PRO BONO + TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DESIGN ROADMAP

Maximize your talent development strategy by integrating pro bono service

Business is changing fast - and the way companies develop their talent is changing with it. Pro bono service has emerged as a proven talent development approach by exposing people to tough challenges and helping them to develop the skills and experiences that will give them an edge in today’s work environment. If you are considering pro bono as a talent development strategy at your company, this step-by-step roadmap will help you get started.

For more information and other resources about building high-impact pro bono programs you can also visit the corporate section of www.taprootfoundation.org or contact us at advisory@taprootfoundation.org.
1 GET THE RIGHT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TEAM IN PLACE.

The members of our team and their roles are...

Best-in-class pro bono + talent development programs are cross-company efforts. Your program development team should ideally include Learning and Development (L&D) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) professionals, so that you can build a program that aligns with the company’s broader business and social impact strategies. When your team is in place, take a look at the diagram below to decide how intensive your program’s talent development component will be. The approach you select may influence which team – CSR or L&D – takes a larger role in program implementation.

THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT SPECTRUM

Members of your team and the roles they play in program design and implementation will be shaped by where your program falls on the Talent Development Spectrum. The following diagram outlines the three common approaches companies take when building pro bono programs that support talent development. Which is best for your company?

**INHERENT TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

Talent development is seen as a desirable outcome of the pro bono program. Participants experience the inherent talent development benefits of serving as pro bono consultants. CSR often drives program development and delivery. L&D is informed, but not necessarily directly involved.

**INTENTIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

Talent development is an explicit program objective. Some additional talent development interventions are integrated into the program so participants can practice and stretch new skills. L&D plays a key role in shaping the program’s talent development strategy and often identifies program participants. Implementation may be led by L&D or CSR.

**INTENSIVE TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

Talent development is a primary program objective. Several features are integrated into the program design so participants can improve performance in target competency areas. L&D typically leads program design and implementation with key support from CSR to ensure the program is aligned with the company’s social impact objectives.
2 KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE.

Our objectives are...

After you’ve decided who will play a role in your program, work together to develop your program’s talent development objectives. Consider what impact you want to have on employee development. Your talent development objectives should be reflective of the approach you selected in Step 1. For example, if you adopted the Intensive Talent Development approach, your development goals should be very measurable and specific so that when the program is complete, you can gauge the degree to which participants developed during the program.

WHAT ARE YOUR TALENT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES?

As a design team, you should develop a set of specific, measurable program objectives. Your objectives should be appropriate for the level and job function of your program participants, as well as the program experience you ultimately design. The following list is an example of the types of objectives you may develop in partnership with your HR team. Depending on your program assessment approach, you might consider having participants self-report their talent development progress or work with managers who can observe skill development.

- Participants demonstrate improved collaboration and teamwork skills
- Participants learn how to effectively manage virtual teams
- Participants gain experience working with external stakeholders

WHICH COMPETENCIES DO YOU WANT TO BUILD AMONG PARTICIPANTS?

As you consider which objectives to pursue, think about the key skills and/or competencies that you want to develop among employees. The following list includes examples of a number of competencies that are both highly valued in today’s work environment and that pro bono service is inherently good at building.

- Learning Agility
- Risk-taking
- Networking
- Global Mindset
- Virtual Adeptness

- Self-Awareness
- Comfort with Ambiguity
- Client Relationship Management
- Collaboration
- Effective Communications
3 IDENTIFY THE RIGHT SET OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.

Our program participants will include...

Selecting the employees who will participate in your program is a critical choice that is directly tied to what you want your program to achieve. A broadly accessible program that invites many people at the company to participate allows you to impact a diverse pool of talent. However, with such a large pool that varies across seniority and expertise, it is harder to build in talent development interventions that are relevant to the needs of the whole group. If you plan to work with a smaller pool of employees that includes just one functional group (e.g., marketing) or to integrate with an existing leadership development program, you have the flexibility to take a more intensive approach to program design that can be customized to that group’s specific needs.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION OPTIONS

The following diagram illustrates three ways to select the right participants for your program. The pool of employees you choose to work with should tie back to your talent development objectives.

- **OPEN CALL**: Any qualified and interested employee can apply
- **PRE-DEFINED POOL**: A specific, pre-identified subset of employees (e.g., VPs, senior executives, the finance function, etc.)
- **LEADERSHIP COHORT**: A tracked group of employees that have been identified by L&D as high-performers or high-potential talent
4. DECIDE ON YOUR TALENT DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS.

Our talent development components will include...

If you pursue a program that is ‘Intentional’ or ‘Intensive’ on the Talent Development Spectrum, it’s likely that your program will include some specific talent development components. The talent development activities you choose should directly support your talent development objectives for the program. For example, if you want participants to improve self-awareness, you might build a 360 review into the process, arrange for structured peer-to-peer feedback sessions, or bring on an executive coach to provide ongoing feedback about how a participant is conducting herself in a group setting.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

The diagram below describes some typical talent development components that you might consider building into your program. Generally, the more activities you integrate, the more intensive the program will be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INHERENT DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Talent Development Components</td>
<td>A Few Talent Development Components</td>
<td>Many Talent Development Components</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAMPLE TALENT DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

- Engage senior sponsors or coaches to counsel participants throughout project experience
- Engage participants’ direct managers to learn about areas for growth
- Integrate 360 feedback
- Designate pro bono team member roles and responsibilities (like Team Lead or Nonprofit Client Contact) to provide areas for participant growth
- Provide an opportunity for the pro bono team to present their findings in a high-pressure or high-stakes setting (i.e. In front of the CEO, a panel of executives, or their managers)
- Facilitate a group debrief after projects concludes to reflect on the experience from a talent development perspective
- Administer assessments to measure progress against professional development goals
- Incorporate project participation feedback into performance review of Individual Development Plan
5 BUILD THE IDEAL PROGRAM MODEL.

Our program model will be...

The right program model has a major impact on your ability to achieve your talent development objectives. Most models can be adjusted to be effective in supporting talent development across the spectrum of inherent, intentional, or intensive programs. Pick the model that’s best for your desired impact, your people, and your own management needs.

PROGRAM MODEL OPTIONS

There are a variety of program design options to consider. Some program design options are more conducive to the integration of talent development features than others. Options include whether the pro bono project work happens virtually or in-person, whether it engages global or local organizations, whether you have people working on teams or as individuals, etc. Fortunately, regardless of the program model, there is almost always room to build in talent development activities. For example, the diagram below illustrates how you might do so with a one day pro bono program, as well as a longer-term pro bono program. But keep in mind that these are just two of an unlimited number of program model approaches you could take.

SAMPLE: ONE DAY INTENTIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT

BEFORE EVENT
Participants Complete a Development Goal-Setting Survey

DURING EVENT
Participants Work towards their Goals During One-Day Pro Bono Projects

AFTER EVENT
Participants Complete a Self-Assessment of their Progress Towards their Goals

SAMPLE: 10-WEEK INTENSIVE TALENT DEVELOPMENT

WEEK 1
Participants Complete a Goal-Setting Survey

WEEK 2
Participants Meet with a Coach to Discuss Goals

WEEK 5
Participants Complete a Mid-Point Goals Assessment

WEEK 10
Participants Present their Key Findings to a Panel of Senior Executives

WEEK 10
Participants Receive 360 Feedback about their Performance