



AMPLIFYING SOCIAL IMPACT

Through Win-Win Partnership Between Social Entrepreneurs and Business Professionals



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About the Partners



ASHOKA CHANGEMAKERS

Ashoka is the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs with over 3,200 leading social innovators in 89 countries. Ashoka Changemakers convenes and connects high-potential changemakers, their ideas, and their resources to exponentially accelerate social change so that it sweeps through systems, tipping the attitudes and behaviors of individuals and institutions. Changemakers builds on Ashoka's three-decade history to advance an "everyone a changemaker" world where people gain the skills and resources they need to collaborate to solve complex social problems. For more on Ashoka Changemakers, visit www.changemakers.com



AMERICAN EXPRESS

Through its Community Service theme, American Express supports programs that encourage community service and civic participation and which deliver measurable outcomes that have a lasting impact on communities. We are pleased to partner with Ashoka Changemakers and Taproot Foundation to better understand how pro bono volunteering can help social entrepreneurs gain access to professional skills and resources that can help drive their success. For more on American Express's philanthropic efforts, visit www.americanexpress.com/csr



TAPROOT FOUNDATION

Taproot Foundation, a national nonprofit organization, connects nonprofits and social change organizations with skilled volunteers through pro bono service. Taproot is creating a world where organizations dedicated to social change have full access—through pro bono service—to the marketing, strategy, HR, and IT resources they need to be most effective. Since 2001, Taproot's skilled volunteers have served 4,000 social change organizations providing 1.4 million hours of work worth over \$150 million in value. Taproot is located in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and is leading a network of global pro bono providers in over 23 countries around the world. For more on Taproot Foundation, visit www.taprootfoundation.org

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

This study identifies prime opportunities for pro bono collaboration and strengthened social impact between social entrepreneurs and business professionals. In order to highlight the key areas of overlap and divergence in the perspectives of these two groups, we invited global social entrepreneurs and U.S.-based business professionals to participate in an online survey designed to gauge their priorities, preferences, and interest in collaboration. The findings and the resulting recommendations can inform stakeholders on both sides as they work to construct successful pro bono partnerships.

Both business professionals and social entrepreneurs indicate high levels of interest in working with one another as part of an ongoing win-win relationship.

KEY DESIRES OF GLOBAL SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Social entrepreneurs tend to desire highly skilled support from business professionals over the course of a long-term engagement. Communications and marketing support is highest in demand for social entrepreneurs across the globe.

KEY DESIRES OF U.S. BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

The importance of meaningful work: The study finds a moderate positive correlation between personally meaningful work and employee satisfaction. Business professionals that found their work to be personally meaningful were more likely to be satisfied with their employers and their jobs in general.

The U.S. business professionals surveyed tend to see volunteering as something to do in their spare time that would involve work that's not necessarily in their field of expertise. For example, the most desired type of engagement with a social entrepreneur might look something like volunteering at an afterschool tutoring program during a short-term commitment.

Ashoka's experience, however, indicates that when business professionals are introduced to the possibilities of incorporating social impact into the daily responsibilities of their job and are able to develop a better understanding of how their skills can be useful to social entrepreneurs, their preferences tend to shift more toward providing skills-based pro bono services as part of their usual work responsibilities. For example, a company may give professionals the opportunity to dedicate 10 percent of their time toward social impact collaborations as part of a formal professional development program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Introduce business professionals to the real needs of social entrepreneurs to unlock hidden demand for impactful work:** Design corporate programs that center the needs of social entrepreneurs so that business professionals accustomed to the traditional prescription of work and volunteering as separate activities have the opportunity to develop an appetite for pursuing social impact as part of their jobs.
- 2. Design pro bono programs that tie into the core operations of a business:** Match social entrepreneurs with companies working in relevant fields to unlock possibilities for shifting the meaning of work from financial gain to social impact.
- 3. Structure time commitments to meet the needs of both parties:** Structure pro bono programs so that a rotating team of business professionals works sequentially to deliver high-quality support to a social entrepreneur over the long-term.
- 4. Recruit for the skill sets that are highest in demand:** Creatively seek out expertise in the fields most desired by social entrepreneurs, primarily communications and marketing.
- 5. Build trust and empathy to overcome misperceptions:** Make room in the design of pro bono programs for business professionals and social entrepreneurs to cultivate empathy and understanding, build trust, and practice candor with one another.

The rewards of doing good span the personal and the professional for both social entrepreneurs, who have dedicated their lives to solving complex social problems in new ways, and business leaders, who contribute their skills and services pro bono to causes that are deeply meaningful to them.

Traditional Corporate Social Responsibility programs tend to model pro bono projects that are one-sided, with business professionals offering a discrete set of services to nonprofit leaders.

Ashoka and thought leaders on volunteerism like the Taproot Foundation are working to evolve the traditional model of pro bono service. This research study explores methods for fostering win-win collaborative work between social entrepreneurs and business professionals. For business professionals and social entrepreneurs, there are many more possibilities for pro bono arrangements that can be mutually beneficial. The mindsets, skills, sectoral and customer knowledge, and operational approaches that guide the work of business professionals and social entrepreneurs are uniquely well aligned to form mutually beneficial and transformative partnerships.

Social Entrepreneurs are Uniquely Aligned with Business Professionals for Pro Bono Engagements

Social entrepreneurs are often driven by the same values as traditional non-profit leaders, but they tend to employ radically different approaches and organizational models. They focus on innovative solutions and achieving systems change and often employ market-based strategies to scale their innovations and ensure financial sustainability, which can make them a particularly good fit for working with a business professional.

