplishments are commendable and should be shared with others.

How Adults Can Help

Adults should look inside their companies to see what direct ways are available to help youth in their area. E-mentoring and e-volunteering are the wave of the future for busy professionals (Ensher, Heun, & Blanchard, 2003). Organizations can also engage in indirect methods of helping children, as exemplified by a recent study by the Points of Light Foundation highlighting the concept of "neighboring." Rather than working to help youth directly, volunteers work to help strengthen families in the neighborhood. Many organizations spend time helping in this manner. More assessment of how neighboring efforts affect youth development will encourage more indirect methods of helping youth and may offer opportunities for busy employees to get involved in their communities through their organizations.

Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce

Clearly, corporate America faces a number of challenges for long-term viability, and chief among these challenges is the development of the next generation of employees. Corporate social responsibility enables organizations to invest in future generations by creating an active pipeline of talented workers. Consider the following five major trends facing organizations: (1) greater diversity of the workforce; (2) globalization in terms of increased multinationals and international outsourcing; (3) increased need for better technological skills; (4) increase in service-based economy; and (5) renewed commitment to and interest in corporate ethics. Many of the challenges inherent in these trends can be effectively addressed with proper attention paid to opportunities for corporate social responsibility.

Our workforce continues to grow more diverse, not only in terms of age, race, and gender, but also in terms of sexual orientation, physical ability, and national origin (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2002). Preparing people to work collaboratively in spite of their differences led to a number of diversity-related efforts in the early 1990s; these efforts continue

today in diversity initiatives, revamped reward systems, and training and development. Organization-sponsored youth programs such as the Los Angeles Times Summer Jobs Training program give both today's workers and their young participants opportunities to enhance their skills in dealing effectively with diversity challenges. Program evaluations conducted by the Times revealed that supervisors, mentors, and the youth all learned valuable lessons about generational differences, leadership, and complementary work styles (Ensher & Murphy, 1997).

One would be hard pressed to read the business section of any newspaper today without finding evidence of increasing globalization for industries and organizations. Youth development programs such as the Tom's of Maine partnership with Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots program, the Body Shop's Children on the Edge program, and the international burgeoning of MentorNet into 55 countries are all examples of how best-practice organizations act globally. In encouraging employees to get involved on an international and yet very personal level with youth from around the world, these organizations enable employees of today and potential workers of tomorrow to break down traditional barriers of geography and nationality.

One of the greatest tools enhancing globalization is the increased use of technology, and particularly widespread communication via the Internet. At the same time that technology improves so many lives, lack of technology and access to the Internet creates the ever widening gulf between the haves and the have-nots that is known as the digital divide ("Microsoft Citizenship Community Affairs Fact Sheet," 2004). Global programs such as Microsoft's Unlimited Potential are an important first step in bridging this digital divide.

One major aspect of globalization is the trend toward outsourcing, particularly in terms of manufacturing and, more recently, administrative tasks and call service centers as well (Bhagwati, 2004). As the United States continues to move toward a service-based economy, it is more important than ever that employees exhibit skills related to service, such as interpersonal competence and customer service know-how. Therefore, programs such as Ben & Jerry's PartnerShops provide extreme at-risk youth (e.g., homeless, mentally ill) with exactly the skills they will need to survive in this service-based economy and give employers access to a previously underutilized pool of workers.

The trend toward greater accountability and corporate ethics is a final challenge for American business. In recent years we have seen an increasing spate of corporate scandals and high-profile bankruptcies (e.g., Enron and WorldCom). This in turn has led to reforms and new legislation (for example, the Sarbanes-Oxley reporting requirements) and a renewed interest in corporate ethics in colleges and universities (Harris, 2002). The prosocial efforts toward youth development highlighted by best-practice organizations as outlined here all represent important strides toward increased corporate ethics. Corporate America should take note: Social responsibility and youth development have a wide variety of benefits in terms of meeting short-term goals and ensuring long-term sustainability.

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