



**ENGAGE
FOR
SUCCESS**

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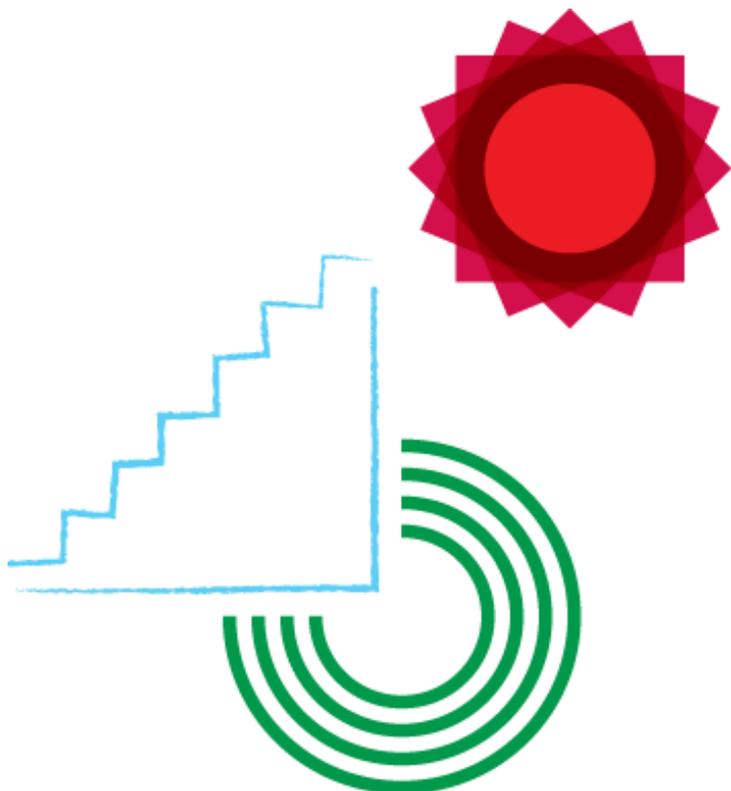
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VOLUNTEERING

Benefiting employee, employer
and local good causes

Story

Grass Roots UK Limited
July 2012



VOLUNTEERING

Business Services provider Grass Roots enables employees to make a contribution to local and national good causes through two days paid volunteering work each year.



Background

Research shows that there is a clear connection between the health and profitability of a company and the general wellbeing of the community in which it does business. The central and local governments cannot tackle all social problems or provide all the solutions. The skills and resources of the private sector can provide the impetus to help many of these communities.

The reputation of an organisation, its image as an employer and its participation in local affairs undoubtedly improves its competitiveness and its appeal to those seeking employment. For many organisations, community volunteering has become an established facet of the company culture and is viewed as integral to personal growth, training and development. Exceptional or sustained community engagement is often recognised and rewarded, potentially resulting in a highly motivated, communicative, loyal and skilled workforce. The positive impact on employee relations can be immeasurable.

The concept of corporate and social responsibility has been part the company DNA since Grass Roots was founded in 1980. Many employees are local, their children go to local schools, they play for the local sports clubs and visit the local theatre; and it gives us all enormous satisfaction to see what a difference our skills, money and time can make.

Volunteering as a benefit

Grass Roots' volunteering scheme provides satisfying experiences for employees and promotes inter-departmental relationship building and raised morale.

As an equal opportunities employer, with a keen focus on employee wellbeing and development it's also an opportunity for individuals to get a boost for their skills and experience in areas such as time management, team building and communication. In some cases, volunteering activities can offer a similar learning experience to more 'conventional' (and higher cost!) training and team building activities.

All Grass Roots employees can take one day paid each year to carry out voluntary work – either for a cause of their choice, or as part of a corporate-sponsored programme. Activities have involved painting for a local hostel, gardening at a children's hospital, and complete the occasional outrageous physical challenge to raise large amounts of sponsorship money!

The Friendship Garden

In the summer of 2011, a team of 20 enthusiastic 'Rooters' designed, built and planted a Friendship Garden for Grove Road Primary School in Tring, as part of a new scheme being set up by national anti-bullying children's charity Kidscape. The volunteer team had a budget of £2,000 to work with, from funds raised by their colleagues in support of the Kidscape initiative.

An area of overgrown bushes and weeds was transformed into a peaceful and relaxing environment where pupils can sit quietly away from the hustle and bustle of the playground. We also designed and built seating, a wind sculpture, two fountains, a mirror and wall art. Finally – following a special request from the children - a small population of garden gnomes was also added!

Creating Friendship Gardens is a new project for Kidscape, and the aim is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for any child that wishes to use them. As part their initiative, Kidscape has trained playground staff to help them recognise and deal with any bullying behaviour.

For more information on Kidscape:

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

For Grass Roots' latest CSR Report (2011):

http://www.grassroots.uk.com/flash/csr_2011/index.html

