

'We Give Our Time' Final Report

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Executive Summary

'We Give Our Time' was a pilot of an online networking space aimed at people who give time unpaid to Macmillan. This report summarises the key findings of the pilot scheme. In particular it seeks to:

- Build on the findings from the midterm report
- Evaluate the extent to which the space fulfils its aims and objectives
- Analyse any differences between the views of volunteers, Macmillan staff and professionals about the usefulness of the space and both groups' involvement in it
- Make recommendations for the future of the space.

'We Give Our Time' aimed to enable volunteers and people who give their time to Macmillan to network and communicate with each other and with relevant Macmillan staff and professionals, as well as making it easy to find relevant information about Macmillan.

The expected outcomes and benefits of the space were that people who give their time to Macmillan feel more part of the Macmillan team, that they gain a better understanding of Macmillan, and that they are encouraged to become more deeply involved with Macmillan.

The key findings indicate that these aims and objectives have been met as far as was possible within the limits of the pilot scheme, and that the space is likely to continue meeting them in the future.

There are several challenges and difficulties facing 'We Give Our Time', for example problems with email notifications, a dip in activity and lack of clarity around the purpose of the space. However, the majority of these are not without solution and there is general agreement amongst key stakeholders that the space should continue to be available in the future as long as solutions are secured and other improvements made.

The recommendation of this report is to open the space up, making it visible and accessible to the wider Online Community and beyond. This will promote long-term sustainability and bring 'We Give Our Time' into line with the ethos of the rest of the Online Community. It could also provide a helpful inside view of volunteering at Macmillan to potential volunteers.

Background

Why did we pilot 'We Give Our Time'?

Volunteer research and focus group results confirm the fact that many volunteers and people who give time to Macmillan would like the opportunity to network and communicate with other volunteers and Macmillan staff/professionals. Whilst some are happy with face-to-face networking, others do not have as much opportunity to enjoy face-to-face contact, for example remote-based volunteers. Others still would actively welcome an online platform as well as face-to-face channels.

Historically, whilst there were a few isolated online networking opportunities for select groups of volunteers, there was no national Macmillan online platform through which volunteers could network and communicate. Likewise, there was no one space that drew relevant materials, documents, tools, and information together for volunteers.

So on 13th December 2011, the Volunteering & Community Action Team launched the pilot scheme 'We Give Our Time' – an online networking space aimed at everyone who gives time unpaid to Macmillan.

Who took part in the pilot?

We aimed to identify and recruit a pilot group of approximately 50 – 200 volunteers from Macmillan's current giving-time network to use 'We Give Our Time' by contributing to group discussions, posting information, accessing links, giving news, ideas and suggestions. This included campaigners, Cancer Voices, Self Help & Support Group members, office volunteers and interns, online community members, fundraisers, events volunteers and services volunteers. 70 people expressed an interest in the pilot and were invited to join 'We Give Our Time'. They played a key role in building sound foundations for the space, as well as participating in the evaluation of its usefulness and accessibility.

The majority of the volunteers who expressed interest were involved in fundraising for Macmillan, although many were involved in multiple ways, for example some fundraising volunteers were also Cancer Voices or members Self Help & Support Groups. Some volunteers who expressed interest were not able to sign up due to unfortunate circumstances or other commitments.

Additionally, 12 relevant Macmillan staff were asked to take part in the pilot scheme, 11 of which joined the space, and 11 Macmillan professionals also signed up. We identified these Macmillan staff and professionals as those who could make a positive contribution to the online space pilot scheme, for example by getting involved in discussions on the space, answering questions relevant to their area of expertise and maybe even initiating some discussions themselves.

What were the aims and expected outcomes of the pilot?

The aim of the space was to enable people who give their time to Macmillan, or to a Macmillan service, to network and communicate with each other and with relevant Macmillan staff and professionals, as well as making it easy to find relevant information about Macmillan.

The expected outcomes and benefits were that people who give their time to Macmillan felt more part of the Macmillan team (Optimum Volunteering Experience Model Statement

3 as shown below), that they gained a better understanding of Macmillan (Statement 8 below), and that they were encouraged to become more deeply involved with Macmillan.



Evaluation Methodology

The pilot phase of 'We Give Our Time' ran from 13th December 2011 – 31st January 2012 and evaluation was a two-part process. An interim evaluation report was submitted in January 2012, marking progress halfway through the pilot phase. This document is the final report marking the overall evaluation of the whole pilot phase.

The pilot group (staff and volunteers) were asked to complete two online surveys to evaluate their experiences and views of using the space. The first survey was circulated on 24th December, just two weeks after the launch, and results informed the interim evaluation report. The final survey was circulated on 1st February and results informed this report. Users were given 11 days to complete each survey. A final evaluation workshop was held on 6th February to gather more qualitative feedback and to provide a face-to-face networking opportunity for many of the volunteers and staff.