For example, Ashoka Changemaker Sameer Sawarkar of Neurosynaptic Communications upsets the traditional model for health clinics by using technology-powered kiosks to deliver high-quality medical care to people living in rural India. His innovative distribution model could be instructive to business leaders across multiple industries, who in turn may have skillsets and

connections that could boost Neurosynaptic Communications' ability to scale effectively.

Social entrepreneurs can also offer business professionals a deep understanding of their market base, which is often groups of people that the traditional business sector fails to serve or finds to be difficult to reach. For example, Ashoka Fellow Sam Agutu of Changamka has leveraged a deep understanding of low- and middle-income earners in Kenya to create health insurance products that are cell phone accessible and in high demand. His insight into this massive, yet underserved, market could be highly useful to business leaders across sectors, while business leaders may be able to offer him industry connections to further Changamka's success.

In this way, the needs and skillsets of social entrepreneurs and business professionals are uniquely aligned. Working with business professionals gives social entrepreneurs

beneficial access to technical and strategic expertise and vital networks. For business professionals, working within the challenging and dynamic space of social entrepreneurship provides a robust opportunity to infuse meaning and innovation into their own work.

Ashoka's three-decade history of working closely with social entrepreneurs has given us unique insight into the social innovation ecosystem. We undertook this report with the purpose of identifying prime opportunities for enabling mutually beneficial collaboration between social entrepreneurs and business professionals.

Through interviews with social entrepreneurs and business professionals, and through a wealth of insights from thought leaders like Taproot Foundation, Points of Light, and Imperative, this report illuminates best practices for stakeholders on both sides for nurturing successful partnerships.

Methodology

Social entrepreneurs and business professionals participated in an online survey designed to gauge their particular priorities, preferences, and interest in collaboration. For efficiency and cost-effectiveness, this study was conducted in English. Further surveying in additional languages is a possibility for future inquiry.

After eliminating responses that didn't pass quality checks, frequencies with quartiles and measures of central tendency were run for each question. Differences between segments were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Open-ended questions were carefully coded and grouped to identify the primary categories of insight for each topic. Data were disaggregated according to a multitude of variables, including geographic region and level of previous experience with pro bono partnership.

Finally, the two analyzed samples were overlaid to identify the categories in which the two groups were aligned or misaligned. In every case, the analysis sought to uncover the common ground opportunity revealed by business professionals and social entrepreneurs.

SNAPSHOT OF THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS SURVEYED

This study sampled English-speaking social entrepreneurs (primary or secondary language) across the globe by distributing an anonymous survey across Ashoka's network, which includes Ashoka Fellows and Ashoka Changemakers. In total, over 230 social entrepreneurs (98 Changemakers and 135 Fellows) responded from 55 countries around the globe, giving an overall margin of error of about +/-6%.

Ashoka Fellows

Fellows have founded systems-changing, scalable, and innovative social impact models and are vetted through Ashoka's rigorous relationship-based process, which has developed over the course of Ashoka's more than three decades of experience. Fellows tend to be at a late stage in their organizational development, with the majority of Fellows surveyed leading organizations that have been in operation for more than a decade.

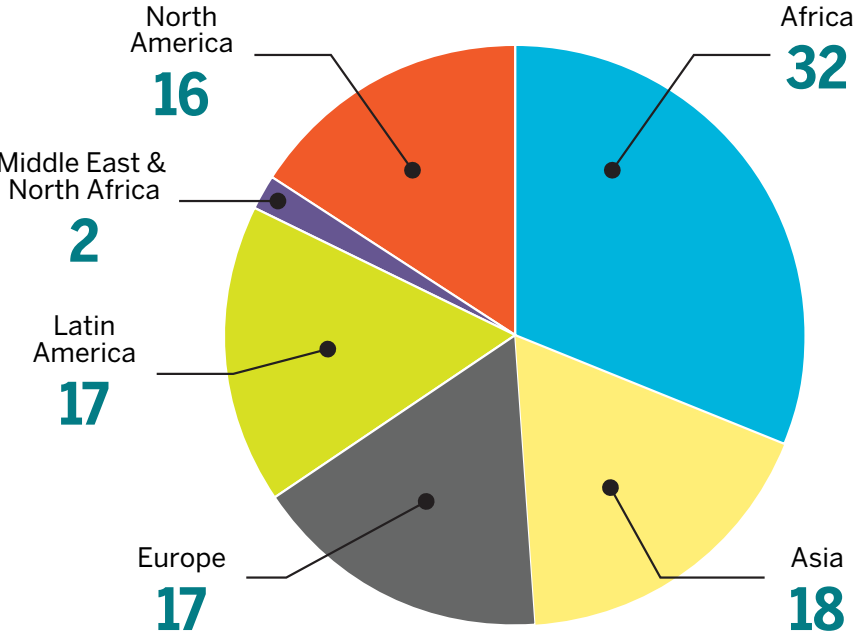
Ashoka Changemakers

Ashoka Changemakers are social entrepreneurs who have participated in the Ashoka Changemakers online community, which convenes leading innovators in social impact and offers support through highly competitive online competitions called Challenges. The survey was distributed to Changemakers who have been named semi-finalists, finalists, or winners of a Challenge through Ashoka Changemakers' vetting process. Changemakers tend to be at an early stage in their organizational development, with the majority of Changemakers surveyed being a part of organizations that launched within the last 10 years.

