

Investigating UBC Kinesiology Student Motivations for Volunteering at BodyWorks

Assignment 3: Final Report

BodyWorks

KIN 464-002: Health Promotion & Physical Activity

University of British Columbia

School of Kinesiology

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Disclaimer Page

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Executive Summary

The study employed an investigative approach into the multifaceted domain that is motivation, specifically that of UBC Kinesiology student volunteers at BodyWorks, in an effort to increase the volunteer recruitment and retention rate. Volunteering amongst undergraduate students holds multifaceted significance, extending beyond mere resume building, encompassing personal growth, educational enhancement, and numerous other benefits to both themselves and the community. Conventionally, most assume the primary driver for motivation for volunteering stems from resume building and potential career enhancement opportunities. Despite this, current literature shows that volunteering and its motivations can be much more nuanced. Our efforts were to do a deeper investigation beyond the overt factors, and explore, in detail, some of the other factors for motivation amongst volunteers at BodyWorks.

We employed a mixed methodology approach, designing a survey that investigated potential psychological/physical barriers, the attractiveness of organizational values and how they relate to volunteer retention. The survey also provided an opportunity for participants to type a short response, in their own words, to better inform our analysis and decision making. Our recruitment strategies leveraged social media platforms and physical posters, targeting current and former UBC Kinesiology students with volunteer experience at BodyWorks.

Analysis of the data provided a number of valuable insights. The vast majority of survey respondents (95%+) expressed extremely high levels of satisfaction with BodyWorks, citing an alignment with career aspirations, and opportunities for professional development. Notably, connections with clients and working with experienced people within this field emerged as a significant motivator. Another theme amongst survey respondents was the desire for more direct feedback, as a number expressed that they would've liked clearer role definitions to better enhance their volunteer experience. With regards to barriers, travel distance and early shift times were cited by most participants as the most significant ones.

This study sheds some light on the potential issues and challenges volunteers at BodyWorks face, and also gathers some information and feedback surrounding areas they feel like need further improvement or guidance. Volunteer recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge for many organizations. This investigative study, although rather small in size and duration, provides a number of actionable steps that BodyWorks can take in an effort to better attract and retain volunteers, and provides the foundation for a number of strategies that can be implemented moving forward; and also provides a basis and platform for future research.

Introduction and Literature Review

Volunteering plays an integral part in a student's post-secondary journey. It serves not only as a resume builder, but an opportunity to advance one's education, find a new passion or fulfilment in life, and assist in their community. These all serve as positive and clear reasons as to why an undergraduate student might choose to volunteer. However, motivation has been proven to be multifaceted; volunteers at the same organization can have vastly differing opinions and motivations for why they are there (Aun et al. 2021; Toscano & Zappala, 2023). Although the factors listed above are fantastic predictors of motivation in theory, the existing literature actually shows this is not the case. One study concluded that the statistical significance of the factors above are actually quite low predictors when it comes to determining whether or not a student will choose to volunteer. (Francis, 2011). This study also revealed that the primary predictor of volunteering, particularly amongst the demographic that is university students, is the alignment of the mission of the organization with the student's own values, as well as the social aspect of volunteering, for example friends or family influence (Francis, 2011). In our research study, we aimed to discern the principal determinants and motivational factors that influence Kinesiology students' inclination to volunteer at the UBC School of Kinesiology's Bodyworks program. Our research questions delved into the basic (and more obvious) factors, such as resume building and exploring new avenues, and try to uncover some of the less-known reasons that contribute one's inclination to volunteer. By asking about, identifying, and then addressing potential barriers (be it time commitment, transit/location, or just dissatisfaction), we aimed to create a plan and strategy to help increase both volunteer recruitment and retention at Bodyworks. Our findings informed five key recommendations we bring to BodyWorks to assist them in attaining these two goals.

