Strategies for corporate volunteer programs

Estrategias para programas de voluntariado corporativo

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1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) constitutes, on the one hand, a management philosophy; and on the other, a business model involved with its environment and its stakeholders, paying attention not only to the maximization of shares value and the economic benefit, but also, oriented towards a wide range of more prosocial activities and policies.

Moreover, the phenomenon of Corporate Volunteering - henceforth CV - can be considered as an element in CSR policies. However, it can also be placed under other more specific patterns; such as, for example: corporate citizenship, corporate philanthropy, corporate social performance, corporate community investment, business in society, or corporate social responsiveness.

The term Corporate Volunteering refers to the voluntary and planned involvement of an organization in the sustainable development of its community through actions carried out by its employees, family and friends (Sanchez-Hernandez and Gallardo-Vázquez, 2013).

CV is a form of "non-spontaneous" aid that offers new perspectives on helping behavior (Clary and Snyder, 1991), beyond traditional monetary donation.

However, an effective CV program needs to be managed from the key of so-called strategic philanthropy, looking for the creation of shared value (Porter and Kramer, 2011). It should generate benefits, first for society as a whole; secondly, for the sector or cause that receives the specific attention (NGO, social problem, etc.); and certainly also for the company itself (Brewis, 2004). In doing so, employees would benefit from their own satisfaction of participating as volunteers, for the learning they can acquire.

It may also increase motivation, self-confidence, leadership develo-

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this research is to study the strategies to implement Corporate Volunteer programs effectively based on the motivations that guide employees to participate in this type of programs. The lack of knowledge about the most effective policies and strategies may be behind the low participation quotas that companies have in their Corporate Volunteering Programs. We carried out a qualitative empirical study in Spain to define a model that incorporates these policies and strategic axes, starting from the motivations and determinants of employee participation in Corporate Volunteer programs.

RESUMEN DEL ARTÍCULO

El objetivo de esta investigación es estudiar cuáles son las estrategias para implementar programas de Voluntariado Corporativo de manera efectiva partiendo de las motivaciones que guían a los empleados a participar en este tipo de programas. El desconocimiento sobre cuáles son las políticas y estrategias más efectivas, puede estar detrás de las bajas cuotas de participación que tienen las empresas en sus programas de Voluntariado Corporativo. Realizamos un estudio empírico de carácter cualitativo en España para definir un modelo que incorpore estas políticas y ejes estratégicos, partiendo de las motivaciones y factores determinantes de la participación de los empleados en los programas de Voluntariado Corporativo.

pment, and other skills. Without a doubt, they will gain greater visibility with managers and directors. All this, surely, it could contribute to the increase of the productivity. In addition, employers would benefit improving their image, increasing their reputation, and because of the greater morale and skills acquired by their employees. In its case, the third sector would see how the volume of resources and people to solve social problems increase (Sajardo and Ribas, 2014). As we indicated, CV can also serve to attract talent. The literature goes on to state that the so-called generation Y, expressly demands it (Booth et al, 2009). Among the benefits of this type of practice is that, through their participation, employees tend to see their work in the company in a more positive way; they claim to be more satisfied and committed; and even prove to be more loyal to the company (Zappalà, 2003, Mayer et al, 2007). For its part, it broadens its public relations (Sajardo and Ribas, 2014) by a better managing of its stakeholders (Cycyota et al, 2016). All this creates a differential competitive advantage for the company (Brewis, 2004).

CV is a form of "non-spontaneous" aid that offers new perspectives on helping behavior (Clary and Snyder, 1991), beyond traditional monetary donation.

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However, although CV can be used as a tool to train staff at low cost, it must be taken into account that the relationship between volunteer hours and the number of skills acquired tends to be curvilinear. By increasing volunteer hours, the number of skills acquired is increased. But only to a certain extent, beyond which the process would be saturated (Booth et al, 2009). In any case, with the implementation of CV programs, it is possible to enhance the workers´ learning while making a valuable contribution to the community, and thus reinforces the skills required in certain functions of their job (Bell, 2007).

The origin of the CV is in the United States in the 1970s, as a strategic tool that was born by the internal and external social awareness of companies;

but it became popular in the 1990s when it was considered as one of the best ways to demonstrate company involvement in the community (Sajardo and Serra, 2008).

Likewise, it is a proven fact that, in recent years, Spanish companies have developed Corporate Volunteering programs within their CSR policies to gain competitiveness (Sanchez-Hernandez and Gallardo-Vázquez, 2013).

CV is increasing, and this seems to be the case, for several reasons: 1) the desire of companies to be seen as a good corporate

citizen; 2) employee demand for ethical values and positive interaction with the community; 3) the interest shown in this respect by the third sector (Zappalà, 2003). Moreover, there has also been an increase in pressure from customers, government and the voluntary sector (Brewis, 2004) to make companies more responsible. As we indicated above, one of the ways of demonstrating this commitment is through CV.

In Spain, according to the 2011 Corporate Volunteer Report developed by the Corporate Volunteer Observatory, 57% of the companies with more than 500 employees have a CV program, with emphasis on industries such as food (15%), banking (13%), telecommunications (12%); and moreover the 77% have Voluntary Committees (Sajardo and Ribas, 2014).

However, although, as we have just said, CV is a growing phenomenon, the recruitment of volunteer employees could be much more effective because the participation rates of employees in this type of programs are rather low. In this sense, it may be useful for companies to know which factors affect employee's decision to participate in CV (Sanchez-Hernandez and Gallardo-Vázquez, 2013). This would allow them to establish strategies more suitable for the development of this type of activities (Rog et al, 2003).

CV has not yet been sufficiently investigated (Morgan and Burchell, 2010). In a special way, this gap is addressed in relation to the factors, motivations and needs of employees which encourage them to participate (Clary and Snyder, 1991; Zappalà, 2003). We find, therefore, that CV is an area that needs more research (Teague and Peterson, 2011): it requires, above all, theoretical models to predict its adoption and the most appropriate type of policy, depending on the benefits that it is aspired to achieve. It is also essential to assess the impact of the phenomenon in the company (Sajardo and Ribas, 2014) comparing the attitudes and behaviors of the participating workers with those who do not participate at all (Tschirhart, 2005).

