

OneDay volunteer work increases employee productivity

Through volunteer projects, OneDay initiative hopes to improve employee productivity by giving volunteers an all-around good feeling

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While many are working from home and no longer in an office, the OneDay initiative is looking to improve business relations with employees and increase productivity by offering multiple volunteer sessions that promote that feel-good feeling. During an interview with Calcalist, founder and CEO of OneDay Elad Blumental noted how his non-profit actually helps improve other companies' worker productivity while also doing something good for society.

"OneDay is a nonprofit foundation, which aims to reshape volunteering completely," he said. "We think of ourselves in Israel especially, as a nation with a very high social and mutual responsibility to take care of one another, however volunteering rates in Israel are not very high, and are 26% below other OECD countries."



OneDay volunteers. Photo: Nir Langer

The concept was born out of a well-known Jewish concept of "Tikkun Olam" or helping fix the world through good deeds and acts of kindness, something that is deeply rooted in the Jewish faith. "We tried to understand how people feel about volunteering, whether they are young professionals or companies,

because in the last couple of decades, many things have changed but the current volunteering model hasn't been changed in a very long time," he said.

Traditional volunteering for nonprofits requires individuals to commit to a certain rate of six or eight hours per week, which many tend to not find doable in today's society with intense work schedules. "OneDay aims to create a new model of volunteering that allows everyone to participate in a much more flexible and fun way that goes well with their preferences and their abilities," he said.

Some of the activities, he noted, included repainting homes for families in need, or Holocaust survivors, sending care packages to families in need, cleaning up waste on beaches, visiting the elderly or special needs children, planting gardens for old age homes and special needs centers, and helping out at animal shelters.

"People will find the time to volunteer when the subject fits their preferences," he added. His organization has been courted by large corporations such as Bank Leumi, Salesforce, MyHeritage, and others. Different companies typically have different agendas or topics that they wish to promote, and this helps build team cohesion especially amid the pandemic, he noted.

Today, amid the coronavirus (Covid-19) many activities have turned to the web, such as virtual trivia night for seniors and musical activities with special needs children, where volunteers interact with groups over Zoom sessions.

According to recent research, Millennials in particular find it easier to work for a company that aligns with their values, and volunteering in places or for causes that they care about actually increases worker productivity. Blumental also added that many companies are working remotely; many haven't had the chance to meet their new coworkers in person or haven't seen their old colleagues in a while because of new social-distancing guidelines. These events can bridge that gap and build team cohesion, he explained. Volunteering has actually gone up amid the pandemic, he added.

One particular moment that stayed with him, was volunteering with special needs youth. "They just know how to express gratitude, more than anyone else. You can see the happiness on their faces," he said, referring to activities with the children.

"I think that every day of the year should be a good deeds day," he said.