



Volunteering

SUMMARY: Cultural, demographic, and technological changes are altering volunteer expectations and experiences in an increasingly dynamic and digital organizational environment. Associations and nonprofits are experimenting with more flexible roles and structures to support collaboration and contribution.

Forecasts

- The aging and retirement of a large percentage of older workers will lead to the hollowing-out of institutional knowledge of organizations that rely on these older workers serving in volunteer capacities.
- The rise of new business models—for instance, distributed networks of ad hoc teams instead of traditional hierarchies—will pose a challenge to established volunteering models. Younger volunteers using social media and online tools will be more inclined to organize from the bottom up and avoid working through an organization’s centralized hierarchy.
- Improvements in media and communications technology, productivity programs, and association management software will enable more seamless blending of volunteer versus paid staff positions in organizations.
- Different generational experiences and expectations could lead to innovations in volunteering and reshape how volunteering is conducted; for example, microvolunteering features lower levels of commitment and smaller tasks.

Evolution and public acceptance of new reputation systems

Impact of automation in professional fields

Generational differences in attitudes toward online work and socializing

Evolution of flexible-work practices and technologies

Impacts of baby boomer retirements