There are researchers -previously cited- such as Sanchez-Hernandez and Gallardo-Vázquez (2013), Sajardo and Ribas (2014) or Sajardo and Serra (2008) who have addressed the issue of Corporate Volunteering in Spain. We will focus on the employee motivations to try to advance in the knowledge of which are the most effective strategies to encourage workers´ participation in Corporate Volunteering programs.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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In this section we collect what other previous researches say about certain elements of relevance: first, we will consider how the sociodemographic variables affect CV; second, we will point out the motivations that academic literature identifies as an explanation for employees' participation. In this regard, we will point out which are the factors, which are the barriers and which are the most significant strategies for the participation of employers in CV programs.

2.1. Sociodemographic Variables

Regarding gender, given the fact that women tend to participate in this type of program (Mayer et al, 2007), it is possible, however, that men volunteer more hours (Houghton et al, 2009). This, according to Bolino and Grant suggest (2016), may be due to the fact that while men are more likely to consider that they deserve to be rewarded for helping; women, on the other hand, would rather tend to think that they should be penalized if they do not help.

The age variable, for its part, is related to three key aspects that will determine employee´s participation in CV programs: prestige and power, the roles that the person performs at each stage, and certain types of specific problems associated to different vital moments (Sundeen et al, 2007).

2.2. Employee´s motivations to participate in CV

Employees may be motivated by various reasons for participating in CV (Clary and Snyder, 1991; Morgan and Burchell, 2010). These motivations can be grouped into six categories: values, enhancement, understanding, protective, social y career (Clary et al, 1991).

Cycyota et al (2016) indicate that employees' motivations to participate in CV may be related to the following elements: altruism, the search for meaning in personal life, the organization's corporate citizenship, the variety of roles, the social and relational characteristics of professional tasks, networking and, in any case, the presence of personal reasons.

Literature, however, is not unanimous in emphasizing the importance of pro social motivation and altruism in the face of selfish motives that motivate workers to take part in CV activities.

Another motivation may be because CV generates satisfaction, increases well-being and happiness reduces anxiety and depression; and increases self-esteem by understanding that, with it, employee is collaborating to improve the world.

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CV can also be interpreted as a form of what is known as corporate citizenship. This tends to be the case, when workers are aligned with the organizational plan as "good soldiers" and try to protect the company´s image (Morgan and Burchell, 2010). This evidence, on the other hand, how the wage is not the only factor that influences employees' feelings towards the company (Zappalà, 2003).

Volunteer employee can also move not only for their own beliefs and rewards, but also for the perception that others are formed of them. This is, for example, the case when CV is carried out in order to impress the superiors (Morgan and Burchell, 2010).

From different angle, according to the Social Identity Theory, we can also find motivations for CV derived from the fact that people tend to catalog themselves in social types by reference to their affiliations and even their demographic characteristics (Tomkovick et al, 2008). In this sense, the so-called organizational self-esteem reflects how important and effective is to consider itself an individual within the organization (Mayer et al, 2007). Volunteer employees can express pride of belonging through CV, which they would consider an indicator of their identification with the company (Houghton et al, 2009).

Finally, employees can also participate in CV programs to compensate for certain shortcomings which come from the characteristics of their job, whether at tasks level, whether at social relations level; or finally, to obtain certain types of skills and knowledge that the job requires (Cycyota et al, 2016).
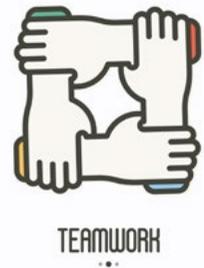
2.3. Factors, barriers and strategies

According to Chen and Hung-Baesecke (2014), there are three attributes in the manager behaviors that can affect employee participation in CV: otherwise they would be the example of a model to follow. On the other hand, they point out the relevance of effective communication. And finally, they refer to the motivation of the existence of incentives of any kind (Chen and Hung-Baesecke, 2014). Among the factors that may affect employee´s decision to participate, some authors emphasize the following aspects: 1) values, attitudes and personal goals; 2) nature of CV program; 3) type of volunteer opportunities; 4) support of the company to the participation in the projects; 5) personal support for Volunteering from other partners; and 6) satisfaction with CV experiences (Rog et al, 2003).

If CV barriers could be taken into account during the planning process, CV policies would be structured in a way that would help over-

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come those obstacles. When employees think that the only motivation of the company is a superficial improvement of the corporate image, they usually judge those practices from the skepticism. Notwithstanding, they can participate because they feel strong internal pressure or even because of high personal motivation (Brewis, 2004).

From the review that we have carried out of the specialized literature, we can assure, in effect, it is possible to strategically manage CV; and that it can be addressed by successful measures to increase workers involvement.

In this sense, the most reputable authors point out how CV programs should be well developed, properly budgeted and clearly communicated. This would prevent employees from seeing it negatively (Morgan and Burchell, 2010). Other strategies that -following Cycyota et al (2016)- the company can develop to implement a CV program would be: 1) to evaluate employees´ interests, community needs and the strategic objectives of the organization; 2) ensure top management support; 3) develop policies and metrics; and 4) recognize volunteer work.

3. EMPIRICAL STUDY AND METODOLOGY

We have chosen Delphi method to contrast if the opinions of the experts are consistent with the emerging theories in the literature of Corporate Volunteering to which we have just referred in the previous sections. We consider that this methodological approach fit perfectly to the object of our study. Through this technique we were able to have a greater number of experts, regardless of their geographical dispersion and their availability of time to collaborate in the research. We think that the anonymity of the experts that the Delphi method makes possible -compared especially to the technique of Discussion Groups- can reduce both, the possible pressure against a generalized opinion of the rest of the group, and the temptation to express similar opinion of the expert with greater credibility. Likewise, we understand that the Delphi method allows obtaining different and more quality results of consensus those that would be derived from the individual opinions of the participants. Finally, among the strengths of this perspective is the fact that greater acceptance can be achieved by the groups involved.

The coordinating group of this study, following the terminology of

Delphi method, was composed by the two authors who sign this article. The tasks that had to be carried out were the following: identify, select and contact the experts; establish the calendar and work agenda; design the questionnaires, administer them and follow up on the study; and finally write the work itself.

To get a global view of the phenomenon under study, we incorporate experts from different areas: CV managers of international companies, consultants and professional specialists in this area. All of them were residing in Spain and with extensive experience (at least four years; being nine their average experience in CV field).

