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LinkedIn & VolunteerMatch Partner to Support Community Involvement

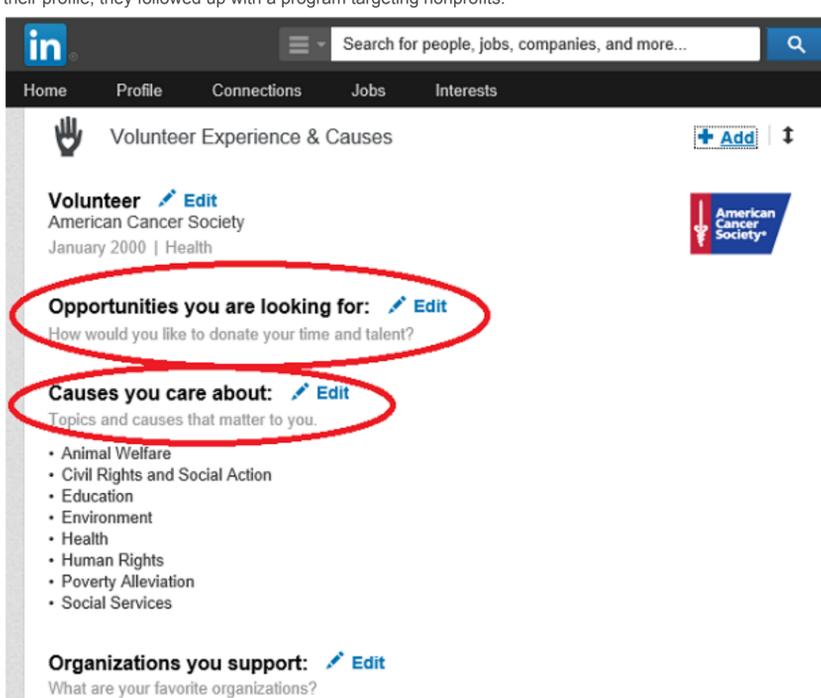
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by *Judy Thomas*

Earlier this year, when LinkedIn debuted their **Volunteer Marketplace**, they granted qualified 501 © (3) nonprofit organizations the ability to post volunteer listings at a considerable 90% off of the standard professional job posting price. These listings not only displayed in LinkedIn user searches, but also appeared in LinkedIn's tailored job emails to members, alongside paid opportunities. A decided homerun for LinkedIn, this pilot program saw volunteer sign-ups double, and even triple in some cases.

LinkedIn Customer Demand Drives Product Development

This is yet another instance of customer demand driving product development, and clearly demonstrates LinkedIn's ongoing attention to its members. For example, when LinkedIn rolled out a **Volunteer Experience and Causes** section in 2011, and nearly three million members used the feature to display their interests on their profile, they followed up with a program targeting nonprofits.



LinkedIn's Volunteer Experience & Causes Profile Feature

Not long after, LinkedIn debuted a related **Board Member Connect** program, which enables registered nonprofit organizations with employer ID numbers (EINs) to search for qualified, potential board member candidates among LinkedIn members who display interest in causes or volunteer work through the Volunteer Experience & Causes section on their profile.

Most recently in June, professional and volunteer networks LinkedIn and VolunteerMatch **announced** that they were joining forces, using their collective technical muscle to design a system that automatically reposts all VolunteerMatch opportunities directly to LinkedIn. The new partnership gives VolunteerMatch's 100,000 nonprofits and LinkedIn's 300 million users access to each other. Their additional 5,000-plus listings, going live through the aid of the improved platform, VolunteerMatch predicts, will bolster the original success of the Volunteer Marketplace program.

How this Impacts For-Profits

Those of you who are firmly rooted in the for-profit world may be wondering how this impacts you or your staff. LinkedIn and VolunteerMatch understand the connection, and VolunteerMatch is so committed to company engagement that they devote an entire blog, **Volunteering is CSR** (corporate social responsibility), to the topic. The blog's very name, they say, is meant to challenge socially responsible entities, such as corporations, companies and colleges, to make volunteering a "prominent part of the mix."

The benefits are many, they say, including the obvious positive branding by association that comes with charitable work. This not only impacts sales, but a **recent study** showed that company volunteer opportunities can also help attract new talent.

As a business owner or employer, you can also check the team-building and PR box if your employees participate in a group community project together. Photos taken at such events, along with employee interviews and quotes, can be leveraged for inclusion in the company newsletter, blog or social media posts.

