Five Ways Volunteering Can Help Your Career

1. It’s a Chance to Network

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2. You Could Discover Your Passion

Barbara Abbot was out of work for almost a decade when she decided to start working again. Focusing on corporate management again, she volunteered at the San Francisco Food Bank. I work lead to a full-time position. She never expected that to

“The first day I volunteered here, I never thought I’d end up with a full-time job,” she told Monster.com (http://career-advice.monster.com/job-search/getting-started/volunteer-to-full-time-article.asp). “Looking back, though, it seems that was a sensible way to make an impression.” Abbot’s story isn’t uncommon. There are countless examples of people who have turned the volunteer experience into a satisfying job.

3. Hiring Managers Value Volunteers

Even if your volunteer work is unrelated to your desired job, hiring managers take it seriously. LinkedIn survey found 41 percent of hiring managers view volunteer work as equal to a paid job. This is especially beneficial to anyone who has been unemployed but volunteered while searching for a job. More importantly, potential employees have a 27 percent better chance of being hired than people who don’t volunteer according to the Corporation for National and Community Service.

There’s a disconnect between applicants and hiring managers based on how they value volunteer experience. Eighty-one percent of hiring managers feel volunteer experience is valuable, according to volunteer impact survey (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/09/deloitte-volunteer_impact_survey-college-grads_n_3726177/). Despite that, only 46 percent of college students felt volunteering would help them land a job.

Tip of the Day

It turns out volunteers aren’t sharing their experience in their resumes. LinkedIn survey (http://fortune.com/2011/10/20/should-you-include-volunteer-work-on/) found 89 percent of people volunteered, yet only 45 percent listed it on their resume. Talk about a missed opportunity!
4. You’ll Learn New Skills

Employers also value volunteering efforts because they engage employees and help them build new skills (http://www.frontstream.com/engaging-employees-workplace-volunteering). There are no shortages of nonprofit organizations in any city, and their missions can range from education to advocacy. With many nonprofits short-staffed and lacking resources, there are a number of potential tasks you could work on the website, track donations using special products or organize large-scale events. If you’re interested in trying anything, local organizations will welcome you on board. Every task you pick up is a chance to improve and expand your personal branding. You won’t be paid, but you’ll accrue valuable hands-on experience that you can take ownership of.

5. You’ll Grow as a Person

It’s a proven fact that volunteering makes most people happier in life and improves their men’s health (http://www.webmd.com/balance/news/20130823/volunteering-may-make-people-happier-and-healthier). Volunteers have a 20 percent lower risk of death than people who don’t volunteer. Volunteering in life can have a huge impact in your “real” job and ensure you don’t get burned out. Disposition and energy levels will improve, while the risk of burnout decreases. Happiness day-to-day work more enjoyable.

Self-confidence goes a long way in furthering your career, and volunteering provides the outlet for this valuable trait. It doesn’t matter what you’re doing as long as it gives you a sense of satisfaction.

Make Volunteering Work

The most important thing when choosing how and where to volunteer is to find something you’re passionate about. Keep an eye on Facebook and check with your friends about any volunteering opportunities. Sites like Idealist.org (http://www.idealista.org) can also lead you to some promising volunteering options. When you find something you enjoy doing, all the above benefits will be in fruition.

Now go out there and find what you like.
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