We understand that the needed number of experts will be based on the moment in which we get to what is known as "theoretical saturation" and occurs at the time when adding new interviews does not generate, however, new categories of relevant information. Our goal in this regard was to reach at least the number of twelve experts since, as stated in the literature, when "the aim of the research is to describe a perception shared between a relatively homogeneous group then the sample of twelve experts is consider sufficient "(Guest et al, 2006: 74). With this in mind, we selected thirteen informants

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- number, in which the theoretical saturation on the strategic axes of study occurred: new interviews do not generate new categories of relevant information- of the fifteen who, at first, we had contacted and they showed us their willingness to collaborate in the investigation.

Once we had identified and selected the experts, we sent them the objectives, study conditions, Delphi methodology based on two rounds, the agenda and the schedule for the data collection. They were made aware of the principle of confidentiality in which we worked, as well as our unequivocal choice for the ethics of research in every case. They agreed that we could use their data as participants in the research. In the same way, they showed their agreement that we could treat the information obtained for academic and divulgation purposes.

For our side, we committed ourselves to notify them, through a report, the results of the study. Although they were offered the possibility of visit them to know their opinions, this option was chosen by a quarter of experts. The rest chose to send the answers electronically. Also, it should be noted that we chose a two-round process in which we contacted each of them twice. We chose this option, be-

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cause we perceived - considering the difficulties of agenda - that we took a high risk of not having the collaboration of any of the experts. Fortunately, of the thirteen finally selected, there were no drop outs during the two rounds of study. Then, experts opinions which were collected face-to-face were recorded in audio format; and were later accurately transcribed in separate Word documents in order to be rigorously analysed.

We tried to make clear, concise, simple, and not very extensive questions. We conducted the first questionnaire with open questions to mitigate bias and possible influence of researchers. Questions in the second questionnaire came from the most significant and repeated answers obtained in the first questionnaire. Questions were designed to facilitate the subsequent statistical treatment of the data and to make its assessment easier through the defined scales. In order to avoid undesirable disconnections and not to rob our informants too much time, the number of questions that we elaborated was expressly reduced: seven open questions in the first questionnaire; and nineteen closed questions in the second.

The outcomes obtained from the first questionnaire allowed to design the second one, which was sent to be completed by the experts in the Delphi second round, in order to reach the greater consensus. After a first general reading of the transcripts, a researcher performed a first initial (deductive) identification of codes and categories, based on key terms of CV literature, while another researcher performed a free (inductive) coding, not related to the previous categories. Following the analysis of the different proposals, the research team managed to get consensus on the criteria for thematic units of interest and coding guidelines.

The QSR Nvivo 10 software is considered like one of the most used software to deal with qualitative research data. We used it for the analysis because it allows comparing the opinions of experts, recovering, codifying and working with a large number of categories. Its use, thus, makes it possible to streamline the most mechanical research tasks. For this reason we decided to use this software together with our contributions as researchers to perform the analysis of the experts discourse from their answers to the first questionnaire. After coding, units of content analysis related to corporate volunteering strategies, including external and internal communication, managerial support, choice of cause, recognition and free time, were extracted literally. After analysing these qualitative data, the

researchers established interrelations between the various topics-highlighting those between internal communication and managerial support regarding to the possibility of compulsory perception from the employee part-.

The result obtained gave three levels of concretion. A first level is constituted by six nodes (which were the open questions of the first questionnaire -): external communication, internal communication, choice of cause, employee recognition, availability of time off and voluntary nature. In a second level of concretion, several categories sprout from the external communication node: informative, image, mixture of them, and possible consequences; and at a third level of the informative category two other subcategories are born: high and low communication profile; other two subcategories come from the category image (CV in order to improve company image, and CV does not pursue reputacional improvement); and likewise, CV external communication may have (or not) consequences in employee's participation.

Also three categories arise from internal communication node at a second level of concretion: motives, typologies and consequences. At a third level, motives category is discharged into the different company motivations to communicate CV activities internally (informing, and encouraging worker´s participation); the typologies category is articulated in three subcategories (intranet, talks and word-of-mouth); and two subcategories germinate from the consequences category (internal communication can generate feeling of obligatoriness, and internal communication does not affect voluntary nature of employee´s participation in CV).

Also from the second level of the managerial support node are born four categories: typologies, ways, intensity and consequences. At a third level, two subcategories come from typologies categories (CEO support, and manager support); other two subcategories are born from ways category (encourage participation, and manager/CEO participation); three subcategories emerge from intensity category (high, moderate, low); and finally, two more subcategories sprout from consequences category (voluntary perception, and compulsory perception).

At a second level of concretion of cause choice node we have three categories: make decision, core alignment and consequences. At a third level, also three subcategories emerge from the make decision category (choice by company, employee´s choice, and a mix of

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both);   two more subcategories are generated from the possibility of alignment with the business core category (cause aligned, and with no core relation); and two more subcategories germinate from the consequences category (without consequences, and repercussion). Moreover, from the recognition node arise five categories

(intensity, typologies, ways, positioning and consequences). At third level, two subcategories are born from the intensity category (gratefulness, and recognition); two subcategories from typologies category (newsletters, and events); other two subcategories from ways category (in the performance evaluation, and promotion caused by participation); two more subcategories from

positioning category (pro recognition, and against this measure); and finally, other two subcategories come from consequences category (without consequences, and repercussion).

In addition, at the same second level of concretion of the time off for volunteering during working hours node, three subcategories are born: business model compatibility, company disposition and consequences. Two subcategories arise from compatibility category (possible compatibility, and complexity of implementation); other two subcategories germinate from the disposition category (positive and negative); and finally, two more subcategories are generated from the consequences category (without consequences, and repercussion). All these results are summarized in **Table 1**.

As we have commented, with these results, we designed the second questionnaire for the second round of Delphi method. It was constituted by 19 closed questions that used a Likert scale from 0 to 10, distinguishing three subgroups of questions. Each item of first subgroup was measured by a Likert scale (agreement and disagreement) and it ranged between values 1 and 10, with 1 total disagreement; 5, no agreement or disagreement; and 10 total agreement. The second subgroup was the result of evaluating possible influences derived from the participation of employees in this type of programs. The third one asked for an assessment of the effectiveness of a series of possible strategies to encourage the participation of employees in CV. **Table 2** compiles data obtained from the questions of the first and second subgroups of our questionnaire, which correspond to the strategic axes that we will gloss over first. While **Table 3** compiles data from the questions of the third subgroup; and it will be analysed later.