For more information about the types of organizations, business models, and sectors of influence of the social entrepreneurs surveyed, see Appendix A.

FIGURE 1

% GLOBAL REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS



SNAPSHOT OF THE U.S. BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS SURVEYED

We surveyed a broad sample of English-speaking, U.S.-based business professionals, enabling us to understand a segment of the business professional community with statistical confidence and predictive insight.

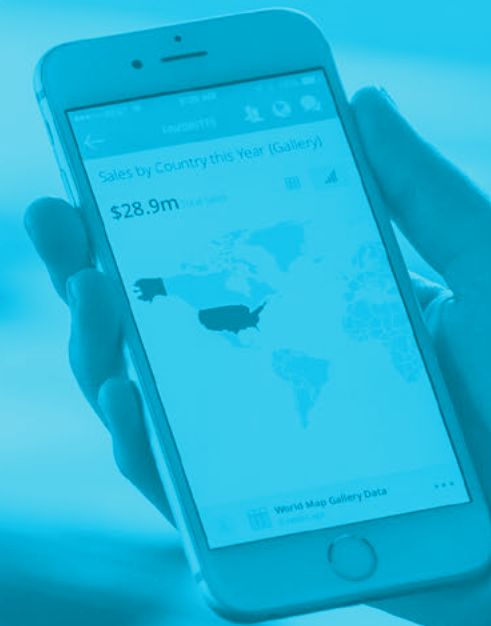
Surveys of business professionals outside of the U.S. would have required such robust sampling that it was out of scope for this study, but it is a possibility for further inquiry.

The sample was collected through an online recruit administered by an enterprise-class data analytics firm. Business professionals participated anonymously and were screened based on U.S. Census parameters for age and gender, giving us a representative final sample of employed, college-educated business professionals working in a professional occupation. In total, 405 business professionals submitted responses, giving us an overall margin of error of about +/-5%.

The respondents represent a broad sample of different sectors, management levels, salaries,

company sizes, and types of companies. For more information about the representation of these metrics, as well as the respondents' average Net Promoter score and information about their self-assessment of entrepreneurialism, see Appendix A.

Though the constraints of this study required us to focus the sampling on business professionals in the U.S., the survey made no assumption that social entrepreneurs around the world would prefer to work with business professionals in the U.S. Our survey leaves ample room for social entrepreneurs to indicate whatever their preference for working with a business professional may be. We find it illuminating to compare the responses of U.S. business professionals and global social entrepreneurs because it gives insight into how the differing perceptions of the two parties might require programmatic adjustments for a partnership involving a social entrepreneur and a U.S. business professional.



Social Entrepreneurs' Ideal Partnership with Business Professionals

In pro bono partnerships, the needs of social entrepreneurs and business professionals are intertwined. For business professionals to experience the personal fulfillment, talent development, and other benefits that can come from achieving social impact through a pro bono partnership, they must meet the needs of their social impact partner.

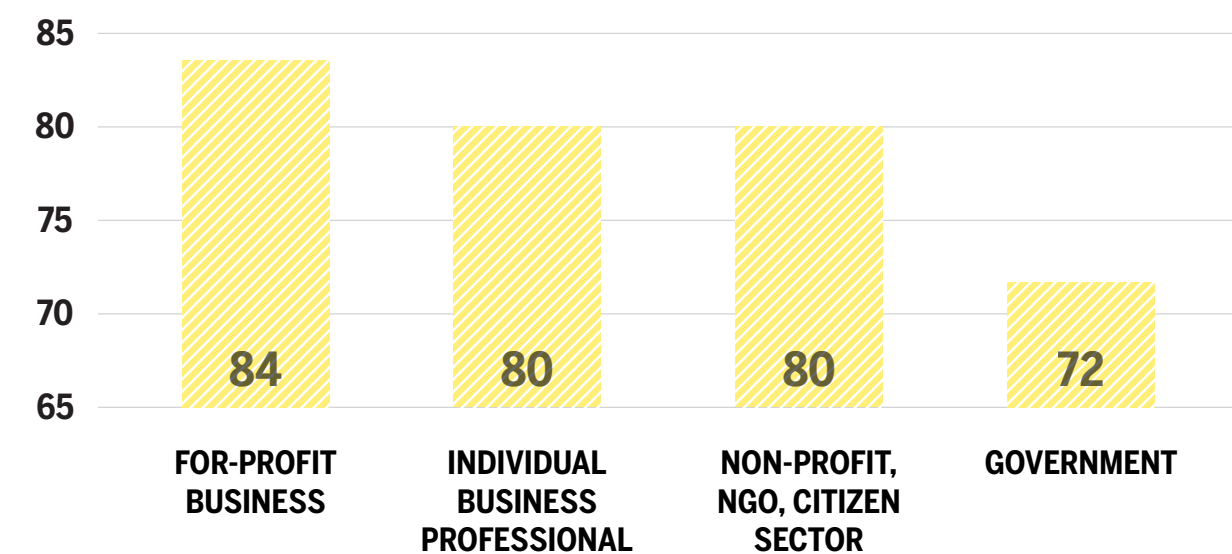
Social entrepreneurs across the globe have unique and varied needs. This section introduces some of the core themes that social entrepreneurs reported in their desires for partnership with business professionals. Subsequent sections of the report center the perspective of social entrepreneurs by contextualizing business professional's responses in terms of how they match with the needs of social entrepreneurs.