Methods

Due to the nature of motivation being multifaceted, and the fact that it differs from person to person, we chose to utilize a mixed methods approach; using a combination of open and closed-ended survey questions. To investigate our research questions, we asked questions surrounding potential psychological barriers that may impact volunteerism, ideal attributes of organizations to attract student volunteers, common sources of motivation for volunteering, and factors that contribute to student volunteer retention. Most questions were quantitative and closed-ended, but we included a number of open-ended questions that allowed participants to type a short response. To ensure the validity of our data, we used a pre-screening sample demographic question to screen out anyone who does not meet the inclusion criteria; which was to be a current or former UBC Kinesiology student with volunteer experience at BodyWorks. We ensured that each of our questions (that weren't demographic related, such as gender) aligned with the purpose of our research and our research questions, which was to investigate some of the different motivations behind why students choose to seek volunteer positions within BodyWorks. We also had questions that investigated the potential dimensions of volunteer satisfactions within their BodyWorks experience, as well as how certain values of the BodyWorks organization may attract more prospective student volunteers from the UBC kinesiology program.

We also designed a recruitment poster with a QR code to our survey to garner participant response. Copies of our recruitment poster were posted on several social media accounts with significant followings, including the Instagram of UBC Kinesiology (student-run @ubckin). Members in our group also disseminated the poster via their own social media platforms.

In addition to social media posts, and word of mouth to our colleagues and friends, we also displayed two physical copies of the poster on the wall at the BodyWorks space in the Osborne building at UBC, with permission from BodyWorks. This would increase the likelihood of actual BodyWorks volunteers being able to see this survey as they entered the building, and those volunteers are directly part of our target demographic.

Our initial plan was to continue data collection until we had reached approximately 50 survey responses. This number was chosen due to the relatively smaller size of the target population. Although we had planned to close the survey on March 29th, 2024, to ensure an adequate amount of time for data analysis, we still seemed to have a steady influx of responses coming in. As such, we continued collecting data until April 9th, though we only gathered approximately half the number of responses that would have been desirable.

The data was comprehensively analyzed using a combination of descriptive analysis and descriptive qualitative analysis methods. The survey included questions using closed-ended ranked answers, which were analyzed as a descriptive statistic by assigning a numerical value to each response. Furthermore, the survey asked questions regarding various multi-faceted factors behind volunteer retention. Each volunteer has a unique individual experience and was allowed to input their own opinion on certain questions, as we were interested in hearing from them in their own words. These answers will provide valuable qualitative data that can be further evaluated using descriptive statistics to conclude trends that will enhance our understanding of volunteer motivations and retention strategies for Bodyworks. For the qualitative, open-ended responses, inductive codes will be used. We will identify patterns in the qualitative data and group answers with similar wording together to inform our inductive codes.

Findings

The survey we conducted provided valuable data, although it was not without its limitations; the most significant of which is sample size. Despite this, the rather detailed nature of our questions did provide some relevant findings. Of the 34 participants who clicked on our survey, 27 started the survey, and 20 finished the survey in its entirety. Out of the 20 respondents that had fully completed the survey, 95% fit into the category of former/current kinesiology students at UBC.

Another noteworthy finding was that 60% of our respondents identified as women, whereas the others skipped this question. Although our research did not dive into this, its implications is something potentially worthy of further considerations. Roughly 20% of our respondents who completed the survey also indicated that they are now graduates of UBC.

Regarding volunteer satisfaction, and likelihood of returning to Bodyworks after finishing their 2nd year at UBC, all answers were “highly satisfied” and “likely to return”, respectively. Furthermore, 95% of our responses were positive and described Bodyworks as a great place to learn and build skills, that also aligned with the participants’ career prospects. An overwhelming majority of participants praised the opportunity to work with older clients and learn from more senior practitioners in a hands-on environment as a reason why they enjoyed the Bodyworks program as a volunteer and why they would consider returning in the future. There was also a high satisfaction rating among participants when discussing the type of work they assisted with 95% of participants listing ‘satisfied’ as their answer, and the remaining 5% answering ‘not sure’.