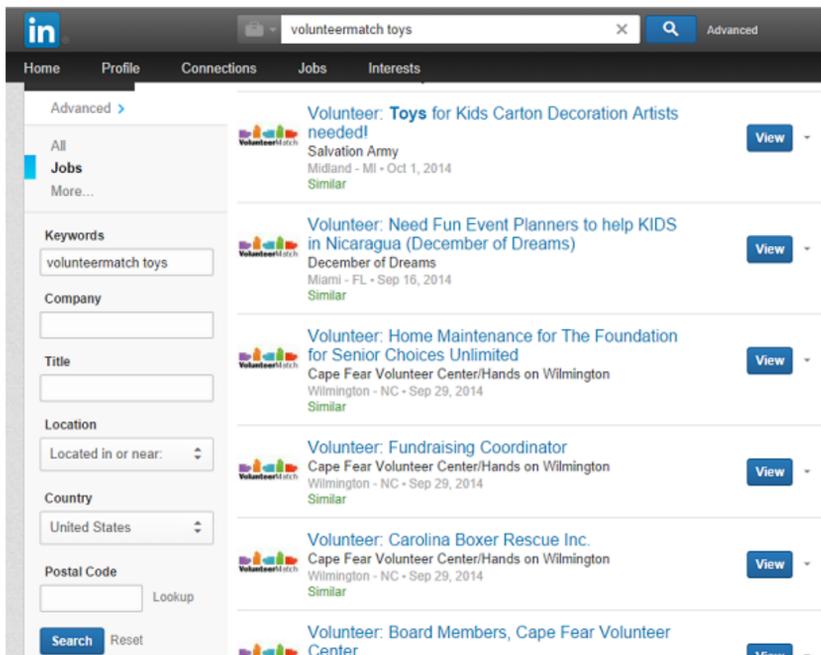
Using Your Skills to Give Back

A **recent report** validated skills-based volunteering, which enables employees to use their specific professional capabilities for good when they are off-the-clock. It showed volunteering had a strong impact on employee development, helping them grow their experience, networking and engagement, while providing organizations with access to invaluable expertise.

Getting Started

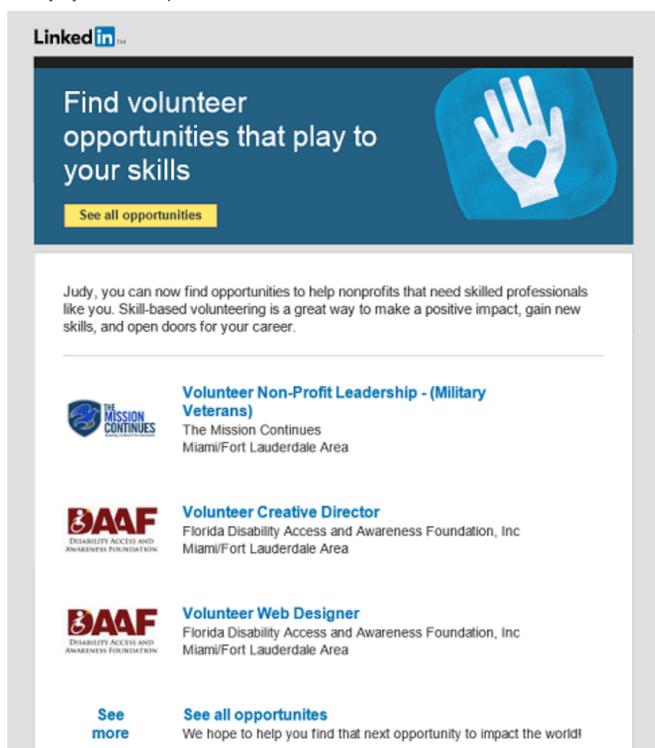
Nonprofits can start with a LinkedIn **Company Page**, getting their current volunteers to tout their involvement on their individual profiles and to search their network for board members or other roles they are hoping to fill with volunteers.

Companies can peruse the various nonprofit pages on LinkedIn to learn more about volunteer opportunities and organizations that closely align with their mission or company culture. For example, a toy company may seek involvement with a children's charity. They can also visit **VolunteerMatch** if they are looking to develop a larger, structured corporate or campus-wide program.



LinkedIn Search for VolunteerMatch Opportunities

Individual members can search LinkedIn for volunteer or board opportunities as they would for a paid job, using "volunteer" as a keyword. Additionally, once they have indicated desired roles and organizations on their profile, they will begin to receive tailored email messages about related opportunities, and may even be contacted directly by interested parties.



LinkedIn Email Tailored to Members Interests and Skillsets

Whatever role you play – nonprofit executive, business owner or volunteer – the idea is to be a part of something greater than yourself, and to connect with others who hope to do the same.

Tags: [LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace](#), [Volunteer](#), [VolunteerMatch](#)

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