Table 1. **First Round Delphi Results Analysed with Nvivo10 Software**

NODES (FIRST LEVEL)	CATEGORIES (SECOND LEVEL)	SUBCATEGORIES (THIRD LEVEL)
External communication	Informative	High communication profile Low communication profile
	Image	Improve company image Not reputacional improvement
	Mix of both Consequences	Without consequences Repercussion
Internal communication	Motives	Informing about CV program Encouraging participation
	Typologies	Corporative intranet Talks and conferences Word-of-mouth
	Consequences	Compulsory perception Voluntary nature
Managerial support	Typologies	CEO support Manager support
	Support ways	Encourage participation Manager/CEO participation
	Intensity	High Moderate Low
	Consequences	Voluntary perception Compulsory perception
Cause choice	Make decision	Choice by company Employee´s choice Mix of both
	Core alignment	Cause aligned Without cause relation
	Consequences	Without consequences Repercussion
Recognition	Intensity	Gratefulness effort Participation recognition
	Typologies	Newsletter Events
	Ways	Performance evaluation Promotion by participation
	Positioning	Pro recognition Against recognition
	Consequences	Without consequences Repercussion
Time off	Business Compatibility	Possible compatibility Complexity of implementation
	Company Disposition	Positive (working hours) Negative: possible abuse
	Consequences	Without consequences Repercussion

Source: prepared by authors

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Figure 1. **"Cloud of word" of experts discourse obtained by Nvivo software for Qualitative Research Methods**

Source: prepared by authors from NVIVO software

The cloud of words that we collect in **figure 1** also emerges from the NVIVO software used. It comes from the representation of the words from the consulted expert's speeches. It emphasizes the coverage of the words like "company", "employees" and "volunteer" so they are represented with a larger size in the cloud. These three terms are essential to define the concept of corporate volunteering as we saw at the introduction chapter. From the cloud, we can not only extract the most repeated words by the consulted experts, but it also reflects the association between these words. This association is manifested by the proximity between the terms. The more together they are in the cloud the greater association between them. As an example, we can appreciate that there is also a strong association between the three most frequent terms: "volunteer", "employees" and "company"; but between "volunteering" and "communication", and between "volunteering" and "managers" as well.

We will delve into these relationships later.

Additionally, statistical treatment of the second questionnaire was performed using the SPSS program, taking the mean of the distribution of the estimates as a measure of central tendency and the standard deviation as a measure of dispersion.

4. RESULTS

Then, from the statistical analysis simplified in **Table 2**- we obtained five possible strategic axes; also other twenty-five measures or policies that could encourage workers´ participation in CV programs. Later we will collect these twenty-five measures in **Table 3** and we will extend in their interpretation. At the moment, we are doing the same with the following strategic axes: external communication; voluntary character; choice of cause; employee´s recognition; and availability of time during the working day. To illustrate the tenor of each axis, we provide literal formulations of the informants, putting them in relation to what literature has been affirming about it.

Table 2. **Strategic axes in the implementation of CV programs (Second Round Delphi)**

ANSWERS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
External communication based on information level	7,15	2,230
External communication based on image improvement	4,23	2,488
CEO support and possibility of mandatory perception	3,00	2,309
Manager support and possibility of mandatory perception	2,38	2,181
Internal communication and possibility of mandatory perception	1,77	2,048
Choice of CV cause is made by the company	5,38	1,850
Workers have the possibility to choice the cause of CV	6,00	2,236
Choice of CV causa: company and worker (mix)	8,31	2,323
Recognition level of employee Volunteering work	7,38	2,063
Time off importance to participate during the working schedule	7,00	2,082
Positive influence of CV during working hours in colleagues	6,38	2,219
Positive influence of CV outside working hours in colleagues	6,92	2,429
Negative influence of CV during working hours in colleagues	3,67	2,774
Negative influence of CV outside working hours in colleagues	0,54	0,967
Positive influence of CV during working hours in managers	6,31	2,323
Positive influence of CV outside working hours in managers	7,33	1,723
Negative influence of CV during working hours in managers	2,92	2,465
Negative influence of CV outside working hours in managers	0,38	0,961

Source: prepared by authors

4.1. Strategic Axes

FIRST AXIS

External communication: inform the stakeholders versus image/public relations

"CV is like a window to a society that demands more social information about the company," said one expert. Therefore, it is necessary that the stakeholders know about the company involvement in the community. As shown on **Table 2**, this assertion scores an average of 7.15. Now, there is always the risk that excessive communication to the outside will make employees think that the main purpose of CV is self-promotion, PPRR, advertising or improving company's image.

"The improvement of the company´s image is a consequence of CV, not an objective of external communication. The company must have a low communication profile in the communication of the activities that it performs in Corporate Volunteering. It is necessary to avoid employee believes that the company takes advantage of their solidarity to build a brand or as a marketing action", another expert commented.

SECOND AXIS

Voluntary nature: internal communication and support of management versus mandatory character

We will distinguish in the gloss of this second axis, two different strategies: managerial support, on the one hand; and internal communication actions, on the other.

A. Management support strategy

"CEOs and managers participation in planned actions is a very powerful asset", said another expert. According to Bolino and Grant (2016), pro-social leaders can have a decisive influence in promoting these pro-social behaviors as they gain power, freedom and resources to express their values. "The involvement of management in CV program can be something exemplary, a motivation of encouragement to other professionals and an opportunity to relate to the superior outside the work environment," said another expert. This corroborates the importance that manager support has for the success of CV program.

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"CEO has a role of encouragement and support to CV: it has the mission of facilitating the participation of employees in the program", said another expert. In this sense, it may be necessary to sensitize managers who fear that the fact that employees are out of the office in CV can break the organizational dynamics.

We based on the fact that the disposition to CV can vary with the psychological force of the situation. According to this view, an employee would be more likely to participate in spontaneous situations; and less, to do so in programmed contexts (Clary and Snyder, 1991).

"The company must ensure that participation is a free and voluntary decision, without any positive or negative consequences on professional performance", said another expert. As Brewis (2004) points out, this premise about willfulness may be hampered when participation in CV programs is strongly encouraged by the company. If managers act as volunteer recruiters, employees may feel pressure to participate in order to please them (Teague and Peterson, 2011) or fear of suffering some kind of penalty if they do not participate. All of this may cause employee to get a negative perception about CV program (Morgan and Burchell, 2010), or perceive it as a standard or expected behavior from employee's side. In both cases, employee may refuse to participate or be less likely to be involved in such projects.

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In certain circumstances, those involved in CV do so in order to obtain some kind of professional return. For example, senior managers may decide to participate in the CV because they understand that this is part of their job description, or their performance appraisal. Even, because they may come to consider it as an implicit requirement for their professional career in the company (Tschirhart and Clair, 2008).