The table below sets out the groups involved in the evaluation, the methods of gathering feedback and the numbers engaged from each group.

Feedback	Group	Numbers engaged (out of 66 volunteers and 22 staff/ professionals)
Midterm online survey	Volunteer pilot group	17
Midterm online survey	Staff and Professionals engaged in pilot project	16
Evaluation Workshop	Volunteer pilot group and staff/professionals	6 volunteers 10 staff
End of pilot online survey	Volunteer pilot group	15
End of pilot online survey	Staff and Professionals engaged in pilot project	10

Evaluation Findings

Uptake

As detailed above, we aimed to identify and recruit a pilot group of approximately 50 – 200 volunteers from Macmillan’s current giving-time network to use ‘We Give Our Time’. 70 people expressed an interest in the pilot of the project and were invited to join the online group.

12 relevant Macmillan staff were asked to take part in the pilot scheme, 11 of which joined the space, and 11 Macmillan professionals also signed up.

Usage

‘We Give Our Time’ had a lively and rapid pick up amongst users – within the first four days 32 users joined, 10 new discussion topics were initiated and 52 posts were added. Six weeks later, by the 31st January 2012, the group had a total of 66 users (staff, professionals and volunteers) engaged in over 25 discussion topics with 156 contributions which had generated over 6400 page views, over 4000 of which were unique views.

Following the Christmas period, the space saw an initial increase in activity with the busiest day of contributions since the launch on 4th January. However, since then activity remained steady, but low.

Views of people who give their time

15 volunteers (just over 20%) completed the final volunteer survey to help us understand their views of ‘We Give Our Time’. The results were largely positive and consistent with the midterm findings:

- Almost all enjoyed using ‘We Give Our Time’, with a third using the space several times a week.
- They found the space most useful for “networking and communicating with people in different roles”, “sharing thoughts, ideas, advice and/or information” and “accessing information about Macmillan”.
- 80% agreed that ‘We Give Our Time’ has already helped them, or is likely to help them, to feel part of the Macmillan team, to gain a better understanding of Macmillan and to network and communicate with other volunteers, staff and professionals.
- Over half agreed the space has already encouraged them, or is likely to encourage them, to become more deeply involved with Macmillan by hearing of other volunteering opportunities.
- Suggestions of additional features and functionality included making the group heading stand out more, fixing the email notifications feature, making it easier to access the group and publishing a list of relevant staff contacts.

Quotes from Final Volunteer Survey:

“The team have done a fantastic job in helping members understand the working of Macmillan volunteers”

“Really enjoyed it and also attending the workshop gave me a stronger understanding of the forum and how Macmillan works.”

“I found the site useful and the ability to communicate and share experience helpful.”

“The layout of the site is easily accessible, which is a good asset, and easy to get around.”

“It’s been very good and I’d like it to continue.”

Views of Macmillan Staff and Professionals

10 Macmillan staff/professionals completed a similar final survey to help us understand their views of ‘We Give Our Time’ – this was approximately half of the group who took part in the pilot. Results were largely positive and consistent with the midterm findings:

- Over a third used ‘We Give Our Time’ once a week or so, and almost 20% used it several times a week.
- They found the space most useful for understanding volunteers’ experiences.
- All agreed that ‘We Give Our Time’ has already helped volunteers, or is likely to help them, to feel part of the Macmillan team and to network and communicate with other volunteers, staff and professionals.
- 70% agreed that ‘We Give Our Time’ has already helped volunteers, or is likely to help them, to gain a better understanding of Macmillan.
- 70% agreed that the space has already encouraged volunteers, or is likely to encourage them, to become more deeply involved with Macmillan.
- Suggestions of additional features and functionality included a news digest and setting up more specialist group discussions, such as "volunteer speaker discussion", where volunteer speakers and managers of speakers can share hints and tips.

Quotes from Midterm and Final Macmillan Staff and Professionals Surveys:

“Many postings and comments in the beginning of the pilot were all about it’s being a pilot and something new. Without that drive, I’m not sure whether people will feel inspired to go on there, so I think it needs someone to ‘keep it going’.”

“Good links to relevant documents and web pages. Good opportunity to share experiences with other volunteers and inspire others to take on new roles, activities and challenges.”

“I think a lack of confidence meant that it took longer than the 5 minutes per day suggested to spend on the site.”

“It was a bit time consuming at first and as a HCP [Health Care Professional] I would not use it, but I’m encouraging my volunteers to.”

Difficulties, Challenges & Suggested Solutions

Several difficulties were discussed in the midterm report, including an issue with the typeface, blocked posts and email notifications. The former two difficulties have been resolved and had minimal impact. The latter is still ongoing, and several other issues and challenges have arisen since the midterm report, as detailed below:

Features and Functions

Email notifications –

Highlighted as a significant challenge throughout the whole pilot phase, the email notifications function did not work at all. The function was supposed to notify users when others replied to a discussion thread they had posted in or posted new activity in the group, but due to an underlying technical error, the issue remained unresolved.