We also asked questions surrounding what BodyWorks should consider with regards to improving volunteer experience. The open-ended question responses, when consolidated, all

leaned towards desiring more professional development and exercise-programming learning opportunities; and also, more frequent and detailed feedback on their experiences, and how they can improve as a volunteer. Some participants also mentioned they would have liked clearer roles, in order to better understand what was expected of them. A number of participants also mentioned they would appreciate greater clarity surrounding how the volunteer scheduled work, and clearer roles on how to climb higher in rank into paid instructor roles. Other open-ended questions included a list of what barriers current volunteers faced/still face when volunteering at BodyWorks; the most prominent answer being lack of schedule flexibility and transit/travel times.

Discussion

Bodyworks has long been an exceptional space for UBC Kinesiology students to volunteer and gain valuable experience. However, a greater effort has been presented by Bodyworks to retain and maintain volunteers. Our research focused on determining the barriers preventing individuals from or continuing volunteering with the program. Additionally, we investigated the motivations behind why students chose to volunteer at BodyWorks. Furthermore, the satisfaction of volunteers' quality of work they completed was investigated.

Our findings from the survey improved our understanding of the issue and how it could potentially be resolved. We discovered that most participants enjoyed their time in the program and had positive experiences volunteering there. When asked about whether the values of BodyWorks aligned with participants' own values, the majority answered that they 'very' much aligned. However, an interesting finding that stood out to us was that while values strongly aligned between the organization and its volunteers, volunteers were primarily motivated for

resume-building building reasons rather than alignment of values, which is contrary to our findings in the literature outlined above.

Another noteworthy finding was that having a friend who is already volunteering at the organization can have a positive impact on student recruitment, and longer periods of volunteer retention. Volunteering at BodyWorks also benefits students in developing communication skills with older adults, students felt they gained an excellent opportunity to practice exercise prescription. One challenge of this study was recruitment, as the students who met our inclusion criteria were limited to current UBC Kinesiology students who had previously volunteered or are currently BodyWorks volunteers, or UBC Kinesiology graduates who previously volunteered at BodyWorks. Furthermore, another limitation of our study was that it was difficult to find other factors that would persuade students to stay or return to the Bodyworks program besides resume building.

Partner Recommendations

Based on our findings, we bring five specific recommendations to Bodyworks to implement in the future to increase their volunteer recruitment and retention:

- 1. Provide more learning opportunities including professional development, hands-on training, and education on creating and implementing exercise programs for volunteers.**

This suggestion can be immediately actionable, and comes from several responses we received in our open-ended questions where participants stated they would have liked “further training about exercise cueing and modifications”.

2. Adding more variety of class hours.

Some students live far from campus and commute long distances to get to their classes and volunteer shifts. Participants mentioned it was difficult to get to the facility early in the morning before their classes. We understand this may be difficult as BodyWorks classes are set at times to accommodate the age demographic of their clientele, but this can be a longer term or more aspirational suggestion, to be worked toward implementing in the future.

3. Role definition expectations and scheduled performance feedback.

Several participants stated they would have liked more clarity regarding their roles and clearer expectations. They also mentioned they would have appreciated receiving more feedback on their progress and performance. This recommendation can be immediately actionable by providing volunteers with progressional feedback throughout their volunteering at Bodyworks.

4. More organization transparency on how volunteer schedules are formed.

Respondents mentioned they would have appreciated more clarity or transparency on how volunteer schedules are formed. Some participants had expressed that scheduling had been a concern while they had volunteered and wanted more communication with how those schedules had been formed. This recommendation can be immediately actionable or aspirational depending on the level of openness Bodyworks wants to be regarding organizational logistics.

5. **More opportunities to be promoted to instructor roles.**

Participants added that more opportunities to be promoted to instructor roles would be beneficial to their experience. Furthermore, participants would have liked clarity on what was expected of volunteers looking to be promoted into an instructor role. This recommendation is expected to be difficult to achieve; promotions may not be necessary if Bodyworks is not looking to hire instructors. However, expectations on what Bodyworks aspires for in a volunteer looking to be promoted could be immediately actionable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, student volunteering serves as a vital catalyst for personal growth, communication development, and the cultivation of essential skills besides resume building. It offers students a unique avenue to apply their abilities in practical, hands-on settings—an influential factor in fostering a likelihood of sustained engagement. By examining the motivations behind student volunteerism, we have seen how factors such as location, time and commute can shape their involvement. Despite the fact that the majority of students were satisfied with the quality of the BodyWorks program, retention remains a challenge. There are barriers preventing students from volunteering and returning to volunteer. These obstacles include the difficulty of the commute and the limited period of time available for classes. Our survey results demonstrated that the majority of motivation stems from resume building rather than organizational values. Moving forward, future research should explore additional dimensions that sway student engagement, thereby enriching our understanding and strategies for fostering sustained participation in volunteer initiatives.

