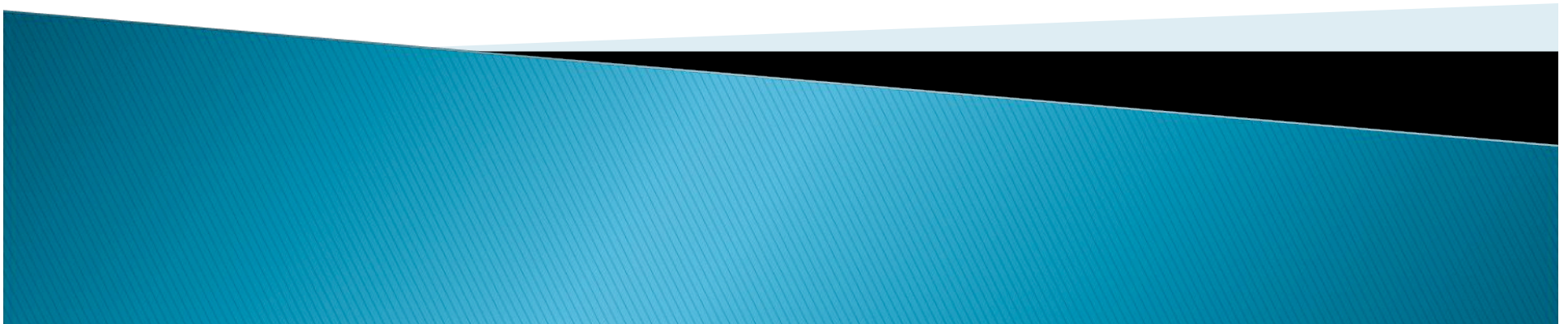


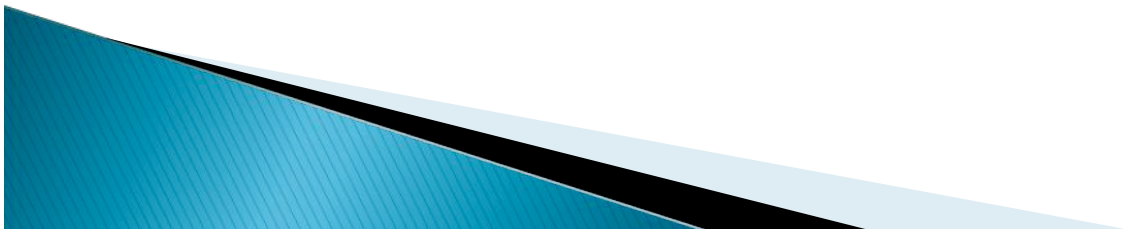
Employer supported Volunteering: Volunteer Experiences

Agnes Meinhard, Ryerson University
Femida Handy, University of Pennsylvania
Itay Greenspan, University of Pennsylvania

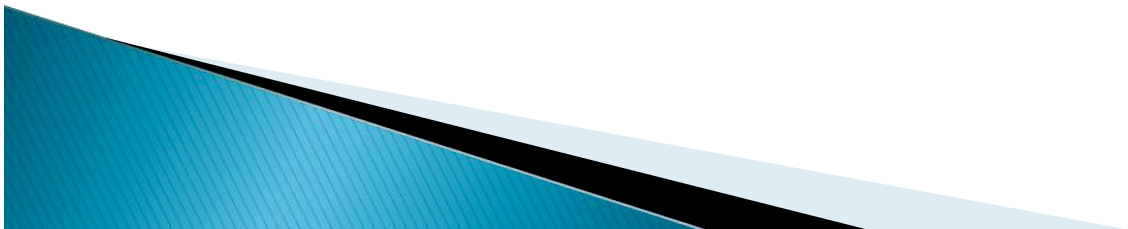


Context

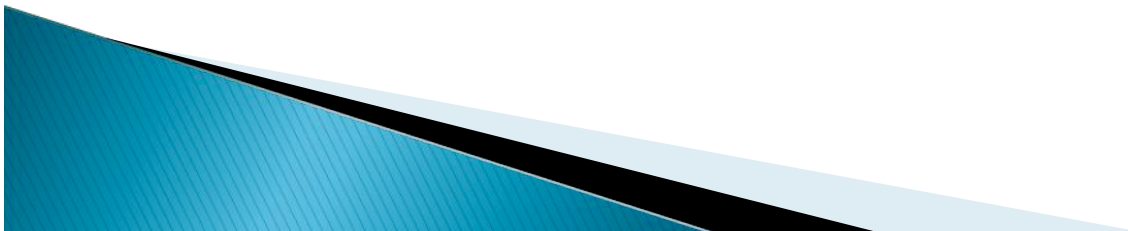
- ▶ Canada's financial institutions are at the vanguard of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.
- ▶ One innovative way to meet community obligations has been the institution of employer supported volunteering (ESV) programs.
- ▶ ESV refers to volunteer activities that employees perform in the community with some form of support or encouragement from their employer.
 - In these initiatives, the employer absorbs all or part of the costs of employee volunteering, thereby providing them incentives to volunteer.



