

ABSTRACT

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Corporate volunteering from an NPO perspective: Unravelling how different forms of corporate volunteering shape the value creation process

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Abstract:

Corporate Volunteering (CV) delineates a new form of volunteering involving that a company offers time of its employees to nonprofit organizations (Meijs/Van der Voort 2004). Up to now most research has focused on the business perspective and has investigated why companies and volunteers engage in such collaborations (e.g. Gautiere/Pache 2015). Only a few studies have addressed CV from the view of nonprofits (e.g. Samuel et al. 2013). Overall, studies from the latter perspective question whether the often cited win-win-win effects of CV hold true for nonprofit organizations (ibid). One difficulty relates to finding suitable tasks for corporate volunteers (ibid.) Thus whether companies donate the core competencies of their employees in the form of pro-bono services, such as legal counselling or IT-skills, or employees are involved in more general tasks they are not specifically trained at (e.g. help with painting a room or in a soup kitchen), what we call layperson CV, is assumed to influence the outcome of the partnership.

In our study we thus focus on the question whether and how pro-bono and layperson CV create different forms of values for nonprofits. For doing so we refer to the concept of collaborative value creation by Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b). This framework assumes that the resources exchanged in the course of collaboration are decisive for the form of value created and distinguishes between resource complementarity and whether the resources are generic or more

organization-specific. In our case, pro-bono corporate volunteering is a specific resource, while layperson CV a more generic one. The value to be created can be divided into four main forms, such as associational value (e.g. credibility), transferred resource value (the receipt of a resource such as time, money), interaction value (e.g. reputation, trust) or synergistic value (Austin & Seitanidi 2012a). Taking this as a starting point, we ask for the expectations of nonprofits engaging in CV, for the different form of value actually created and the particular decisions and tensions that arise. We expect insights into how (different) corporate volunteering arrangements need to be organized in order to create value for nonprofits.

We apply a qualitative research design, conducting twenty qualitative semi-structured interviews with the coordinators of corporate-volunteering programs (ten experienced in pro-bono CV and ten in layperson CV) in nonprofit organizations in Austria.

Most important references:

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