References

- Aun, F. F., Elco, v. B., Thompson, N. A., & Wempe, J. (2021). Called to volunteer and stay longer: The significance of work calling for volunteering motivation and retention. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 12(2), 235-255. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1332/204080520X15929332587023>
- Francis, J. E. (2011). The functions and norms that drive university student volunteering. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 16(1), 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.390>
- Toscano, F., & Zappalà, S. (2023). Volunteers' satisfaction with the Voluntary Association: Exploring the role of service climate, organizational identification, and understanding motivation. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05475-3>

Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

The poster is a screenshot of a social media post from 'ubckin' on UBC KIN. It features a header with the UBC KIN logo and the text 'ubckin 15h'. The main text is centered and reads: 'IF YOU ARE: A UBC Kinesiology student who has volunteer experience at BodyWorks WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!'. Below this, it states: 'AS PART OF A COURSE-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT (KIN 464), WE ARE CONDUCTING A STUDY ON STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS. IF YOU ARE: A UBC KINESIOLOGY STUDENT WHO CURRENTLY VOLUNTEERS WITH BODYWORKS OR A CURRENT OR FORMER UBC KINESIOLOGY STUDENT WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY VOLUNTEERED AT BODYWORKS PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY AT THE QR CODE BELOW'. A section titled 'Survey respondents will have the opportunity to enter a draw to win one of the following prizes:' lists 'Lululemon yoga mat (2 available)' and 'UBC Athletics Prize Pack (4 available)'. Below the list, it says 'For more information about this project, please follow the QR code or contact: eamonnyc@student.ubc.ca or elaure01@student.ubc.ca'. A QR code is provided, along with 'Project ID: H17-03560-A017 [AB2] Group 12'. At the bottom, a note states: 'PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS POST IS PUBLIC AND ANYONE WHO LIKES, COMMENTS OR SHARES THE LINK WILL, BY DOING SO, BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE STUDY. THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ON THIS PROJECT IS DR. ANDREA BUNDON (ANDREA.BUNDON@UBC.CA)'. The poster ends with a large button that says 'SURVEY HERE' with a link icon.

UBC KIN ubckin 15h

IF YOU ARE:

A UBC Kinesiology student who has volunteer experience at BodyWorks

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

AS PART OF A COURSE-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT (KIN 464), WE ARE CONDUCTING A STUDY ON STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS. IF YOU ARE:

A UBC KINESIOLOGY STUDENT WHO CURRENTLY VOLUNTEERS WITH BODYWORKS

OR

A CURRENT OR FORMER UBC KINESIOLOGY STUDENT WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY VOLUNTEERED AT BODYWORKS

PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY AT THE QR CODE BELOW

Survey respondents will have the opportunity to enter a draw to win one of the following prizes:

- Lululemon yoga mat (2 available)
- UBC Athletics Prize Pack (4 available)

