

VOLUNTEERING HELPS THOSE UNEMPLOYED FOR 3 GOOD REASONS



The Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that around 62.8 million people volunteered for, or through, an organization at least once in 2009 and 2010. Even though not all of the people who volunteered were seeking full-time employment, with 15 million unemployed, the professional value of work that is unpaid could hardly be greater. In a poll of opinions that was conducted by Opinion Research for the Deloitte Volunteer Impact Survey, a large amount of the workers responded positively as to whether volunteering had an impact on their career or not. The workers said that when they volunteered, it increased their networking contacts, it enhanced their business skills, and it helped them to develop leadership abilities. These are the three things that volunteering does to help your career: **Increase Networking Contacts:** Have you ever wondered how a person got that specific job, or how you could get paid to do something that you are really passionate about? For some people, it all started when they started volunteering. Think about this: Have you ever stopped and considered just how many small business owners participate in volunteering activities? People who volunteer, interact with other people who also volunteer. If a volunteer can help you by giving you a contact or a link to people or positions that are open and that are hiring, then most likely they will give you this information before the job announcement even hits the newspaper ad. **Enhance Business Skills:** Most employers aren't going to hire someone without experience, and volunteer work is almost as valuable as paid work experience. Mary Gannon, who is the author of *Starting Over: 25 Rules When You've Bottomed Out*, retells the story of her volunteer work. While she was looking for employment, she decided to volunteer at her local school district, writing out grants. Since she had no grant writing experience, she took a free class that was being given by her public library. Her voluntary efforts helped the school secure a \$68,000 grant. Eventually, she was able to parlay her new found grant writing skills into full-time employment as a hospital foundation executive. **Develop Leadership Abilities:** How can serving people their food, addressing envelopes, answering phones, and making photocopies help you to develop leadership abilities? Well you are, first and foremost, displaying leadership by "leading by example." Which is teaching you to take charge in the small amount of work that you do. Volunteering is a very special commitment in which you give your spare time and your talents to a worthy cause. It can also help you to find the career of your dreams. Plus it can teach you things about yourself and about the jobs that you do, that you would have never known if you hadn't taken time out of your day to help others and volunteer.

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