On the contrary, that the company considers employee´s participation in CV in its personal development plan (PDP) can be interpreted positively because it reflects the importance of CV to the company and recognizes the skills acquired by employees in the program (Brewis, 2004).

To close this epigraph, it should be noted that, although some of our experts considered that the way in which CEO support is produced may lead workers to believe that their participation in the program is mandatory; however, none of them felt that the support of managers to Corporate Volunteering could negatively affect employee's perception of willfulness.

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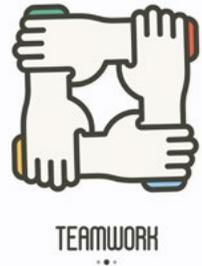
B. Internal communication strategy

"Internal communication is key to achieving participation, especially to remove the first fears", said another expert. And literature indicates that a direct proposal to employee by offering to participate in a CV program is usually the best way to obtain their involvement (Sundeen et al, 2007). On the other hand, it is stated that it is easier for workers to participate in CV when they are sent persuasive messages appealing to their psychological motives (Clary and Snyder, 1991); and when they are well informed about who, how and when they can help with the program (Bolino and Grant, 2016).

Companies employ various methods to recruit volunteer employees, such as websites, e-mails, bulletin board flyers, or newsletters (Teague and Peterson, 2011). In this sense, one of our informants said that: *"word of mouth of workers, as a form of communication, is what works best to get them involved"*. And indeed, literature corroborates the claim (Wilson, 2000), especially when the peers are themselves who know employee personally, share group identity and encourage them to volunteer (Teague and Peterson, 2011).

Finally, it is better to inform without any pressure. This is an idea shared by several experts interviewed. To that effect, we rescue the formulation of one of them: *"You cannot pretend that one hundred percent of the staff is voluntary because of insisting heavily without a brake"*.

THIRD AXIS

Choice of cause: core business versus employee´s choice

Some authors argue that the causes of the company's social action activities must be associated with the core business of the company as a basis for more strategic social action. To a certain extent, this opposes to other authors who argue that the workers' possibility of choosing the cause would increase time and effort devoted to CV because they considers the cause in question to be worthwhile (Mayer et al, 2007).

This ambivalence is perfectly reflected in comments received from our informants. One of them firmly stated the following: *"CV must be aligned with the core business of the company to maximize its impact and take advantage of internal talent"*. Another, however, said: *"companies must perform the exercise of consulting employees about their interests and motivations"*.

It is not difficult to understand, considering that both points of view are based on relevant motives, that the solution that seems most welcome among the experts is a kind of mixture of the two previous ones. On the one hand, executives prefer that CV is connected to the mission and company´s goals, although causes can also be chosen for the value of their public relations, to avoid controversy, and for employee´s likes. On the other hand, perhaps, if a greater number of CV opportunities were offered, in line with the will of employees, their involvement in the programs could increase (Tschirhart and Clair, 2008).

FOURTH AXIS

Employee´s recognition: reward versus lack of gratitude

One aspect that must be considered when talking about CV is the one referring to the convenience or impertinence of carrying out an explicit recognition to those who act as volunteers. Both, literature and consulted experts, reflect this dichotomy. *"Employee participates as a volunteer not for the recognition"* explains one of the experts. This idea, moreover, seems to be shared by most of the others: *"I am not in favour of recognition; favouring this possibility would be enough recognition"*. However, there are those who think differently. Another of our interviewees pointed out how *"even if the volunteers do not expect recognition, their effort should be recognized"*.

In any case, a point to keep in mind would be the one referring to the type of recognition in particular, because it can be in several ways. If it is reduced to inform through a newsletter, where photos of the activities are inserted; or takes place in annual volunteer galas or similar events, where the CEO of the company appreciates the efforts of volunteer employees (Tschirhart and Clair, 2008), there seems to be no major upset. However, if the recognition took pecuniary form or contributed to facilitating the promotion within the company, skepticism and distrust could be generated towards the entire CV program (Bell, 2007). One of the experts seemed to synthesize this point of view when he stated that *"the effort must be recognized and valued, but without detracting from the voluntary nature of participation"*.

From our side, we reiterate what has been said above. Associating CV to internal promotion can have negative effects on employees. However, the fact that employer recognizes the worker, both the effort and the skills acquired during CV, can also be a measure that has positive consequences for participation in new projects.

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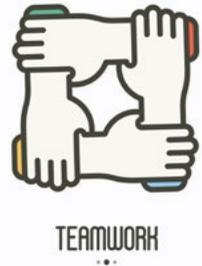
FIFTH AXIS

Availability of time off: flexible timetable versus rigidity to avoid abuse

The consulted experts, generally, are in favour of that employees can carry out voluntary activities within their working day. However, they consider that this is sometimes complex, especially in industrial sectors, with rigid shifts; or in commercial or other positions that require a direct contact with clients. In this sense, we take the assertion of one of the respondents: *"in some companies such as the industrial ones, you cannot stop production. It would be a serious irresponsibility that would bring penalties to the company"*.

Another tension that emerges at this point is the one established between the fact that if the employees performs CV in their working hours, they should then recover the time not applied to the task; and the possibility that, abuses may occur in the event that CV justifies itself the working day. *"Participation in these initiatives during the working day must be open to all employees, must be agreed and approved by the manager"*, said an expert in this regard. According to managers, they may think they do not have enough authority to grant employee time off for CV during working hours; or that if they grant it, employees would generally abuse this measure. Naturally, employees may also complain about having to recover work undone for being involved in CV activities (Tschirhart and Clair, 2008).

Volunteer partner perception: positive versus negative

It is necessary to start from the assumption, well observed by one of the informants, that: *"time dedicated to Volunteering should not influence the result of the work of employees nor the workload of their colleagues who do not participate as volunteers"*.

From this point of view, it should be noted with Rodell and Lynch (2016) that how peers and managers can look favourably volunteer employee if they consider that they participate in CV programs for intrinsic reasons - that is, for a sincere concern for others. On the contrary, they will not willingly accept that participation, if they think that the motive itself is associated, either to disregard the work, or simply to gain a better image with the managers.

In this regard, our study shows that participating in Volunteering can positively influence the peers and managers perception of employee. On the other hand, it has more influence on managers than on colleagues when it comes to participating in activities outside wor-

king hours (7.33 vs 6.92) as it showed in the scores collected in **Table 2**.