FIGURE 2

%

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR INTEREST IN SUPPORT FROM BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Which types of partners
would be helpful in achieving
your social mission?



TYPES OF SUPPORT THAT SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS DESIRE

Social entrepreneurs indicated strong interest in partnering with business professionals in many different capacities.

Social entrepreneurs held a slight preference for working with for-profit companies rather than with individuals who are volunteering not as a part of an employer program. Of note, social entrepreneurs expressed a slight preference for working with a team of business professionals from multiple organizations.

The functional area in which social entrepreneurs were most interested in receiving support was communications and marketing strategy (53%). This skill set was the most

desired by social entrepreneurs in every region around the globe. Global teams across Ashoka confirm that this finding is consistent with their experience orchestrating pro bono partnerships through the years, citing that marketing and communications can lead to positive outcomes--such as increased access to funding opportunities--yet is also relatively easy to outsource to a professional who need not be knowledgeable about a social entrepreneur’s particular area of social impact.

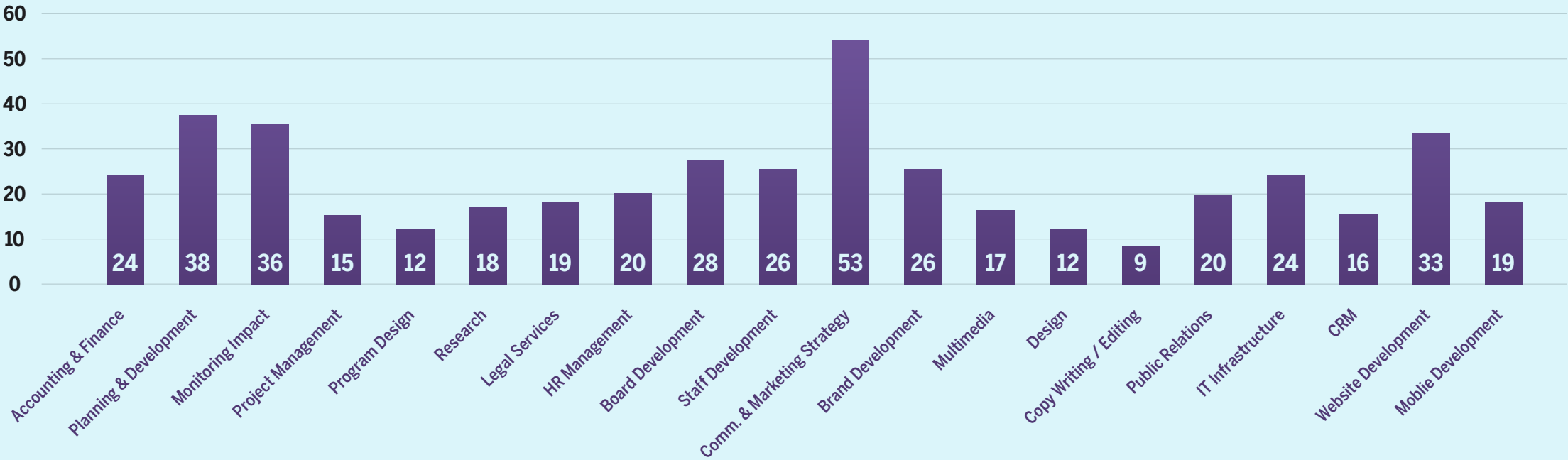
At least one in three social entrepreneurs also expressed interest in help with business planning & development, monitoring impact, and website design & development.

