

DIRECTORS COLUMN

Scott Witte, CGC, *Cantigny Golf Club*



WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME??!!

*We live in a world where many believe that "One good deed deserves another." Often this is translated into, "If I do A-B-C for you...you do X-Y-Z for me," and all is right with the W.I.F.M. universe, right? I am here to tell you that some of the most valuable experiences you will ever gain in your lifetime, you'll get from **volunteering**. Whether you expect something or nothing in return, you'll receive more than you ever imagined.*

So what's in it for you? Here are some reasons to volunteer:

Learn or develop a new skill

Volunteering can be the perfect vehicle for discovering something you are really good at or for developing a new job skill. You might even improve your job opportunities. Just because you have finished your education and are employed, doesn't mean you should stop taking on new challenges. Almost one quarter (23%) of people say they volunteer to develop new skills.

- 82% of younger volunteers, ages 15 to 24, report gaining increased communication skills
- 49% of employed people said their volunteer activities gave them new skills that they could apply directly to their job
- 77% of the same group greatly improved their interpersonal skills

Who knows, you might even discover that you love writing articles for *On Course*!

Be a part of your community

Everywhere we turn, there are opportunities to serve. I am not just talking about the MAGCS. I am talking about your kid's school, local food pantries, community outreach programs, and faith based organizations. Volunteering in these arenas is about helping others and having an impact on people's wellbeing.

Motivation and sense of achievement

Volunteers experience a sense of achievement and motivation that comes from their enthusiasm and desire to help. All this is done of your own accord. When we volunteer we give of ourselves, and it has an overwhelmingly positive effect on the psyche.

Boost your career options

A survey carried out by TimeBank through Reed Executive showed that among 200 leading businesses

- 73% of employers would recruit a candidate with volunteering experience over one without
- 94% of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills
- 94% of employees who had volunteered in order to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary, or being promoted

Did I get your attention yet, or are my statistics boring you?

New interests and hobbies

As golf course superintendents we have the potential to get wrapped up in the world of "Turf" and everything golf. Volunteering can provide an escape from everyday routine and create balance in our lives. Finding new interests and hobbies can be fun, relaxing, and energizing. Sometimes a volunteer experience can lead you to something you never even thought about or help you discover a new interest.

New experiences

Volunteering is a brilliant way to get life experience. The beauty of it is that it gives back in peculiar ways. Over time, the benefits seep into who we are as individuals. It helps define our character, our passion, and our ability to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.

Meeting a diverse range of people

Volunteering brings together a diverse range of people from all backgrounds and walks of life. Both the recipients of your efforts and your fellow volunteers can be a source of inspiration and a means to develop your interpersonal skills. It also offers an incredible networking opportunity. Not only will you develop lasting personal and professional relationships, but

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it's also a great way to learn about people from all walks of life, different environments, and new industries. You can never tell who you will meet, what new information you will learn, and what impact this could have on your life.

Send a signal to your employer, teachers, friends and family

People pay attention to your life outside the environment in which they have direct contact with you. For example, your employer would be interested in the activities that give you a good work-life balance, just as academic institutions are interested in your extra-curricular activities. Volunteering reflects and supports a complete picture of you and gives real examples of your commitment, dedication, and interests.

So consider volunteering!

The end of the season is fast approaching, so take advantage of the slow months this winter. Get involved somewhere, somehow. The intangibles of your volunteer experiences will stay with you for a lifetime. It's worth it. That's what's in it for you!

-OC

References:

Ten Professional Development Benefits of Volunteering (Everything I Learned in Life I Learned Through Volunteering). Mary V. Merrill, LSW, Merrill Associates. TimeBank Volunteer Research. World Volunteerweb. National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

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