Our experts do not consider that the participation outside working days has negative influences on the perception of neither the peers nor the managers (0.54 and 0.38). But when CV occurs within working days, both -the peers- and the others -the managers- tend to see it with some negative prevention: it goes from 0.54 to 3.67 in peers; and it increases in managers in a similar proportion, from 0.38 to 2.92.

Employees who participate in CV activities during the working day may have a worse impression by their colleagues than by their managers (3.67 vs 2.92). This does not prevent some managers from considering that employees who participate in CV during the working day are less professional, that they do not sufficiently attend to their obligations or that they participate for non-altruistic reasons.

4.2. Strategies to encourage participation

Employer can manage CV programs through different forms, structures, practices and policies. Thus, they can include resources to support CV, flexible time, cash grant for the organization where employees perform CV, or volunteer recognition events (Tschirhart, 2005).

In our research, we have also found a serie of policies and strategic measures that - in the opinion of the consulted experts and with the literature review carried out - may allow employee´s participation in CV programs to be encouraged. The twenty-five strategies identified are summarized in **Table 3**. We measured the effectiveness of these strategies, according to the responses received, using a Likert scale between the values of 0 to 10, where zero value indicated "nothing important" and ten "very important".

Based on the obtained results, we will divide the strategies in terms of their effectiveness in three groups: 1) very high effectiveness (valuation of 8); 2) high effectiveness (valuation of seven); and 3) medium effectiveness (between 5 and 6). After that, we will contrast the statements made by the experts on the first group of measures with the literature -just those considered as very high effectiveness.

Three of the four most valued strategies refer to internal communication. *"Communication channel must be accessible and very dynamic so that information can be obtained from volunteers"*, said one expert. *"Feedback or give the volunteers a chance to tell what he*

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Table 3. **Effectiveness of strategies to encourage employee´s participation (Second Round Delphi)**

ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
- CSR consistent with Corporate Volunteering	8,08	1,188
- Managers to realize the benefits it brings to their teams	7,92	1,801
- To develop a program aligned with the core business	7,85	1,951
- Program aligned with strategy, culture, mission and vision	7,85	1,772
- To support, involvement and participation of management positions	7,69	1,494
- Possibility of involving family and friends	7,62	1,502
- Program with a variety offer of activities	7,38	1,710
- Promoting a good working atmosphere	7,23	1,787
- Program that develops personal or professional competences	7,15	2,340
- Volunteer activities done by departments or areas	7,15	2.230
- Provision of time off during working hours	6,75	1,603
- To put in place initiatives such as "The Annual Day of CV"	6,62	2,434
- To promote belonging pride of employees	6,08	2,937
- To perform internal challenges or contests between employees	5,69	3,276

Source: prepared by authors

has done is also a way of becoming aware or analysing what has been done", said another expert.

A second subgroup of the most valued strategies focuses on the worker, in line with what has already been pointed out in the literature. Employees who enjoy doing Volunteering spend more time on CV than others (Houghton et al, 2009). And otherwise, past voluntary behavior is the most powerful determinant of future voluntary behavior (Tomkovick et al, 2008).

For CV experience to be positive, it is recommended to take into account employee´s concern to give them the possibility of choosing the cause, facilitate their organization in clubs or communities and strengthen their recognition - in some way, in line with what was indicated in the previous section. This does not mean that CV is to be seen as something extraordinary. One expert pointed out in this regard: *"Do not treat volunteers as heroes, all employees can volunteer"*. Therefore, companies can encourage employee dynamics by

implementing policies that facilitate participation in CV (Cycyota et al, 2016).

Abounding in this idea, there were statements like the ones that we get textually below: *"I am pro defending amplitude in terms of projects, time and duration so that everyone who wants to participate can" said one expert"*. *"A sufficiently varied supply of voluntary actions and roles is necessary"*, said another.

The more value employees feel they have generated through volunteering, the more likely they will participate again (Tomkovick et al, 2008). Therefore, it makes sense to rescue the statement of one of the experts, who said: *"another very important aspect is the measurement of impact and its communication to workers"*. Such impact can be achieved by deep involvement with tasks or relationships. Thus, only after their participation is completed, employees experience the emotional strength of the real importance of their contribution (Bolino and Grant, 2016).

Likewise, when implementing a CV program, those responsible must try to align it coherently with CSR - including the measurement of social, economic and environmental impact-; but also, to ensure that it is equipped with sufficient resources and financial capital (Sajardo and Ribas, 2014).

Regarding CV, the result of win-win seems indisputable, as one of the interviewees pointed out: *"NGOs demand it, they have beneficiaries who demand it; and the company has a set of resources that can make available to that cause facilitating employee´s participation"*.

5. DISCUSSION

Taking into account the results obtained and in reference to the conceptual framework presented, we synthesize in **Figure 2** the emerging model of strategic axes that we propose to articulate CV programs with success. In relation to the first axis, and in line with Sajardo and Ribas (2014), we have seen that companies in their external communication may tend to make use of CV program for image or for public relations purposes beyond informing their stakeholders. Under the umbrella of a sense of pride in the voluntary effort of their employees, they can cross the thin line between mere communication of this work and the use of CV as a marketing tool. As discussed above, this may lead to retraction of employee´s participation.

Figure 2. **Conceptual Framework for a CV Model: Strategic Axes for Participation**

AXIS 1: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
To inform Stakeholders	vs	Image/PPRR

AXIS 2: VOLUNTARY NATURE			AXIS 3: CHOICE OF CAUSE		
Managers support			Core Business	vs	Employee choice
Internal communication	vs	Obligatoriness			