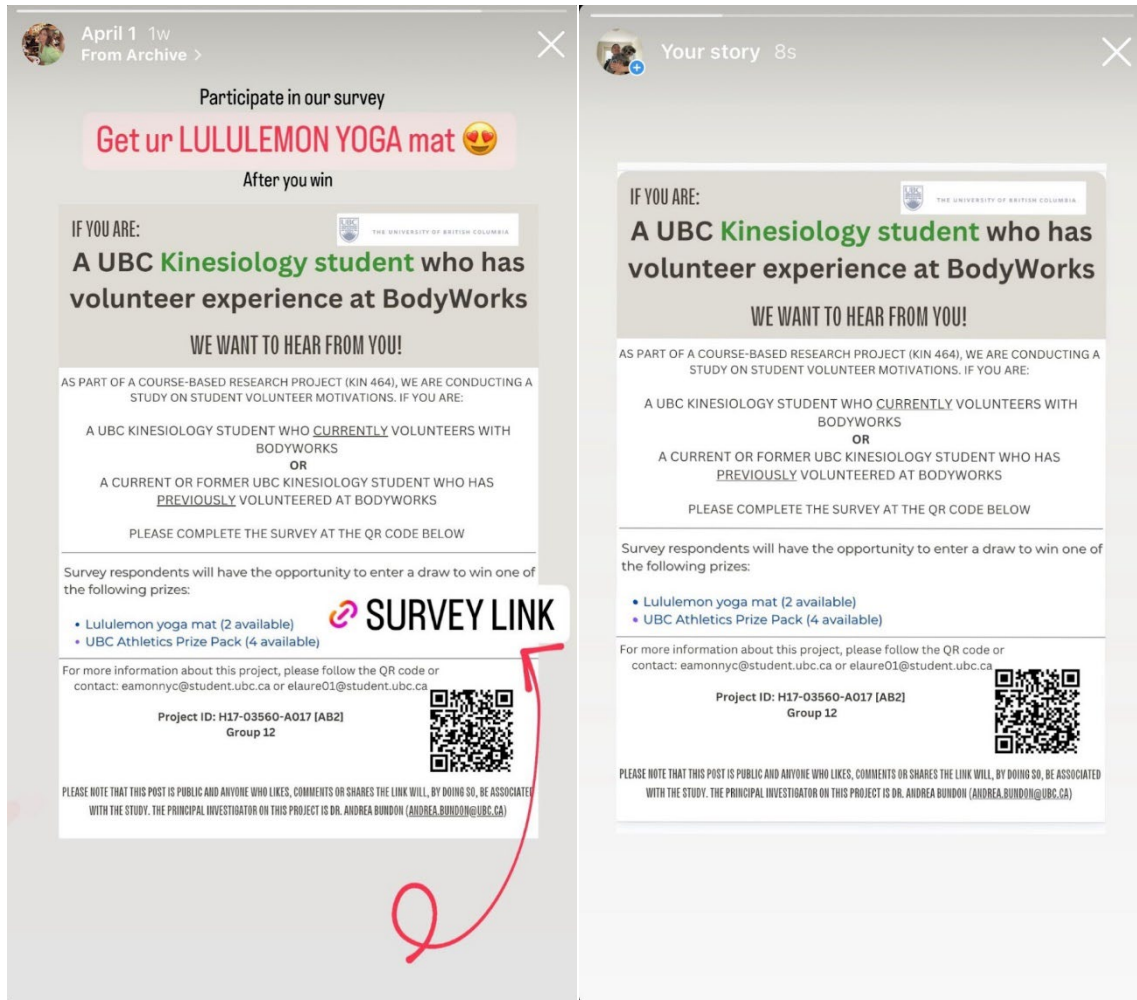
For more information about this project, please follow the QR code or contact: eamonnyc@student.ubc.ca or elaure01@student.ubc.ca

Project ID: H17-03560-A017 [AB2]
Group 12

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS POST IS PUBLIC AND ANYONE WHO LIKES, COMMENTS OR SHARES THE LINK WILL, BY DOING SO, BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE STUDY. THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ON THIS PROJECT IS DR. ANDREA BUNDON (ANDREA.BUNDON@UBC.CA)

SURVEY HERE

Appendix B: Social Media Postings



Appendix C: Actual Survey

CLASS PROJECT: Health Promotion and Physical Activity (KIN 464)

Participant Consent Form [Kinesiology Student

Volunteer Experience with Bodyworks] [Group #12]

Project ID: H17-03560-A017

Principal Investigator: Dr. Andrea Bundon (Assistant Professor, School of Kinesiology, Faculty of Education)

The purpose of the class project: To gather knowledge and expertise from community members on understanding volunteer motivations of Kinesiology students who are currently or have previously volunteered with the BodyWorks program at UBC.