- ▶ **ESV is not a new phenomenon in the corporate world:**
 - a 1995-survey showed that 25% of Canadian companies had a formal volunteering policy (Rostami & Hall, 1996).
 - Another study showed that 27% of Canadian volunteers had received some type of support for volunteering from their employer (NSGVP, 2001).

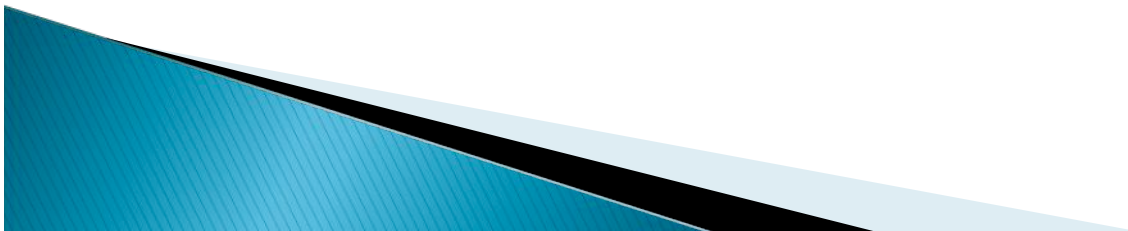


- ▶ Encouraging employees in their volunteering activities helps the corporate sector:
 - build links with communities
 - enhance their public image
 - promote the mission of voluntary sector by helping provide needed services
 - contribute in creating a healthy socioeconomic environment in the country.



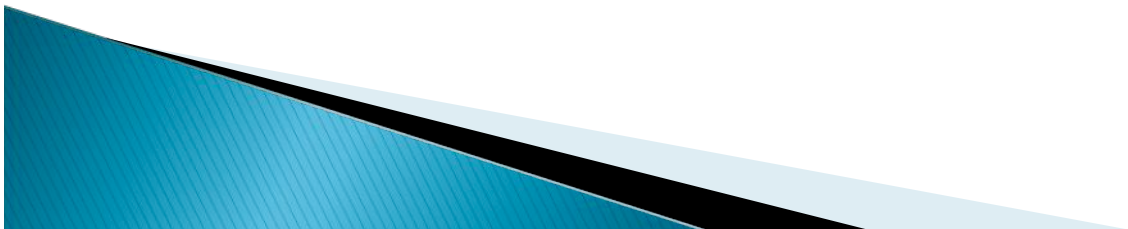
The project

- ▶ This project was conducted in two phases:
 - **Phase 1.** Interviews with representatives from all of Canada's major banks and some other financial institutions. The findings of Phase 1 were reported last year.
 - **Phase 2.** A survey of Employee Volunteers



The Survey

- ▶ An on-line survey was conducted from May to August 2007
- ▶ 299 employee volunteers at a Canadian financial institution responded to the survey
- ▶ The survey provides:
 - Demographic profile of the volunteers
 - General volunteering activities and motivation
 - The ESV program
 - A qualitative analysis of the company's role in volunteering initiatives



Findings:

Demographic Profile of Volunteers

- ▶ Volunteers participating in ESV initiatives are highly educated, high earning, married females, in their late 30s to early 40s, having completed their education in Canada.

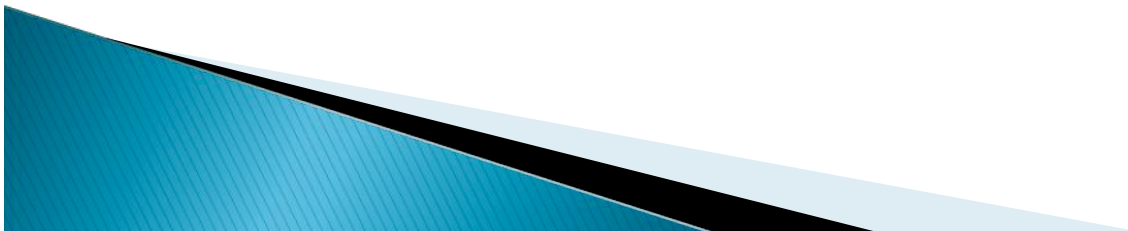
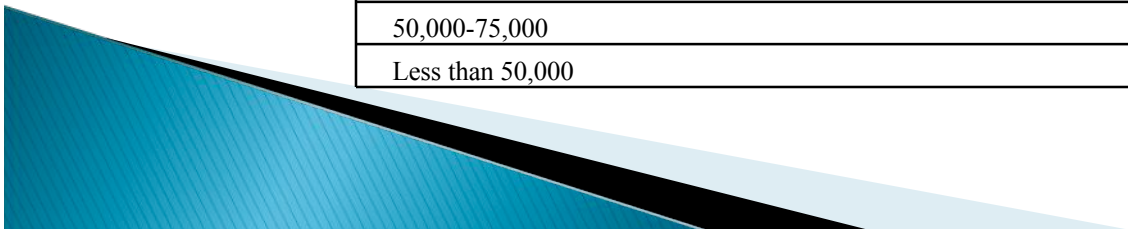


