**Common Impact Microsite**

**Rachel Hutchisson**

        Describe your work and what drives you. 

I have the distinct honor and pleasure of running Blackbaud’s corporate social responsibility, a strategic function I have built over the years as the company has grown from an entrepreneurial start up to a publicly traded company. Today, we provide technology and data solutions that power and connect the entire spectrum of philanthropy – individuals taking on cause action, 30,000 nonprofits seeking to maximize their fundraising and operate more efficiently, more than 1,000 grant-making foundations, and companies seeking to turn their employees into agents of good. I mention this focus because it’s vital to me and my role. In addition to being a CSR professional, I am one who works within a business context that is all about philanthropy. In many of our efforts, we seek to take a broad approach that helps to lift the sector versus selecting individual causes (in our case, that would be like picking a favorite child). Examples of this are our work with Giving USA, #GivingTuesday and A Billion + Change. Working at the intersection of nonprofit and corporate has formed how I look at the topic of social good. I have a fundamental belief that “good is for everyone” (individuals of all ages, nonprofits, foundations, small business, corporates, cities, etc.) and seek to share this position through various blogs (npENGAGE contributor; Business Doing Good creator and blogger) and many speaking engagements in the nonprofit, corporate and social innovation spaces. I also invest a significant amount of time helping our people identify opportunities to serve on nonprofit committees and boards, both as a way to give back and to learn about this amazing market.

        What was your first exposure to Pro Bono?

To really answer this question, it’s important that you know that I think of Pro Bono, at heart, as being skill-based volunteerism where a professional offers his or her skills to a nonprofit at no charge. I look at this type of service as being at the pinnacle of the volunteerism spectrum. Many view Pro Bono as being project based where a project is scoped by a nonprofit and a group of skilled volunteers take it on at no charge but with the same professional focus and committee as they would a paid venture. I take a broader view of skills-based volunteerism, most likely because I find myself in a setting where I am working with a lot of individuals seeking to do this kind of service (vs groups able to take on scoped initiatives).   
  
This background matters because I, realize, looking back at my life, that I have grown up surrounded by skills-based volunteerism. Before I knew what nonprofits were, I knew that my parents were engaged in the community with their peers, seeking to lead the public library through difficult economic times and to ensure the future services of organizations like the senior citizens center and a literacy organization. As a middle school student, I knew that when my mother was in the dining room with an adult client (teaching him how to read), I was to give them privacy.

At Blackbaud, over the years, we have led a number of initiatives that – also looking back – I would now call skills-based volunteerism. The term itself seems to have risen in popularity over the last 5-10 years. When A Billion Plus Change asked us to make a pledge about 4 years ago, our reaction was, “of course, we already do this work.”

       Why did you become “hooked” on Pro Bono / Skills-Based Volunteering?

I am a huge fan of skills-based volunteerism for two equally important reasons. 1) It results in a much more meaningful contribution to the nonprofit, both in terms of the cost value of the skill and the last impact it makes. 2) It results in a much more meaningful experience for the volunteer who can see that he or she did something that is of real financial and lasting value. Although days of caring or other team volunteer activities where physical labor is provided are important types of volunteerism, they also can leave people unfulfilled. Knowing you really helped a nonprofit through the unique use of your skills is hugely rewarding.

Finally, I love skills-based volunteerism because it is a fabulous way for companies of all sizes (including small business) to involve their employees in service in targeted but truly helpful initiatives.

        What has been most rewarding about participating in a Pro Bono program?

To me, the reward is twofold. First and foremost, it is the genuine thanks from the nonprofit partner when the organization realizes what you were uniquely able to do and what a lasting impact it will make. Often, this comes with an excitement about how easy it was to work with our staff and how much they genuinely wanted to help the organization. Also, when we are able to see the end recipients of a project (middle school kids learning to code, for example, that’s a gift – [see the video from Camp Blackbaud here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rXsPqnuaXo).) The second reward is the reaction of the staff involved, who are excited to learn that they truly do have skills to offer that are of help to a nonprofit (many don’t realize this when approached about a project for some reason, which is a shame). Skills-based volunteerism done well truly is a win win for the nonprofit and the company alike.

      What was most challenging, in your role, about leveraging or participating in a Pro Bono program?

The biggest challenge we face is identifying and scoping projects that also meet the skills of our employees and also fit in with the time and attention they can give them. Nonprofits don’t typically know they can ask for volunteers with key skills, so we are left to approach organizations with ideas. It takes a good partner to figure out where their needs align with what you have to offer.

       If someone was in your shoes, looking to get started with skills-based volunteering for the first time, what advice would you give or tool would you point them to?

I would advise them to keep it as simple as possible, not worrying that they may not be a big company or have massive amounts of resources. Skills-based volunteerism is about identifying the skills you have to offer and finding outlets where there is a match. I would recommend that they keep open minded about partners, seeking to find ones where there is a real match versus going in thinking you must help a certain cause. I would also recommend they start small and build as they go. Start with a smaller initiative, scoping what the goal is and also tracking what happens along the way to learn how scope can shift. Then, when that phase is done, see if it makes sense to go to phase 2. Taking on too big a project too quickly can just lead to frustration all around. For small businesses, I would point them to [www.businessdoinggood.com](http://www.businessdoinggood.com) and the eBook I published with A Billion Plus Change and Riggs Partners as inspiration for how small businesses can give back – [Small Business Big Purpose](http://www.abillionpluschange.org/small-business-big-purpose).

         If Pro Bono were a celebrity, who would it be and why?

Jamie Oliver – he’s current, socially minded, and has turned his love for food into a passion for providing quality nutrition in the school.

**Additional Content:**

         **High resolution headshot:** Please provide a high resolution headshot, as large in size as you are able to provide.  Preferably it will have a light background.  It doesn’t need to be professional in quality, but if you’re struggling to find a photo do let me know and we can figure out photography options.  - PROVIDED

         **Company logo:**  For those who want their company or organization to be recognized alongside your profile, please send a high res organization / company logo and let me know if there are any publicity permissions we’ll need to acquire. - PROVIDED

         **Tools / Websites / Content:** Common Impact is developing this microsite to be a one stop shop of resources for individuals like yourselves that are exploring Pro Bono for the first time, so any resources or content that you have used or would suggest (beyond the key resource you share in the question above) please send them along and we’ll include them in our resource page.

PLEASE see the two resources I list in my answers above ([www.businessdoinggood.com](http://www.businessdoinggood.com) and the eBook I did with A Billion Plus Change.)