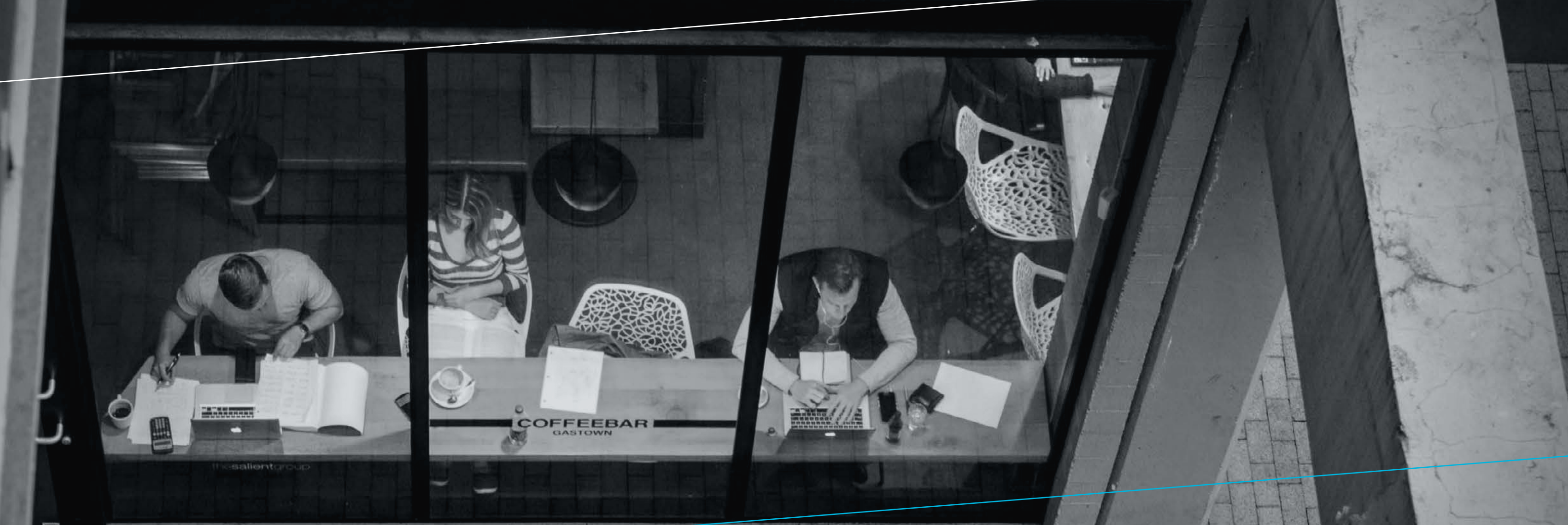
FIGURE 3

%

FUNCTIONAL AREAS WHERE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS DESIRE SUPPORT

In which of these areas would you like receiving help?





Perspectives of U.S. Business Professionals & Implications on Pro Bono Partnerships with Social Entrepreneurs

MEANINGFUL WORK INSPIRES EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

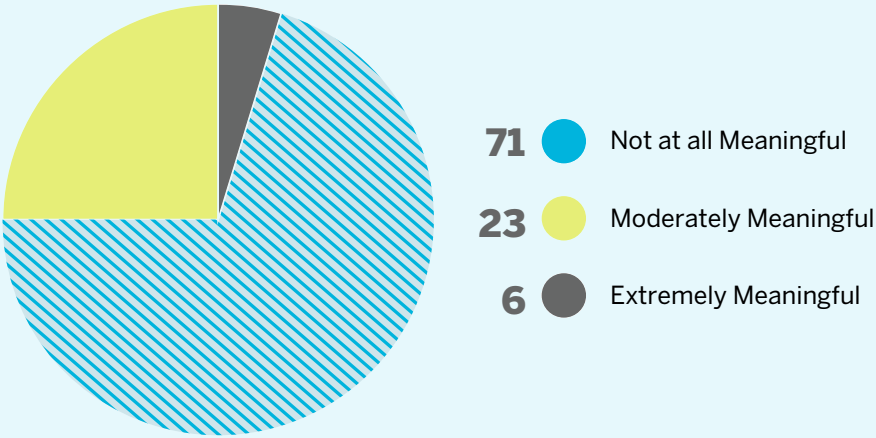
Over 90% of the business professionals in the study find some level of meaningfulness in their jobs. Open-ended responses to our survey revealed that professionals have a strong desire to know the tangible impact of their work.

While business professionals were generally able to point to meaningfulness in their jobs, this meaning was often described in an indirect and intellectual manner rather than directly connecting their day-to-day work to impactful outcomes.

FIGURE 4

%

HOW PERSONALLY
MEANINGFUL IS YOUR WORK
IN YOUR CURRENT JOB?



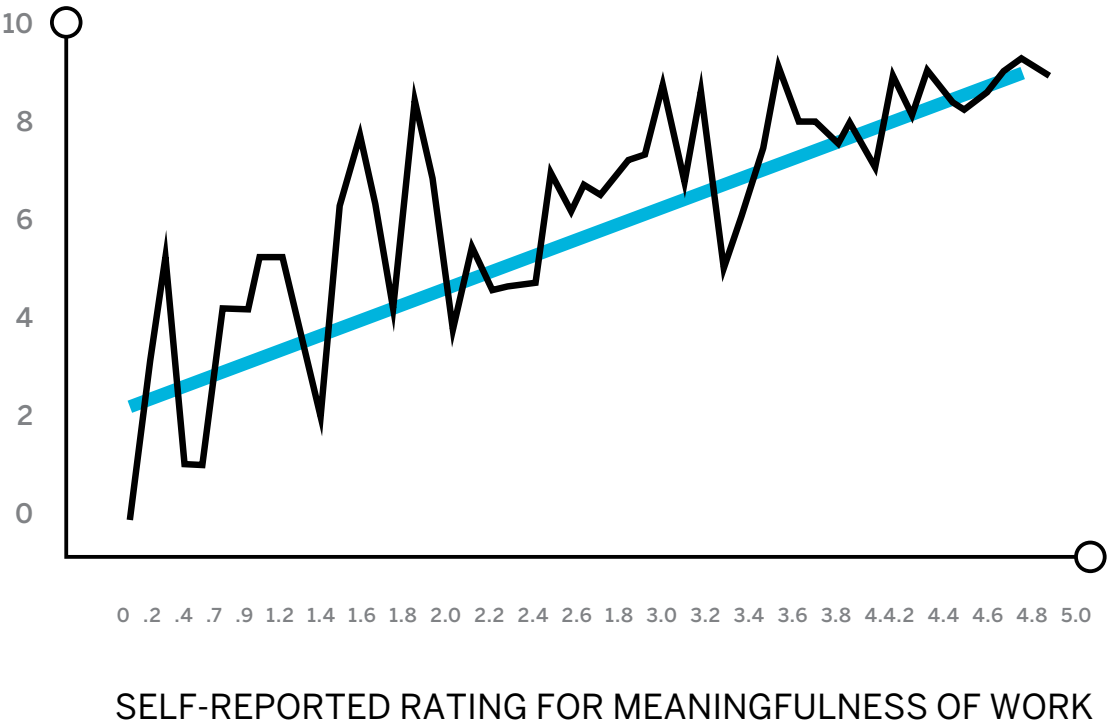
Nevertheless, they still found ways to articulate why their work carried meaning in some downstream sense. Those who reported their work being meaningful based their response on believing that the work “makes a difference” or that they are “good at what they do.” Others revealed finding meaning based on the proximate quality of the work being accomplished, such as feeling “pride in a job well done,” apart from the difference it makes in the world.