Users had to check back into the space in order to see if their posts had been answered. Whilst this may have encouraged some users to check the space more, overall it is likely to have had a negative effect on usage and engagement. Users were not reminded to check the space for replies, and with busy schedules and other commitments, this is likely to have meant the space was not used as much as it could have been.

Over 85% of volunteers and 70% of Macmillan staff and professionals agree that email notifications would be useful. One volunteer commented in the Final Volunteer Survey, *“The email notifications would be fab as I have had little chance recently to access the site and other priorities took over - an email reply to something I'd put would have been really great as a reminder!”*

The web developers are still trying to resolve the issue, and are currently unable to provide a timeframe for finding a solution.

Live Chat –

On 13th January Alice Sander from the Challenge Events team at UKO hosted a live chat session with some of the users on the space, talking about the London Marathon and other national events and the different volunteer roles at these events.

However, other than this hosted session, the chat function was underused throughout the pilot phase. Reasons for this could be that the function was not visible enough and users didn't realise it was there, that it was unclear and users did not understand how to use it, or simply that there weren't enough users logged in at any one time. The function needs to be promoted further, perhaps using suggestions that have been gathered for future live chat sessions as a hook.

Head Banner –

There was general agreement at the final evaluation workshop that the head banner (the header above the space which holds the title and logo) currently isn't saying much to users about 'We Give Our Time'. It is at the forefront of the space and so really needs to sell its value. Solutions include altering the copy and/or changing the logo to make it much clearer what 'We Give Our Time' is, who it is for, and what it can offer.

“Sticky” discussions, focus tags and/or news area –

Currently, there are quite a few discussions on ‘We Give Our Time’. This list will only grow when more users join the space, potentially making it hard for users to navigate the space and find relevant discussions.

A “Sticky” function would enable a user to “stick” a discussion so it always sits at the top of the Latest Activity and Discussions list in the group forum. It would enable users to bookmark the discussions or posts they are most interested in, making it quicker and easier to navigate the space.

An alternative would be to use focus tags to label posts and discussions so that users can filter information. And yet another way of making certain topics more visible would be to introduce a ‘News and Updates Area’, highlighting a ‘Topic of the Month/Week’ (e.g. Cancer Talk Week), a case study or a success story. Approximately 70% of volunteers, staff and professionals think this would be useful.

Listing posts in descending order –

Currently, posts are listed in ascending order, with the oldest post first and the newest post last. This means it takes quite a lot of effort and clicks to get to the most recent post. All staff and professionals, and 73% of volunteers think that listing posts in descending order, with the newest posts appearing at the top of the list rather than at the bottom, would be useful.

Geo-tagging –

Volunteers have suggested it would be helpful to identify the location of other users and events. To this end, users have created and contributed to a discussion on ‘We Give Our Time’ entitled “Where are you?”.

However, a geo-tagging function would fulfil this need much more easily and efficiently. It would enable users to tag themselves and events geographically, allowing others to search and identify people and events near them. Although it would be a large and costly development, it is highly sought-after – 60% of volunteers and 90% of staff and professionals agree that geo-tagging would be useful.

Jargon Buster –

Volunteers involved in a specific field of work can lack awareness of other areas of involvement, other teams and wider initiatives. Therefore, they may not always understand the terminology referred to on ‘We Give Our Time’. For example, an events volunteer may not be aware of what a Cancer Voice is.

Macmillan staff and volunteers alike have recommended a “Jargon Buster” to address this possible issue. This would give a concise explanation of the main terminology used on the space.

Dip in activity on ‘We Give Our Time’

Following the Christmas period, the space saw an initial increase in activity with the busiest day of contributions since the launch being 4th January. However, since then activity remained steady, but low. Reasons for this could include the lack of email notifications, post-Christmas busyness, or the lack of many new users joining the space. Steps were taken to encourage existing users back onto the space, including email

prompts from the group facilitator. These made some difference, but activity did not resume the rate it had taken before the Christmas period.

A long-lasting solution would be to open up 'We Give Our Time' beyond the pilot group of volunteers, staff and professionals, removing the need to request permission to join. This would likely lead to more users accessing the space, and ultimately generate more discussion and activity.

Lack of clarity around involvement in 'We Give Our Time'

Despite initial coaching and guidance, staff and professionals expressed a need for a clearer framework to guide their involvement in 'We Give Our Time'. Feedback at the final evaluation workshop suggested that staff often felt uncomfortable or uncertain of what and how often to contribute to 'We Give Our Time'. They were unclear as to whether they should be participating in general 'chit-chat', given their professional capacity, whether they should be encouraging users to talk about more Macmillan-focused topics, or a bit of both. Volunteers also expressed that they would like some clearer guidance on using the space.

