



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MILITARY, NATIONAL, AND
PUBLIC SERVICE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Memphis Business and Philanthropic Leaders' Thoughts on Service

The following is a record of a meeting with Commissioners and representatives from ServiceMaster, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, Greater Memphis Chamber, Mid-South Quality Productivity Center, Church Health, FedEx, and Community Foundation, which took place on August 16, 2018, at the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis. At the meeting, participants discussed how philanthropic and business leaders in the Memphis community view service along with other service-related topics of interest to the Commission. The conversation was facilitated by Chair Joe Heck, and included Mr. Mark Gearan, Ms. Avril Haines, Ms. Shawn Skelly, and Ms. Debra Wada. Commission staff from the RAW, OGC, and GPE teams were present. This memorandum is protected by the deliberative process privilege and should be treated as For Official Use Only. This memorandum is not a verbatim transcript of the discussion.

Attendees:

- Commissioners: Dr. Joe Heck, Mr. Mark Gearan, Ms. Avril Haines, Ms. Debra Wada, Ms. Shawn Skelley
- Commission Staff: Mr. Kent Abernathy, Ms. Keri Lowry, Ms. Annie Rorem, Mr. Judson Crane, Mr. Paul Lekas, Ms. Mary Reding, Mr. Brian Collins, Ms. Tara Razjouyan
- External Organizations: ServiceMaster, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, Greater Memphis Chamber, Mid-South Quality Productivity Center, Church Health, FedEx, Community Foundation

Key Takeaways:

- Finding out what individuals are passionate about is an important component for encouraging service.
- Skills-based volunteering should be leveraged as a part of professional development. Nonprofits and charitable missions require more than monetary donations or handouts; they need skills as well and could benefit from volunteering in the form of accounting, logistics support, and other areas.
- There are noteworthy differences in motivation between volunteering cohort (by age) for certain types of service. Younger volunteers have anecdotally shown to be more attracted to service positively contributing to the "greater good." There are also notable differences between those forced to serve versus those who choose to serve.

- Participants largely oppose mandatory service but feel more comfortable with requiring service in high schools. Any form of large-scale mandatory service should consider the impact and burden to existing nonprofits, communities, and organizations.

Meeting Discussion

Chairman Heck stated the Commission’s mandate and goals. He stated the Commission’s intent in meeting with the present business and philanthropic leaders is to determine how they view service, what programs they have within their organizations that encourage a culture of service, and what barriers they face.

Encouraging Service

***Chairman Heck** asked what the needs within the Memphis community and Tennessee are, and how these organizations’ programs serve these needs and encourage service.*

One participant described their organization’s voluntary service programs. The participant stated their organization has stated goals and desired outcomes in relation to service and charitable giving, such as giving \$200 million to 200 communities by 2020. The participant explained the organization’s core pillars—each pillar has a program with a charitable giving and service component—are intended to inspire young people; the organization encourages team members to find what they are passionate about in their communities and allows variance in programs within local communities. The participants added their organization ensures team members are engaged with international core activities as well.

***Chairmen Heck** asked how this organization encourages and incentivizes teams to get involved with international and local charitable- and service-oriented efforts.*

The participant explained they have 10 local markets and local market councils for each, which help determine volunteers, leads, and opportunities. Service opportunities at the corporate level are funded, so they mainly need to encourage employees to step up and lead a service activity. The participant added team members from markets without local market councils are able to submit funding requests to activate volunteers. They also provide small funding grants to local nonprofits.

One participant stated even large corporations struggle with challenges similar to those of small businesses. They have to find ways to encourage teams that struggle with engaging in volunteer opportunities. The participant noted it is important to start small with team meetings or business meetings for instance. The participant added when organizations start small to find out what a team is passionate about, they can grow effectively.

***Chairman Heck** asked what other organizational programs and incentives exist.*

One participant stated their organization’s programs align with their interest areas in revitalizing communities. The participant described other programs incentivizing volunteerism among their employees. For instance, if an employee volunteers a minimum of 40 hours per year, that employee can apply for a grant of up to \$500 for the organization they volunteer with. The participant described another program they have in which any employee can apply and receive a grant of up to \$1,000 for an organization for which they volunteer, but they must recruit a minimum of 10 team members to join in volunteering.