FIGURE 5

CORRELATION BETWEEN LIKELIHOOD
TO RECOMMEND EMPLOYER AND
MEANINGFULNESS OF WORK

The study found a moderate positive correlation (.543) between business professionals’ likelihood to recommend their employer (NPS) and how meaningful they reported their work to be, indicating that meaningful work drives employee satisfaction. Perceived meaningfulness in an employee’s work explains 30% of the overall variance in employee satisfaction. Older workers (ages 50 and up) in particular displayed a correlation between their job satisfaction and how meaningful they viewed their work to be. There are many factors that can contribute to why an employee might perceive their job to be meaningful. We suggest that one way managers could increase the meaningfulness of employees’ jobs is by connecting them with opportunities to support the work of social entrepreneurs.

LIKELIHOOD
TO RECOMMEND
EMPLOYER



TAP INTO INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION BY EXPOSING BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS TO THE NEEDS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Tapping into individuals' motivation for volunteering is key to effective pro bono programs, but business professionals cannot be sure of what kind of support they desire to give if they are unfamiliar with the needs of social entrepreneurs.

Points of Light--a leader in shepherding a culture of volunteerism--found through their research that there are three types of volunteers:

1. Social-oriented volunteers who are motivated by their enjoyment of the work and passion for the cause;
2. Career-oriented volunteers who are motivated by opportunities for skill building, professional advancement, and networking; and
3. People who are uninterested in volunteering or who believe that volunteering does not have an impact.¹

Having identified these three types of motivations for volunteers, Points of Light finds that it is essential to tap into individuals' motivation for volunteering in order for a pro bono program to be more impactful and satisfying for both parties. Thus, giving business professionals the opportunity to choose pro bono engagements that speak to their motivations is key to fueling more pro bono work in the social change ecosystem.

In this study, half of the surveyed U.S. business professionals said they were extremely interested in supporting a social entrepreneur's social mission. However, our findings indicate that business professionals have a limited view of what volunteering might look like and that they have not been adequately exposed to all of the choices that are available to them when it comes to pro bono work. It is important for pro bono program implementers to offer business professionals the ability to choose programs that best align with their passions.

To fully reveal these passions, institutions like Ashoka must expose business professionals to all of the possibilities for pro bono partnership. For example, a career-oriented

volunteer would be interested in knowing how to engage with a social entrepreneur working in an emerging market relevant to the volunteer's field of work. A social-oriented volunteer would be excited to learn how their skills can be put to use helping a social entrepreneur expand their social impact. By exposing business professionals to all the possibilities that are available to them, pro bono programs can find alignment between social entrepreneurs' needs and business professionals' passions.

Familiarizing business professionals with the breadth of skills and services needed by social entrepreneurs can spark greater excitement for pro bono partnership.

Business professionals expressed greatest interest in working with social entrepreneurs in the Learning & Education field of work, even when it wasn't their field of expertise. This response is consistent with the finding (also discussed on page 19 in the section on "Finding Alignment in Desired Sector of Support") that business professionals tend to prefer offering general skills volunteering over professional expertise sharing.

One explanation for this finding could be that business professionals might not realize that their business skills can be of value to social entrepreneurs. Business professionals can probably imagine themselves working in a school since that is a more standard image for the type of work that nonprofits do, but they might not as readily imagine themselves offering pro bono services in health institutions, inclusive banking structures, or the other kinds of complex systems that social entrepreneurs work to transform.

Because many business professionals might be unaware of all of the pro bono choices that are available to them, including opportunities that involve sharing their expertise or building new skills, they are limited from pursuing pro bono work that may deeply speak to their personal motivations. There is a significant opportunity for pro bono program implementers and organizations like Ashoka to help educate business professionals about the breadth of social entrepreneurs' work, and thus help unlock professionals' passion and satisfaction for volunteering.

¹ Points of Light. Value of EVP Programs and CEB Findings. November 2014.

DRIVE ALIGNMENT BY IGNITING A
PASSION FOR PURSUING SOCIAL IMPACT
THROUGH WORK

Most U.S. business professionals say they want to do pro bono work on their own time, but introducing the possibility of pursuing social impact at work could lead to greater satisfaction for both business professionals and social entrepreneurs and could open possibilities for positioning companies to contribute to social change.