Clearer guidance needs to be produced about what 'We Give Our Time' can offer to volunteers, and how Macmillan staff and professionals can/should get involved. An additional solution suggested at the final evaluation workshop was for the space to continue to be guided by a facilitator, or group of facilitators, who would be able to take on the additional task of alerting appropriate staff/professionals when posts come up that are relevant to their areas of work. For example, if a user posts a request to be contacted by someone in the Fundraising Team, the facilitator would alert an appropriate member of staff and ask them to respond to the user. This would help staff and professionals understand when it is appropriate for them to get involved in discussions.

Lack of clarity around the purpose of 'We Give Our Time'

The final evaluation workshop highlighted confusion around the purpose of 'We Give Our Time' from both volunteers and staff/professionals. The purpose needs to be communicated more clearly, detailing what 'We Give Our Time' can offer to volunteers and how it is different from other spaces on the Online Community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Meeting the aims and objectives

The aim of the space was to enable people who give their time to Macmillan, or to a Macmillan service, to network and communicate with each other and with relevant Macmillan staff and professionals, as well as making it easy to find relevant information about Macmillan.

The expected outcomes and benefits were that people who give their time to Macmillan felt more part of the Macmillan team, that they gained a better understanding of Macmillan, and that they were encouraged to become more deeply involved with Macmillan.

As outlined in the “Evaluation Findings” section, ‘We Give Our Time’ met all these aims and objectives as far as was possible within the limits of the pilot scheme, and is likely to continue meeting them in the future.

“As a novice I'm finding this method of communicating has such potential.”

“All those links enable me to look at areas that I'd never have found otherwise.”

“[I] have enjoyed finding out about the different volunteering roles within Macmillan and the people who work in them.”

(Quotes are from the Midterm Volunteer Survey)

Further indication that the space helped volunteers to gain a better understanding of Macmillan can be gained from the site's exit statistics. These show that users tended to continue on to the rest of Macmillan's Online Community or other areas of the Macmillan website, rather than leaving website completely. This suggests that people used ‘We Give Our Time’ as a springboard for learning more about Macmillan's work. The ‘Useful Links’ section on the space was accessed over 100 times throughout the pilot, suggesting that users also saw the space itself as a source of information.

However, the final evaluation workshop highlighted that clarification is needed around the definition of ‘Macmillan Team’ in order fully to understand whether or not the space has met/will meet this objective.

Recommendations for the future of ‘We Give Our Time’

It is clear that ‘We Give Our Time’ is fulfilling its aims and objectives as far as possible, but what do volunteers, staff and professionals feel about its future?

“It's been very good and I'd like it to continue.”

“It will need more users and variety.”

“It needs someone to 'keep it going' or discussion topics may fall off a little bit.”

(Quotes from Final Volunteer Survey and Final Macmillan Staff & Professionals Survey)

There is general enthusiasm and appetite amongst both volunteers and staff for the space to continue in future as long as Macmillan dedicates time and resources to repairing/improving existing features and functionality, as well as ideally introducing some new ones, like geo-tagging. Macmillan will also need to ensure clearer guidance is on hand for both volunteers and staff/professionals around what ‘We Give Our Time’ can

offer and how/when to get involved in discussions. A facilitator (or group of facilitators) would also be extremely helpful in guiding the space and those who are involved in it.

Another issue that would need to be addressed is the dip in activity that the space has experienced since 4th January 2012. As detailed in the previous section, a long-lasting solution would be to open up 'We Give Our Time' beyond the pilot group of volunteers, staff and professionals, removing the need to request permission to join. This would likely lead to more users accessing the space, and ultimately generate more discussion and activity.

There are, in fact, three possible future directions for 'We Give Our Time':

- 1) The suggestion just made (opening up the space and making it visible and accessible to the wider Online Community and beyond).
- 2) Opening up the space by making it visible to the wider Online Community and beyond, but retaining the need to request permission to join.
- 3) Keeping it as it is – a closed group that is invisible to the rest of the Online Community and beyond and inaccessible without permission.

Taking option 3 would likely mean that 'We Give Our Time' would be unsustainable long-term. There are not enough existing users in the space to keep discussions going into the future, and there would be no way for others to find out about the space and join in.

Option 2 would go against the ethos of the Online Community – all other groups are open-access and content is kept relevant by moderators and facilitators. It would also pose an unnecessary barrier to people who are interested in joining in the discussion on 'We Give Our Time'.

We are suggesting Option 1 as the recommended future direction of 'We Give Our Time'. This is likely to help solve the issue of the dip in activity by allowing other people to join the space and contribute to discussions. It is also in line with the ethos of the wider Online Community.