Study Procedures: With your permission, we are asking you to participate in a survey. You may only complete each survey once. With the information gathered, students will critically examine how different individuals understand or engage in health promoting activities or health promotion initiatives.

Project outcomes: The information gathered will be part of a written report for the class project. The written report will be shared with campus partners involved with the project. Summaries of findings will also be posted on the following websites. UBC SEEDS Program Library:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/courses-degrees/alternativecredit-options/seeds-sustainability-program/seedssustainability-library> No personal information/information that could identify participants will be included in these reports or shared with campus partners.

Potential benefits of class project: There are no explicit benefits to you by taking part in this class project. However, the survey will provide you with the opportunity to voice your opinion on your experiences with health promoting activities or initiatives in a broad sense and will provide the students with an opportunity to learn from your experiences. Confidentiality: Maintaining the confidentiality of the participants involved in the research is paramount, and no names of participants will be linked to the data collected. At the completion of the course, all data (i.e. notes) and signed consent forms will be stored on a secure electronic drive by Dr. Bundon. All data and consent forms will be destroyed 1 year after completion of the course.

Risks: The risks associated with participating in this research are minimal. There are no known physical, economic, or social risks associated with participation in this study. You should know that your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study and there will not be negative impacts related to your withdrawal. If you withdraw from the study, all of the information you have shared up until that point will be destroyed.

Contact for information about the study: If you have any questions about this class project, you can contact Andrea Bundon by email at andrea.bundon@ubc.ca

Research ethics complaints: If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca . or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

By proceeding with this survey, I am confirming I have read the above information and agree to participate in this research project.

To proceed with the survey, please confirm that you are:

a) a Kinesiology undergraduate student at UBC currently volunteering at BodyWorks

OR

b) a current or former UBC Kinesiology student who has previous volunteer experience at UBC

- Yes, this applies to me
- No, I am not

What is your gender identity?

- Woman
- Non-binary/third gender/queer
- Man
- Two Spirit
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Please select the response that best describes your student status.

- Full Time (9 credits or more per semester)
 - Part Time (less than 9 credits per semester)
 -
- (OTHER)

How satisfied were/are you with Bodyworks during your volunteer experience?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral (neither satisfied or dissatisfied)
- Not very satisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

How likely are you to continue volunteering at Bodyworks beyond your 2nd year?

- Very Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Somewhat Unlikely
- Extremely Unlikely

If you answered that you are unlikely to continue volunteering with BodyWorks in the last question, please expand on the reason(s) why.

If this does not apply to you, please write "skip".

What keeps you coming back to volunteering at Bodyworks?

What adjustments do you think are necessary in order to retain the involvement of volunteers?

What motivates you to volunteer at BodyWorks?

How likely would you recommend volunteering at Bodyworks to other Kinesiology students?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

Were you satisfied/fulfilled with the type of work you did at Bodyworks?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Why did you choose BodyWorks as a place to volunteer? (please select all that apply)

- Needed volunteer hours
- BodyWorks mission aligned with my values
- Aligned with my career prospects (resume building)
- Other (please describe below)

Would you be more likely to volunteer at BodyWorks if you had friends who were already volunteering there?

- No
- Yes
- Unsure

Do the values of Bodyworks align with your own personal beliefs? (The vision of UBC BodyWorks is to develop and deliver exercise programs for specific populations to assist with disease management and promote healthy aging)

- Very
- Somewhat
- Minimal
- Not really/indifferent
- Not at all

Do you feel like there were any barriers (social perception, transit distance, time commitment) that you struggled with when choosing Bodyworks as a volunteer option? Please expand below.

What are some skills you hope to gain out of your time having volunteered at Bodyworks?

Is there anything you hope Bodyworks can change for future volunteers?

How frequently do/did you volunteer at BodyWorks?

- 1-2 times per week
- 3-5 times per week
- More than 5 times per week

During your time volunteering at BodyWorks, did you volunteer at any other organizations (at the same time)?

- yes, one other organization
- yes, two or more other organizations
- no, just BodyWorks

Block 6

Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your volunteer experience at BodyWorks?

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