AXIS 4: EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION			AXIS 5: AVAILABILITY OF TIME OFF		
Reward	vs	Lack of gratitude	Flexible Time	vs	Rigidity avoid abuse
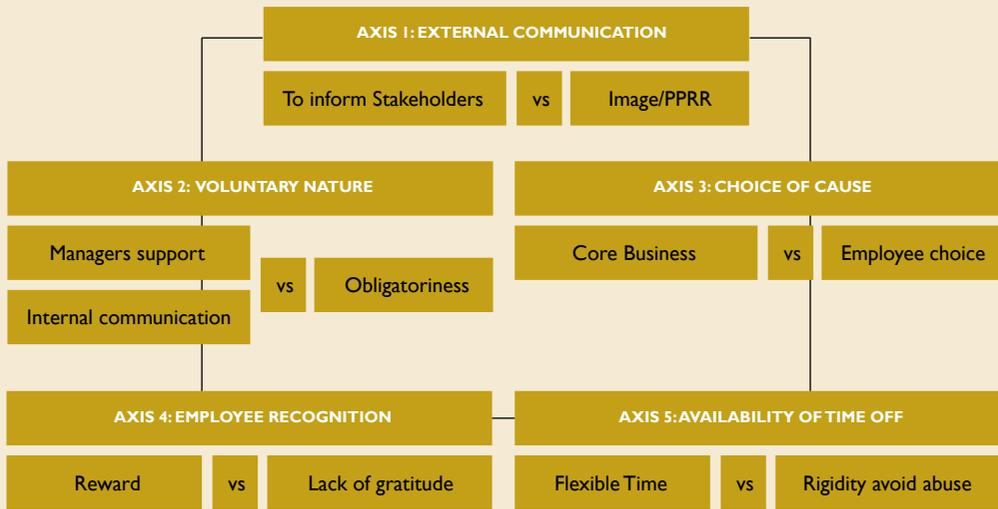
Source: prepared by authors

Regarding the second axis, in line with Brewis (2004), companies are aware of the importance of having the support of the managers so that their teams participate in CV. As for internal communication, we have found evidences that the company must appeal to psychological motives of Volunteering as advocated by Clary and Snyder (1991) with the most attractive communication possible. We have also found evidence -in line with Teague and Peterson (2011) - of the importance of using various communication methods, such as corporate intranet or bulletins and newsletters; although experts are aware -as Wilson (2000)- that word of mouth is the most effective way to recruit volunteers.

In this context, where managers can serve as volunteer employee recruiters, we have found -in line with Rodell and Lynch, 2016- that employees can assume CV as something expected of them. This circumstance has even more weight in companies where worker's participation in CV is included in their performance evaluation. We said that it in tune with Morgan and Burchell (2010) who argue that employee might feel afraid of not having a stake in CV activities; with which it might have lost the voluntary nature of this type of activities, to cross to the field of mandatory.

Regarding the third axis, the choice of cause, we have found, in the

wake of Tschirhart and Clair (2008), that although managers uses to advocate causes related to the mission or the core business of the company, they can also leave the door open for employees to choose the cause. Mayer et al. (2007) insist on the same point and venture that this could increase the participation ratio.

In reference to the fourth axis, which concerns the possible recognition of volunteers, experts consulted are more in line with Rog et al (2003) in favour of this recognition; than with Tschirhart and Clair (2008), who point to the inappropriateness of recognizing a voluntarily chosen task. In view of this divergence, we believe that further research may be necessary. We also found evidence, according to Bell (2007) that companies are aware that the recognition of voluntary action in the form of internal promotion leads to disaffection on the part of employees regarding CV program.

Finally, the fifth axis, as we indicated, deals with the granting of time off during the working day for employee to participate in CV. In this sense, also against what is expressed in the work of Tschirhart and Clair (2008) we have not appreciated that the experts consider employees can complain about having to recover the work not done by participating in CV. But we have found that the participation of employees in CV during their working day could have negative consequences in the perception of colleagues and managers have of them. This, we have already said, may be due to the fact that some employees are thought to abuse the time off policy; or because their motivation to participate does not go beyond an attempt to climb the organizational scale. Again, we believe that this issue deserves further investigation in the future.

As it has become clear, in our research we identified a series of strategies that could encourage and increase employee´s participation in CV programs. **Figure 3** summarizes what we discussed above.

To a large extent, program success will depend on a series of measures that we find in our empirical study and which corroborates the anticipated in previous works. Thus, a design attractive CV programs (Zappalà 2003); easy to perform (Cycyota et al, 2016); and above all, in line with Brewis (2004), providing them with financial and time resources, can be key to the success of the program.

We have also seen that companies, in the wake of Houghton et al. (2009), seek to have the volunteer experience positive for employee, and in order to employee to be able to develop their skills - as Booth et al (2009) also advocated. In same way, our study highlights

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Figure 3. **Conceptual framework for a CV model: Measures to increase participation**

I. VERY HIGH EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

M1. Accessible and dynamic channels
M2. Clear/attractive communication
M3. Give visibility to the activities
M4. Tell volunteer testimony

M5. Consider employee´s concern
M6. Cause selected by employees
M7. Community or volunteers club
M8. Employee´s recognition

M9. Program with enough resources

M10. Long-term relationships ONGs

M11. CSR aligned with CV

M12. Measure social impact

POLICIES AND STRATEGIC MEASURES OF CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

III. MEDIUM EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

M22. Time off policies

M23. Initiatives like "volunteer day"

M24. Belonging pride

M25. Internal challenges

II. HIGH EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

M13. Aligned with core business
M14. Aligned with strategy

M15. Management positions support
M16. Managers realize CV benefits

M17. Varied offer of activities
M18. Family and friends participate

M19. Good working atmosphere

M20. Personal and profesional skills

M21. CV activities by departments

Source: prepared by authors

the desirability of having a syntony between values, culture, the way of acting of the company, its CSR strategy; specific programs of social action and CV. This places us close to Chen and Hung-Baesecke (2014) thesis.

5.1. Scope, limitations and future lines of research

As we have already mentioned, the scope of this exploratory qualitative study aimed to show a conceptual framework on possible strategies to encourage employee´s participation in CV programs, seeking an approximation to the social significance of the problem; and not so much statistical, geographical or sectoral representation. Regarding the limitations of the study, in the literature, it is recorded that the technique used by us to carry out our qualitative study, could present some methodological weakness. This is because Delphi method used is based on subjective judgment, which is always complex and variable. We have tried to take this issue into account and try to minimize it as much as possible. Moreover, we recognize as a limitation the fact that to evaluate with accuracy and precision

the level that each expert has regarding the problem under study it is not always a simple task.

Apart from those already mentioned, such as deepening the recognition and leisure time policies for CV as future lines of research, we could consider a longitudinal study over the years to investigate how the proposed policies can affect the participation ratio of CV programs and employees´ image. In this way, it could be interesting to apply the same strategy to Corporate Volunteer programs of different companies from different sectors and geographic areas, in order to check if the results obtained are similar or not. Likewise, we believe that we should continue to investigate in the field of motivation of workers, both when starting, and when continuing to participate in CV programs. Sociodemographic variables and those derived from employee's own condition should be considered in the study. Finally, we understand that it could also help us to advance in the knowledge of this study field, to carry out, as a comparative approach, a CV program in two companies as much similar as possible, following only in one of them the conceptual framework proposed in this research, and then compare the ratios of participation obtained in both over time.