The option is not without risks, however. 'We Give Our Time' is still a very young community, and if it is opened up to the wider Online Community, which is predominantly focused on people affected by cancer and their needs, it could lead to misunderstandings about the purpose of the group. People may post irrelevant information on the space and cause it to diverge from its aims and objectives.

However, the suggested facilitator(s) would be able to redirect stray posts and keep discussions on track, continually reinforcing the aims and objectives of the space and what it can offer. Over time, users will probably also start to take on these roles for themselves, as they have done in other areas of the Online Community.

Another risk is that, given the space will be accessible and visible to the general public, and if some discussions or posts paint a negative picture of volunteering at Macmillan, it may deter some potential volunteers from getting involved.

However, the facilitator(s) would, again, be able to step in and ensure that any negative feedback is dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate way, just as facilitators do on the wider Online Community. Transparency may even be encouraging to potential volunteers, rather than having a negative impact on their likelihood to volunteer with Macmillan.

Concern was expressed at the final evaluation workshop that potential volunteers may get confused by 'We Give Our Time' given the fluid nature of the information available on the space. The consensus was that potential volunteers shouldn't be directed to 'We Give Our Time' *instead of* the Get Involved pages on the Macmillan website. The first port of call should continue to be the Get Involved pages because they are naturally much more structured and clear in terms of the information they provide and the way it is laid out.

However, it was felt that a link to 'We Give Our Time' could be placed on the Get Involved pages because, once potential volunteers have looked at the information on the pages, they might find it helpful to connect with some current volunteers on 'We Give Our Time' to gain an insiders' view.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the risks of taking option 1 and making 'We Give Our Time' visible and accessible to the wider Online Community can be mitigated with good facilitation and clear understanding that potential volunteers should continue to be directed towards the Get Involved pages in the first instance.

The benefits of taking this option are that it will promote long-term sustainability and that it will bring the space into line with the ethos of the rest of the Online Community. It could also provide a helpful inside view of volunteering at Macmillan to potential volunteers.

Macmillan should take option 1, as well as dedicating the necessary time and resources to ensure clearer guidance and good facilitation is on hand, to repair/improve existing features and functionality, and, ideally, to introduce some new ones.

This will ensure that 'We Give Our Time' continues to fulfil its aims and objectives, helping to provide an excellent volunteering experience for everyone who gives their time unpaid to Macmillan and/or Macmillan services.

Appendix 1 – Midterm Volunteer Survey

1. How much are you enjoying using ‘We Give Our Time’?

- Very much
- A little
- Not very much
- Not at all

2. How easy are you finding it to network and communicate with other volunteers and members of Macmillan staff/Macmillan professionals?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Not very easy
- Not at all easy
- Comments:

3. How easy are you finding it to access relevant information (e.g. from the Useful Links?)

- Very easy
- Easy
- Not very easy
- Not at all easy
- I haven't accessed relevant information
- Comments:

4. If you have accessed the Useful Links, how useful are you finding the information?

- Very useful
- Useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- I haven't accessed relevant information
- Comments:

5. What are you finding ‘We Give Our Time’ most useful for?

- Networking and communicating with people in similar roles
- Networking and communicating with people in different roles
- Sharing experiences
- Sharing thoughts, ideas, advice and/or information
- Accessing information about Macmillan
- Accessing information about your role or area of involvement
- Accessing resources for learning and development
- Finding out about other volunteering opportunities with Macmillan and/or Macmillan services
- Other (please specify)

6. Did you feel welcomed into ‘We Give Our Time’?

Very welcomed
Welcomed
Not very welcomed
Not at all welcomed
Comments:

7. Are your posts being answered effectively and promptly?

Never
Sometimes
Mostly
Always

8. Functionality

(Yes definitely, Yes – to some extent, No)

Is 'We Give Our Time' "user-friendly"?

Do you feel comfortable posting replies in discussion threads?

Do you feel comfortable starting new discussions?

Comments:

9. What features do you like/dislike?

(Like, Dislike, Neither like nor dislike, haven't used)

Discussions Live Chat

The Useful Links

Private messaging

Searching for other people with similar skills/roles/location

10. Do you have any other comments you'd like to add about how you've been finding 'We Give Our Time' so far?

Appendix 2 – Midterm Macmillan Staff/Professionals Survey

1. If you received coaching in how to use the Online Community how useful did you find it?

Very useful

Useful

Not very useful

Not at all useful

I haven't received coaching

Comments:

2. How much do you think 'We Give Our Time' is enabling volunteers to network and communicate with each other and with Macmillan staff/professionals?

Very much

A little

Not very much

Not at all

Comments:

3. How much do you think 'We Give Our Time' is enabling volunteers to find relevant information about how to get involved and wider information about Macmillan?