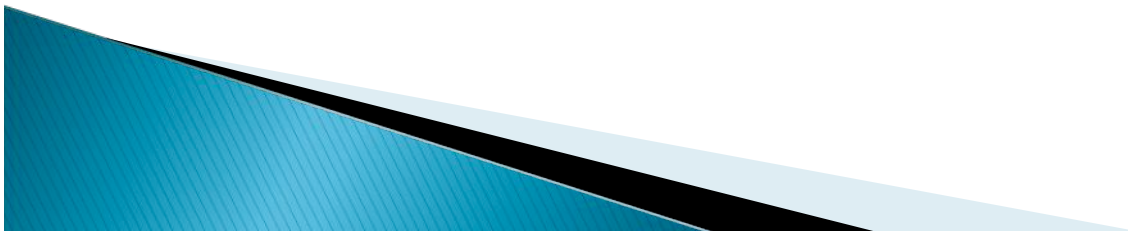
Table 1 - Socio-demographic characteristics of ESV volunteers

Age	%
21-30	25.5
31-40	31.8
41-50	26.8
51-60	11.7
Over 60	4.1
Gender	%
Male	34.9
Female	65.1
Marital status	%
Unmarried	29.6
Married / common law	63.2
Divorced, separated, or widowed	7.1
Education	%
High school	7.1
Post-secondary certificate or diploma	9.5
Some university or college education	17.3
Bachelor's degree	56.3
Master's or PhD degree	9.8
Place of completing high school	%
In Canada	82.6
Elsewhere	17.4
Annual household income	%
Above 100,000	46.8
75,000-100,000	20.4
50,000-75,000	20.8
Less than 50,000	12.0



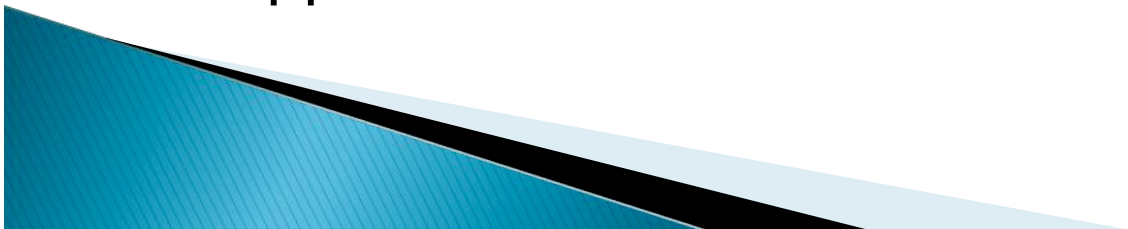
Findings: General Volunteering Activities and Motivations

- ▶ Volunteering activities concentrated in fundraising and physical labour.
- ▶ Respondents enjoy volunteering with their co-workers, and prefer to serve in community or social service organizations.
- ▶ They are primarily motivated by moral considerations and the desire to help people rather than an obligation to their employer.
- ▶ Volunteering provides them with opportunities to learn new things, chances to develop leadership skills and ways to increase their networking.
- ▶ Volunteers believe their contributions help develop a sense of community and build trust among people.
- ▶ Volunteers also tend to donate money to their favourite causes.