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6. CONCLUSIONS

Companies feel some pressure from society to be responsible, and corporate volunteering is a form of corporate social action, through which they can show their will and commitment, beyond the strict relationship in the market.

CV is a phenomenon in growth in the last years that generates numerous benefits for society, for employees and for the company. For example, Corporate Volunteering can increase employee´s satisfaction, learning, motivation, productivity, leadership, and other skills. From employer side, they can benefit from the improvement of image, the increase of the good reputation, and by gain of company´s notoriety. Finally, the third sector can have, through CV, more human, material and financial resources to solve social problems.

Although, as we said, this is a booming phenomenon, the companies that are developing it have not yet managed to reach significant levels. This is because companies do not know which are the motivations and determinants; and which elements are decisive for employees to choose to participate in such programs.

In this article we have tried to collect those motivations and determinants; in order to define a conceptual framework with strategies, policies and concrete measures that will enable those responsible for the area to successfully implement Corporate Volunteering programs in line with the idiosyncrasy of each company.

As a synthesis of what we have said, we consider the following as important aspects that should be taken into account in any case to design, manage and evaluate any CV program:

- To provide the program with the necessary means and resources to carry it out.
- To consider the concerns of employees in the design of CV program.
- To allow employees to have the opportunity to select the type of Volunteer activities in which they are to take part.
- To establish long-term relationships with NGOs.
- To align the company's CSR strategy with Corporate Volunteer program.
- To perform a clear, informative, attractive and eye-catching internal program communication.
- To enable accessible and dynamic communication channels for employee.
- To inform, promote and give visibility to the activities carried out.
- To give the volunteer the opportunity to act as an ambassador, telling the experience lived in the program.
- To organize a volunteer club or community of volunteers.
- To measure the social impact of the program and encourage the beneficiary to explain the obtained outcomes.
- To encourage appreciation and recognition of volunteers´ efforts.

Finally, we consider that the conceptual framework proposed in this study can be used as a useful tool for those managers who, although aware of the importance of implementing these types of programs in their company, have not yet dared to take the step of implement it mainly due to the widespread lack of knowledge in this field; as well as for those others who have already started it but want to improve their results.

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LIST OF PARTICIPATING EXPERTS

The study has counted on by the following 13 experts in the field of Corporate Volunteering. The following is a brief summary of the curriculum data provided by the experts:

- Mr. José Antonio Barberá García, expert in CSR, with more than 10 years' experience in the field of Sustainability consultancy and environmental, social and Volunteer management technician in Bankinter during the last three years.

- Mr. Gonzalo Sales Genovés, six years as Corporate Responsible for CSR Programs at Ferrovial. Degree in Law, specialization in Company Law. Executive Education at the Harvard Business School in Creating Shared Value with Prof. Michael Porter. Development in International Management with IE Business School.

- Ms. María Prieto Bengochea. Diploma in Tourism from the University of Cantabria, master in Commercial Management and Marketing. She joined Mahou San Miguel in 2004 as Head of Institutional Relations of the Center in Alovera and since 2013 responsible for Corporate Volunteering program, supply chain management and ethical audits.

- Ms. Pilar Suárez-Inclán. Institutional Communication area in Reale Spain and RSE at Group level for Spain and Italy Director. She is a member of Forética, DIRSE, CSR Europe and the Corresponsables Stewardship Advisory. It also manages the Reale Foundation, with social, cultural and environmental objectives.

- Ms. Susana Gato García, Master in CSR by UNED and expert in Corporate Reputation. Since 2007 Responsible for Corporate Responsibility in the audio-visual ATRESMEDIA Group. Representative of ATRESMEDIA in the Community of Corporate Social Responsibility of the Spanish Association for Quality, in the Forética Transparency Cluster and in the Voluntare Network.

- Mr. Juan Ángel Poyatos holds a PhD in Business Administration, a partner in Volunteering and Strategy for the management of Volunteer Plans of companies such as Telefónica, Endesa, Caixa, or Repsol. Director of Voluntare.org. He has worked at the European Volunteer Center coordinating EVEN, Employee Volunteering European Network. Advisor on CV of the European Union 2011 and he is part of IMPACT 2030.

- Ms. Cristina Antelo Albertos holds a degree in Economics. Specialized in International Economics and Development, Superior Program of Direction in Corporate Responsibility. Currently coordinator for the EMEA region of the Sustainability Area and CSR Lead for SAP Spain. She has participated in the design, coordination and execution of many Corporate Volunteer initiatives.

- Ms. Belén Perales Martín. She has been working for IBM since 1998, and she has been managing IBM Spain Corporate Social Responsibility since 2004. Professor and holder of a degree in English Philology from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Expert in Corporate Social Responsibility by UNED.

- Mr. John Scade, General Manager of MAS Business, Coordinator of LBG Spain, Promoter and Coordinator of ONLBG, Certified Sustainability Assurance Practitioner, and SROI Accredited Practioner.

- Ms. Marta Pastor, journalist, master's degree in international cooperation. Launches the RSC consultancy, AdaptaRSE Soluciones, serving different companies for five years. Department of RC and Communication of quality Pascual since 2014, where she is currently developing her work in the area of Social Impact.

- Dª Dolores Zamarra. Degree in Psychology, Organizational and Industrial Psychology (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). She was Responsible for Recruitment and Integration at Repsol company before taking up the position of Corporate Volunteer Manager of the Repsol Foundation in 2013, up to the present.

- Dª Inés Ruiz de Arana Marone. Bachelor´s Degree in Political Science and Public Administration, International Relations from UCM, CSR Expert (UNED), Co-director of the Spanish Network of the United Nations Global Compact (2005-07), International Relations Director in Fundación Entorno (2007-10), RSC Director in Banca Cívica (2010-12) and current CSR Director of Gestamp.

- Dª María Calvo. Business, Economics and Marketing in University of Zaragoza. MBA IE. Country Manager of eBay Spain (2001-08). General Manager of Ashoka Spain (2008-11). VIPS Group Talent Management and CSR Managers since 2011.

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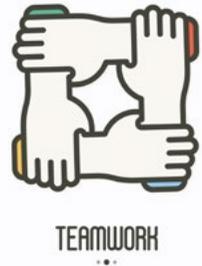
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NOTES

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