Very much

A little

Not very much

Not at all

Comments:

4. Is the Useful Links section missing anything?

Comments:

5. What are you finding 'We Give Our Time' most useful for?

Networking with volunteers in your field of work

Networking with volunteers in other fields of work

Understanding volunteers' experiences

Gaining new ideas from volunteers

Finding out about other ways in which volunteers get involved with Macmillan and/or Macmillan services

Comments:

6. Did you feel welcomed into 'We Give Our Time'?

Very welcomed

Welcomed

Not very welcomed

Not at all welcomed

Comments:

7. Do you feel that posts are being answered effectively and promptly by other members of Macmillan staff/professionals?

Always

Mostly

Sometimes

Never

Comments:

8. Functionality

(Yes definitely, Yes – to some extent, No)

Is 'We Give Our Time' "user-friendly"?

Do you feel comfortable posting replies in discussion threads?

Do you feel comfortable starting new discussions?

Comments:

9. What features do you like/dislike?

(Like, Dislike, Neither like nor dislike, haven't used)

Discussions Live Chat

The Useful Links

Private messaging

Searching for other people with similar skills/roles/location

Comments:

10. Do you have any other comments you'd like to add about how you've been finding 'We Give Our Time' so far?

Comments:

Appendix 3 – Final Volunteer Survey

1. Which, if any, of the following unpaid activities have you been involved in for Macmillan recently?

- Campaigning for change and taking action for better cancer care
- Helping someone in your community by lending a hand with the shopping, a lift to hospital, or being a listening ear.
- Involvement in a self-help and support group (offering mutual support to others going through a cancer experience)
- Participating in Macmillan's internship scheme
- Raising money for Macmillan, by attending, participating in or organising a fundraising event or activity
- Forming/joining a fundraising group/committee
- Giving a talk or presentation about Macmillan
- Participating in Macmillan's online community by replying to discussion posts and/or starting new discussion threads
- Sharing your cancer experience with others (online, in the media, personally) through Macmillan's Cancer Voices
- Volunteering at a Macmillan information and support centre
- Volunteering at a Macmillan office
- Involvement with Macmillan via a corporate volunteering scheme run by your company
- Other (please specify):

2. Overall, how regularly have you used 'We Give Our Time'?

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once a week or so
- Once a month or so
- Less than once a month
- I haven't used it
- Please tell us why you've been using 'We Give Our Time' at this frequency:

3. How much have you enjoyed using 'We Give Our Time'?

- Very much
- A little
- Not very much
- Not at all

4. What have you found 'We Give Our Time' most useful for? Please select all that apply.

- Networking and communicating with people in similar roles
- Networking and communicating with people in different roles
- Sharing experiences
- Sharing thoughts, ideas, advice and/or information
- Accessing information about Macmillan
- Accessing information about your role or area of involvement
- Accessing resources for learning and development

Finding out about other volunteering opportunities with Macmillan and/or Macmillan services

5. How useful do you think each of the following future developments/improvements we want to make to 'We Give Our Time' will be?

(Very useful, Useful, Not very useful, Not at all useful, Don't know)

Geo-tagging – to geographically locate other users

Email Notifications – to alert users of activity, replies and posts in the group

Effective profiling – users include a list of skills and a short role description in their profile to make it easier to search for users

Newest to Oldest – Posts are listed in descending order with the newest posts appearing at the top of the list rather than at the bottom

Blogging – a regular news post of case studies/success stories dedicated to 'We Give Our Time'

Comments:

6. Are there any other features or functionality you would like to see on 'We Give Our Time'?

Comments:

7. The pilot phase has only been running for six weeks but we are keen to understand if 'We Give Our Time' has already, or is likely to...

(Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

Help you to feel more a part of the Macmillan team

Help you gain a better understanding of Macmillan

Help encourage you to become more deeply involved with Macmillan by hearing of other volunteering opportunities

Help you to network and communicate with other volunteers, staff and professionals

8. Do you have any other comments you'd like to add about how you've found 'We Give Our Time'?

Comments:

Appendix 4 – Final Macmillan Staff/Professionals Survey

1. Overall, how regularly have you used 'We Give Our Time'?

Daily

Several times a week

Once a week or so

Once a month or so

Less than once a month

I haven't used it

2. What have you found 'We Give Our Time' most useful for? Please select all that apply.

Networking and communicating with volunteers in your field of work

Networking and communicating with volunteers in other fields of work

Understanding volunteers' experiences

Gaining new ideas from volunteers

Finding out about other ways in which volunteers get involved with Macmillan and/or Macmillan Services

Other (please specify):

3. How useful do you think each of the following future developments/improvements we want to make to 'We Give Our Time' will be?

(Very useful, Useful, Not very useful, Not at all useful, Don't know)

Email Notifications – to alert users of activity, replies and posts in the group

Geo-tagging – to geographically locate other users

Effective profiling – a standard set for profiles making searching for roles and skills easier

Newest to Oldest – Descending order posts

Blogging – a regular news post of case studies/success stories dedicated to 'We Give Our Time'

Comments

4. Are there any other features or functionality you would like to see on 'We Give Our Time'?

Comments:

5. The pilot phase has only been running for six weeks but we are keen to understand if 'We Give Our Time' has already, or is likely to...

(Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

Help volunteers to feel more a part of the Macmillan family?

Help volunteers gain a better understanding of Macmillan?

Encourage volunteers to become more deeply involved with Macmillan?

Help volunteers to network and communicate with each other and with relevant Macmillan staff and professionals?

Comments

6. Do you have any other comments you'd like to add about how you've found 'We Give Our Time'?

Comments:

Appendix 5 - 'We Give Our Time' Final Evaluation Workshop Write-Up

General Overview of the Day

A final evaluation workshop of the We Give Our Time pilot scheme was held at Macmillan's UK Office on 6th February 2012.

The purpose of the workshop was to build upon the findings of the midterm report and really understand the future potential of We Give Our Time. We wanted to gather views on whether it is something that Macmillan should develop further, whether there is a need for it, and what kind of changes or developments we should look at making.

The workshop was attended by 8 members of Macmillan staff and 6 volunteers. There was a good spread across different volunteer groups, with representation from fundraising, self help & support groups and office volunteers. Discussions (detailed below) were extremely useful and gave great insight into the future direction of We Give Our Time.

Discussion 1 – Overall Effectiveness of We Give Our Time

Positive points –

- Discussions – it is easy to see the difference between those that a user has read and those they haven't (because the colour changes from bold to not bold).
- It's also easy to read, reply to and begin discussions. According to each of the discussion groups, even those who hadn't contributed themselves, felt comfortable and confident that they could if they wanted to. NB - this appears to contradict the following discussion on staff involvement (please see below).

Ideas for improvement –

- A weekly (or daily) digest of relevant activity going on in the space –
 - This could be automated e.g. the top 5/10 most commented on/most read discussions.
 - Or if there was editorial resource, a hand-picked selection of the discussions most relevant to staff/volunteers (most likely they'd need to be different for both)
 - You'd need to be able to opt in/out
 - Filtering alerts and notifications to topics users have tagged that they are interested in. (see discussion on staff involvement below on filtering).
- Some items discussed by the three discussion groups concerned functionality that already exists –
 - This suggests they didn't know it was there/ didn't know how to use it/ it wasn't communicated well enough.
 - Macmillan needs to help fill the gaps in people's knowledge of how to use the Online Community (generally, not just for this group).
 - This also needs to be done for privacy, naming, tagging etc.
- Being able to 'view all' contributions to discussions made by members. E.g. I can easily see all the discussions a member has replied to, which, in the case of staff members, might mean that I can see that my question has already been answered.

- ‘Sticky’ discussions/ hot topics – in other words, enabling someone (a moderator) to stick a discussion so it always sits at the top. This would be good to help staff keep the agenda on track. Also to see which discussions “I’ve” participated in.
- RSS alerts on updates to page. Although this might be a little too techie-jargon and confusing.
- Some areas of We Give Our Time are too full of jargon. E.g. Useful Links – “Learnzone” (see also Jargon Buster below).
- Links should open in a new window, e.g. chat, documents and web links in the Useful Links section.
- Geo-tagging would be useful – people and events (see below) using something like Google Maps.
- Signposting with help of a facilitator/moderator.

Chat –

- Chat has been an underused tool throughout the pilot.
- It’s possibly too hidden – users didn’t realise it was there.
- The discussion groups agreed this tool has potential, possibly as a way of fundraising committee chairs and other remote-based volunteers keeping in touch with fundraising managers – sharing good practice, what’s going on and events etc.
- One group thought an out-of-hours web chat with a staff member/expert might be better attended.
- Chats hosted by volunteers would also be good (see also below).

The Head Banner (the bit at the top with the group title/logo in) –

- There was a general sense that this part of We Give Our Time isn’t doing or saying much to a member right now.
- Seeing as it is in such a prominent place we could think about changing the copy, changing the logo to make it much clearer what the space is for/who’s it for/the kinds of things that happen here, and making it stand out more.
- It really needs to sell the value of We Give Our Time to volunteers.

Discussion 2 – Staff Involvement in We Give Our Time

There were three discussion groups. The first two had more members of staff in them and the third had more volunteers in it. There were differing opinions between the staff-heavy groups and the volunteer-heavy group.

- Everyone was unsure about starting new discussions. NB - this appears to contradict the previous discussion on overall effectiveness.
- People wanted fewer discussions and more replies to discussions.
- People wanted more structure for information e.g. finding stuff relevant to them –
 - The idea of creating sub forums came up.
 - An alternative suggestion was tagging so that people can filter information.