Another participant stated there is a culture for charity in Memphis, highlighting Memphis as the city with the most philanthropic organizations per capita in the U.S. This participant said it is important to find opportunities that individuals within organizations are passionate about as well as utilizing

individualized programming instead of one size fits all. They added the strong faith community in Memphis drives and perpetuates charitable giving and service. They said there are programs across the community that focus on addressing poverty. Memphis supports a culture of getting involved, which differentiates it from other cities.

One participant stated their organization has a program that allows team members who do not have time to serve to collect items. They encourage days of service with interns and collaboratively with various corporations. They also work with local nonprofits, which showcases their organization and nonprofits. This encourages people to have an affinity for different organizations and helps engage the millennial audience.

Chairman Heck asked if they draw in the college-aged population.

The participant stated they do for the internship program.

Chairman Heck noted the Commission is looking to engage the high school-aged population as well in order to determine what age inspires an ethos of service.

Another participant stated they work with high school- and college-aged populations, explaining around 11 colleges engage with them for alternative break weeks. The participant added that some of these student volunteers become their employees. The participant noted an apparent desired division. For instance, volunteers in the health care capacity such as nurses and professionals working 12-hour shifts have the best volunteer buy-in when a service activity is done during the work day. The participant added the biggest obstacle is compassion fatigue—in this case for people in health care. These professionals might prefer to volunteer at programs completely different from their jobs, such as programs focusing on literacy within schools.

Strategic Service for the Community and Skills-Based Volunteering

One participant explained their organization defaults to engaging churches and children. The participant said it is important to remember there are many people in small- to mid-sized businesses that will never emulate gold star groups and organizations. The participant stated they would like to see small- and mid-sized businesses empowered to engage communities and volunteer opportunities by connecting them to real societal needs. The participant suggested connecting these through value and appeal.

The participant asked how skills-based volunteerism can be encouraged.

The participant explained their question, adding the non-profit world needs more than just donors and could benefit from accountants, human resource professionals, and other skill sets. The participant suggested contextualizing needs in terms of what would be helpful to small- or mid-sized businesses.

Another participant added awareness is a community effort. The participant noted connecting people with an issue they care about encourages service. For instance, if someone works at a car dealership, they could be interested in helping high school students develop technical skills. The participant stated not everyone has the luxury of paid time off for volunteering, but this can propel other opportunities.

Chairman Heck asked what the role of the Greater Memphis Chamber is, and whether it is a conduit to match small- and mid- businesses with nonprofits.

A participant answered the highest level of the Greater Memphis Chamber is the Chairmen's circle, which creates new missions every year. The participant added that they have been successful in

finding opportunities for small- and medium-sized corporations and businesses, and mentioned time constraints are always difficult to manage. The participant added the most successful tactic is to utilize mission-aligned volunteerism and service that connect with an individual's personal value or a company's brand and mission.

Another participant mentioned handouts are "not good." One participant stated there are various ways to deliver charity within businesses that are not pure cash transactions. For instance, businesses can help individuals without health insurance by contributing in some way. The participant stated Methodist Health Care donates teams and Baptist Health Care offers a family care residency. The participant added it is important to have conversations with Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) regarding such decisions.

One participant mentioned the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) index is another good example and model. The participant added Memphis needs to discover that it can tie good deeds with an organization's or business' mission.

One participant stated they receive around 200 individual volunteers each week. The participant noted there are various types of volunteers, such as active volunteers that need hours for medical schools, boomer who want recognition, and volunteers in their mid-20s to late 30s who do not want recognition or swag—the latter group rarely misses shifts. The participant emphasized there is a population that does not want any recognition for volunteering.

***Chairman Heck** asked another participant what their theory is on why this happens.*

The participant answered there is a misperception about millennials, adding there is a distinction between the youngest millennials and elder millennials. The participants explained, for the youngest millennials, service is ingrained but as service for the greater good. The participant added St. Jude, for instance, performs research that is shared with everyone—appealing to younger millennials through this global view. The participant summarized there is an expectation for service, but it should impact the greater good and it should be a part of a successful professional life.