The experience of Ashoka’s pro bono programs, such as the Executives in Residence program, is that business professionals tend to rate their pro bono experience much more highly if they are able to perform the pro bono work as part of their regular paid

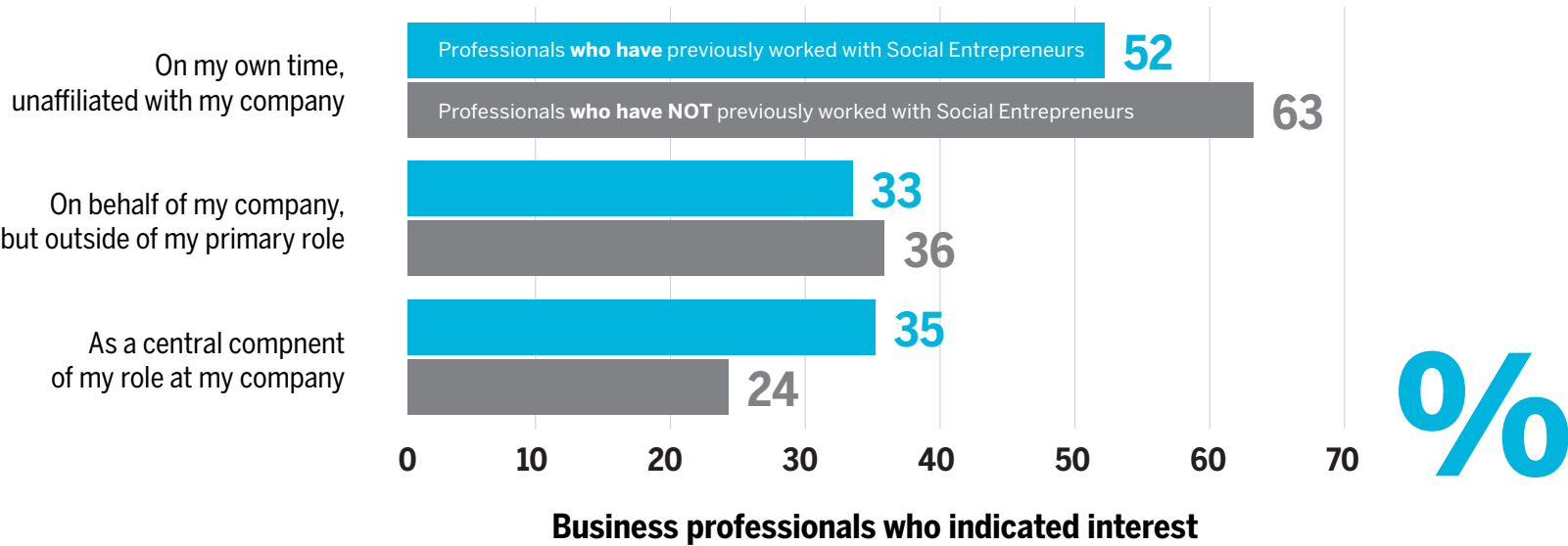
time at their job. In turn, social entrepreneurs tend to express far greater satisfaction with the work product they receive if the volunteer is sponsored through their employer.

However, in contrast to Ashoka’s typical experience, the majority (61%) of the U.S. business professionals surveyed in this study expressed interest in working with a social entrepreneur on their own time, unaffiliated with their employer. Approximately 1 in 4 (26%) business professionals were interested in collaborating with a social entrepreneur as a central component of their role in their company. A closer look at the mindset of the broad set of business professionals surveyed reveals why they may have responded this way.

U.S. BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS’ PREFERRED
PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT, DISAGGREGATED
BY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Would you be interested in working with a social entrepreneur in these ways?

Business professionals with prior experience working with a social entrepreneur are more interested in offering pro bono support as part of their role at their company.





Most U.S. business professionals view work as a means for financial gain rather than personal fulfillment.

Imperative's 2015 research² into the drivers and motivations of the U.S. workforce determined that only 28% of the U.S. workforce “defines the role of work in their lives primarily as a source of personal fulfillment and a way to help others.” For these purpose-oriented workers, the desire to collaborate with a social entrepreneur is no surprise.

For the remaining 72% of the workforce, however, the purpose of work is for “financial gain or for achieving status and advancement.” Workers who fall within this category tend to view work as a transactional method for gaining status or money rather than as a viable avenue for pursuing positive social impact. It follows, then, that a majority of the business professionals surveyed tend to think of pro bono work as something personal that they would do on their free time, independently and perhaps as an escape from their usual job responsibilities.

The more exposure business professionals have to social entrepreneurship, the more they prefer integrating pro bono work into their role at their company.

The study points to promising opportunities to shift the mindsets of business professionals toward a model for employer-sponsored pro bono work--a model that Ashoka has found to be more mutually satisfying and impactful. Business professionals who have prior experience working with a social entrepreneur indicate more interest in volunteering as a central component of their role at their company. This suggests that acclimating business professionals to the possibility of working with a social entrepreneur to pursue social impact as part of their professional role could unlock hidden demand for this type of arrangement. **Company-sponsored and supported pro bono partnerships can be a way for business professionals to feel more comfortable working directly with social entrepreneurs.**

² Imperative & New York University. 2015 Workforce Purpose Index. Access from <https://www.imperative.com>

Additionally, business professionals interested in sharing professional expertise are more likely to be interested in pro bono opportunities offered through their company than those who aren't interested in sharing professional expertise. Thus, pro bono opportunities offered through an employer might be particularly appealing for skills-driven individuals.

U.S. BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS' PREFERRED PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT, DISAGGREGATED BY INTEREST IN SKILLS SHARING

Would you be interested in working with a social entrepreneur in these ways?



Reaching Purpose-Oriented Workers is a Key Opportunity

Through their research into purpose-oriented workers, Imperative confirms that there is an exciting opportunity to introduce meaning into work. Imperative identifies a segment of the workforce that sees the purpose of work to be financial gain but desires that work be more personally fulfilling. For this type of worker, which makes up 29% of the U.S. workforce, the right environmental conditions could be created to unlock a passion for social impact. For example, an employer could activate a drive for purpose by offering meaningful avenues for social impact through pro bono partnership opportunities.