- Opinion of the Online Community Team: there isn't enough content at the moment to warrant filtering and dividing everything into sub forums at this stage would result in more clicks.
 - More structured discussions were requested e.g. what is the volunteering experience like in Yorkshire.
- There was a desire shared by all three discussion groups for more quality content.
 - Volunteers based in the regions felt it very important to include a regional aspect to the discussions, partly in relation to the closing of regional offices. Staff were hesitant about this angle.
 - Both staff and volunteers felt it was inappropriate for general enquiries to be directed through the space.
 - Informal conversations – some people were for and some people were against these.
 - Volunteers want staff to create discussions, whereas staff want them to be volunteer-led.
 - There is a lack of clarity over the purpose of We Give Our Time.
 - Staff want a framework for involvement e.g. what they are allowed to write in a professional capacity.
 - One suggestion was for staff to reach out to volunteers to create posts.
 - Everyone felt there was a need for more users to be involved to promote new recruits and engagement of existing members. A revision of the marketing strategies used.
 - Both staff and volunteers wanted more experience exchange, possibly even opportunities to arrange further face-to-face networking via event sharing. Experiences would also inspire others. This goes back to needing more people on the space to get more activity and experience exchange.
 - We Give Our Time would be useful alongside other volunteer experiences/opportunities.
 - Staff don't need general social media training, but they would find a guide on staff involvement detailing what is expected of them useful, as there were reservations about posting in a professional capacity. This would bring clarity on whether staff are to get involved with general chit chat or whether they're only to get involved in certain types of discussions, in replying to certain types of posts etc.
 - Buy-in from the top is also needed.
 - A (team of) volunteer moderator(s) could be responsible for signposting staff to appropriate posts that they can reply to.

Discussion 3 – The Future of We Give Our Time

Overall, feedback was very positive. All three discussion groups agreed that the space has good potential for the future, but would need several improvements to be made in order for it to reach its full potential.

General points –

- Make it easier to use so that people are not frightened by technology. This can be done by educating people. It needs to appeal to all groups.
- It needs to be clear about what it does to make it distinct from the rest of the online community. Clear purpose and clear distinction – what do volunteers get out of it?

- We must be clear that this does not replace other channels of networking. It is just one option for networking and communicating.
- The Online Community is not the only channel for increasing understanding of Macmillan – staff need actively to communicate Macmillan values in other ways as well.
- However, We Give Our Time might be a good way of introducing a “Macmillan Volunteering Identity”.
- Volunteers have different motivations – CV/skill enhancing or cancer experience – thus have different expectations. This requires balance and structure.
- The space needs to adapt and change with the organisational changes, e.g. the current changes in fundraising (people feel cut off and isolated sometimes, We Give Our Time provides a way of keeping communities going while in transitional periods).
- Volunteer hosted chat – by volunteer ambassadors to give advice, share good practice and inspire other volunteers.
- More clarification is needed around the definition of the “Macmillan Team”. One of the main objectives of We Give Our Time is to help people feel more part of the Macmillan team but it’s hard to know whether this is being achieved when we lack a robust definition of the term.

Opening the space vs. keeping it closed –

- Opening the space to the wider online community and beyond is potentially risky. Currently, We Give Our Time is very young, it is wholly organic and thus to open would run the risk of it diverging from its aims. However, on the other hand, it needs more people to keep it sustainable, so opening it up might be the best way to go.
- It may also have implications for volunteer engagement if it is opened to the general public. If there was negative feedback about volunteering on there it might put potential volunteers off. However, the flip side of this is that the current online community occasionally gets negative feedback about Macmillan nurses, Macmillan services etc. This is dealt with carefully in order to minimise negative impact. The transparency may even be helpful to potential users, and it may be the same amongst potential volunteers.
- The discussion groups felt that potential volunteers shouldn’t be directed to We Give Our Time *instead of* the Get Involved pages on our website. This is because the Get Involved pages are naturally much more structured and clear in terms of the information they provide and the way it is laid out.
- However, once potential volunteers have seen the Get Involved pages it might be very helpful for them to take a look at We Give Our Time to give them a chance to connect with people who are volunteering for Macmillan already. This could be done by putting a link to We Give Our Time on the Get Involved pages.

Top recommendations for future development –

Many of the points made here have been covered in the previous discussions topics.

- Structure and Relevance
 - Focus tags for posts
 - Areas of interest/involvement /role specific areas (fulfil different areas of motives)

- Easy to access
- News/updates/topic of the month.
- Quick questions
- Needs better direction – what it is for and not for.
- Have we exhausted volunteering topics already?
- Twitter-like feed – “top 10” or “editors pick” posts.
- Geo-tagging.
- Need for moderator to:
 - Keep momentum
 - Signpost
 - Facilitate
 - Evaluate
 - Build relationships.
- Jargon Buster! What people currently do for Macmillan, departments in Macmillan, resources provided to volunteers by Macmillan.
- A framework for involvement – what is expected of me as a member of staff? What is expected of me as a volunteer?