Service for Corporate Recruiting and Professional Development

***Chairman Heck** asked how imperative it is for the recruitment of millennials to highlight service. He asked if there is any collective organization or model.*

One participant stated the community foundation fills that role to some degree, but there is no collective model. Another participant answered their organization makes the service connection for businesses or individuals. One participant added organizations typically have one chance to draw an individual to service; if someone has a poor service experience, they most likely will not serve again. The participant added if an individual has a great service experience, they will encourage others and serve again themselves. The participant added that service is a big part of their human resources.

Another participant mentioned the way service is utilized is different for every organization. The participant added many people believe service aid recruitment for businesses, but it is not a tangible theory and the effects are not certain.

One participant added service can be connected with other business-related goals such as using volunteering as team-building activities, which help build a healthier work culture.

***Chairman Heck** asked if corporations track it.*

One participant answered they do, adding corporations invest time and money to capture what volunteerism is happening within their corporation. The participant added some organizations do a great job of tracking volunteerism, while others rely on anecdotal stories.

Another participant stated there are apparent global trends, but all volunteerism is not recorded. The participant noted it is important that it is part of business plans. The participant added one organization studied gave leave time and allowed people to work on innovative projects for the community. The participant said they can use the community to grow professionalism and “interpreneurship.” The participant stated organizations that do not tie volunteerism into their business plan are missing out.

Chairman Heck asked what a participant meant regarding “not getting credit” for volunteering.

The participant explained businesses can incorporate service into their personal development plans for employees; for instance, volunteering could be a part of moving up to a manager position. The participant added certain organizations can utilize skills-specific service more effectively if they gave their employees credit for the service. The participant added there are many do-gooders, but not enough innovation and entrepreneurship.

Ms. Skelley summarized there is a potential for service that addresses needs.

The participant added everything should be aligned with the corporation’s mission.

Mr. Gearan asked if any organization does this.

The participant explained that in order to keep corporations anonymous, no specific examples can be offered. Although, the participant noted there are trends with volunteering that is not connected to an organization’s mission, which is burn out from service and increased problems. The participant said an apparent distinction is an external need for credit and more nuanced practices to track how such things grow individuals. The participant broadly states examples of companies good at tracking mission-oriented service such as Luxottica and other eyewear companies, Hershey, P&G, and Anheuser-Busch Inbev. The participant added their company implemented volunteer days, donations relevant to customers, business goals, and brand ambassador programs.

Chairman Heck asked how participants perceive public service on resumes.

Two participants commented public service on resumes makes a huge difference for them. They mentioned it is hard to gauge an individual’s EQ or ability to manage responsibilities from a resume or cover letter, so service reveals a lot. Participants added relevant service is noticed as well as skills-based volunteering. One participant noted strategic volunteerism is important for younger volunteers; younger volunteers engage effectively with strategic volunteerism. Another participant stated the purpose of the service noted on a resume is important.

Mandatory Service or High School Service Requirements

Chairman Heck asked what participants thoughts of mandatory service. He added if the theory is right about volunteering cohorts, mandatory service provides an opportunity for high-impact service without credit-seeking.

One participant stated service has to align with someone’s personal values. The participant added they were unsure how generational differences apply to this. Another participant noted a personal anecdote where their parents encouraged service, highlighting that service was shown, not mandated. The participant added there is a notable difference between those forced to do service during high school, for instance.

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Chairman Heck asked if there is value to using mandatory service to introduce people to service.

One participant stated they did not think there is value in mandatory service because the reason service works to inspire passion is because service is done on their own terms. The participant added the service culture in Memphis is effective in instilling the value of service. The participant recommended looking at institutions which reframe how people get engaged. Another participant mentioned they worked with individuals who had to serve and those that chose to and noted a substantial difference between them.

The participant added currently community service is levied as a punishment. The participant added many people look at service as a form of rebellion. For instance, individuals rebel against the national narrative by serving in organizations or for causes opposite to the national narrative.

Chairman Heck asked what participants feel about a service requirement as part of a high school education.

The participants were in consensus that they felt more comfortable with this option. One participant agreed with introducing a service requirement at a high school level, as long as it is executed well.

Another participant noted high school is a great place to instill a service requirement, but asked whether this requirement would create an added burden to nonprofits and communities.

[Chairman Heck closed the meeting.]