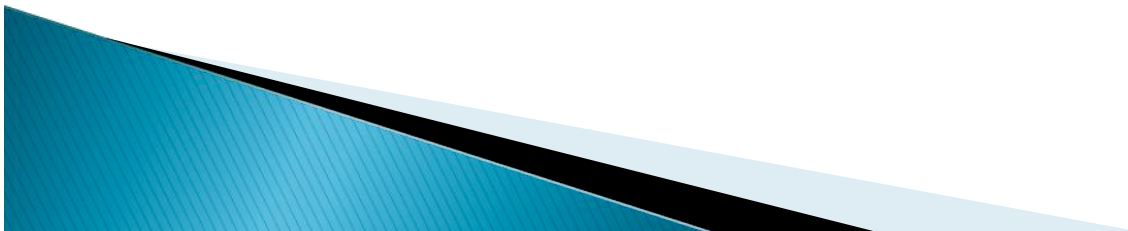


Findings: ESV program

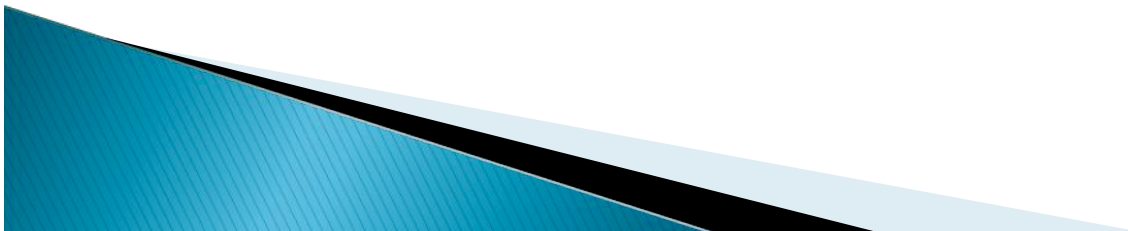
- ▶ Participation rate for company supported volunteering is very high
- ▶ information about programs is accessed through company's internal website, emails, and posters.
- ▶ volunteers or potential volunteers feel that do not receive enough information from their immediate supervisors.
- ▶ More than one half of volunteers report that their volunteer activities are fully supported by their company, one third claim they receive partial support and one in ten report that they do not receiving any support.



- ▶ The company supports volunteering in the following ways, (in order of frequency):
 - (i) providing time off from work,
 - (ii) forming volunteer teams for special campaigns
 - (iii) providing donations to organizations

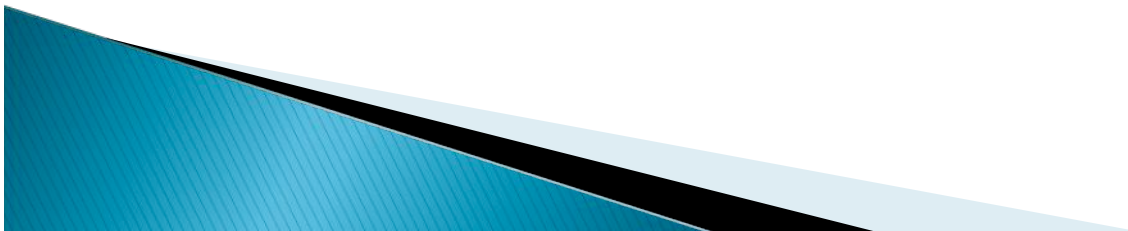


- ▶ Employees report that ESV initiatives (in order of importance):
 - (i) give them a sense of pride in their company for its concern for community,
 - (ii) give them satisfaction in making a contribution to the community,
 - (iii) give them a sense of pride in their company's image in society.



Qualitative Findings: Company's Role in Volunteering Initiatives

- ▶ **Positive:** Volunteering provides employees:
 - a chance to serve humanity,
 - gain practical experience,
 - increase their networking.
- ▶ **Negative:**
 - Poor administrative arrangements,
 - short duration of programs,
 - perceived low turnout of participants.

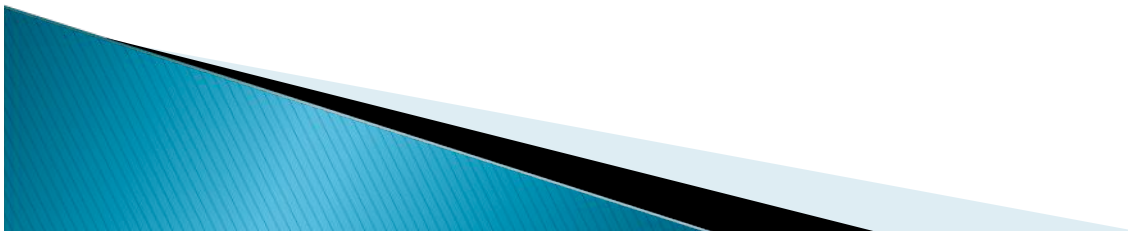


- The company's role as a corporate citizen is appreciated by respondents
- they recognize the company's efforts:
 - in training volunteers,
 - providing strong executive support
 - assigning volunteers to deserving charities.



▶ Suggestions for improvement include:

- paying more attention to immigrants in their volunteering initiatives;
- providing more support for volunteering for non-company events;
- creating more programs involving children;
- providing more flexible work schedules;
- greater consideration for retirees in volunteering;
- more programs in war torn countries;
- greater support for Gay/lesbian groups.



Conclusions

- ▶ Overall, the survey findings indicate a very successful employer-supported volunteering program.
- ▶ The program has created a culture of volunteering exemplified by high participation rates especially in employer-initiated program.
- ▶ The company provides favourable conditions for volunteering that complement the existing motivations among employees to volunteer.