Comparison of U.S. Business Professionals and Global Social Entrepreneurs



STRIVING FOR WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIPS

Both social entrepreneurs and business professionals responded to the open-ended questions indicating that networking and long-term relationships are key values of engagement. Survey results further indicate that both groups prefer win-win partnerships over discrete projects. Thus, there is demand for employers and pro bono program implementers to create avenues through which business professionals and social entrepreneurs can form ongoing win-win partnerships.

Discretely defined pro bono projects can be highly effective in certain contexts. Taproot Foundation's extensive research and years of experience working on pro

bono engagement between nonprofit leaders and business professionals indicates that nonprofit leaders often have needs which can be met through one-off pro bono projects, such as building a website or creating an HR management system. Though they also have needs for discrete project support, social entrepreneurs' preference for win-win partnership over discrete projects could be explained by the market-based nature of their work. For social entrepreneurs, there's more opportunity to find ways of integrating their organizations' core operations with those of a company through an ongoing mutually beneficial partnership.

TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS, BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS CAN OFFER SKILLS-BASED PRO BONO SUPPORT

Finding Alignment in Desired Types of Services Offered or Provided

Social entrepreneurs are very interested in receiving tangible resources (donations of funds and goods) and highly skilled services (professional expertise sharing and board service). In contrast, business professionals expressed the most interest in general skills volunteering, such as help with tutoring. About 45% of the business professionals surveyed were interested in professional expertise sharing, whereas three-quarters (72%) of the social entrepreneurs surveyed expressed a desire for help in this area.

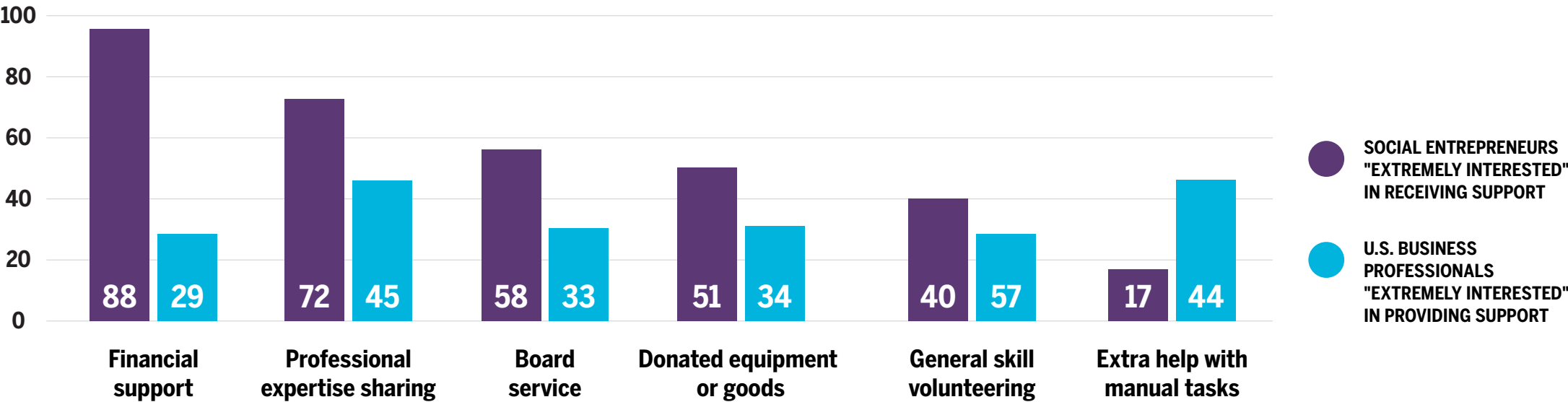
Despite this contrast, there is still a significant match between social entrepreneurs' desire to receive general skills volunteering and professional expertise, and business professionals' desire to contribute in these two ways. Both of these categories of support seem to be the most promising gateways for success in a pro bono partnership, potentially forming a foundation for subsequent support in other areas valued by each group. Additionally, Ashoka's experience in building partnerships between business professionals and social entrepreneurs indicates that business professionals become more interested in offering expertise-based pro bono services once they know they are in demand and have the potential for positive social impact.

FIGURE 8

%

TYPE OF SUPPORT MOST DESIRED TO RECEIVE OR PROVIDE

How interested would you be in receiving / providing support in these areas?



Finding Alignment in Desired Sector of Support

Another area where it is necessary to drive alignment is in business professionals' interest in the sectors in which social entrepreneurs work. Though only 22% of social entrepreneurs indicated Learning & Education as their primary field, 56% of business professionals indicated this sector as the most appealing to provide support in, even when this was not their area of expertise. (also discussed on page 13 in the section on “Tap into Individual Motivation”). Social entrepreneurs, on the other hand, are most interested in receiving expertise in communications and marketing.

FIGURE 9

SECTOR LEVEL INTEREST OF BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS,
COMPARED WITH ACTUAL SECTORS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

In what areas would you like to partner with a social entrepreneur?

%



Preferences of Professionals in Management Positions

Our independent-samples t-tests revealed that, compared to professionals in non-management positions, professionals in management positions expressed greater interest in contributing expertise-based services such as board service and professional expertise sharing. There was no significant difference in their desire to provide help with services that are not skill-based, such as manual tasks, general skills volunteering, financial support, or donating equipment/goods. One explanation for this finding is that non-management professionals might not necessarily think that they have technical expertise or relevant skills to offer to social entrepreneurs.

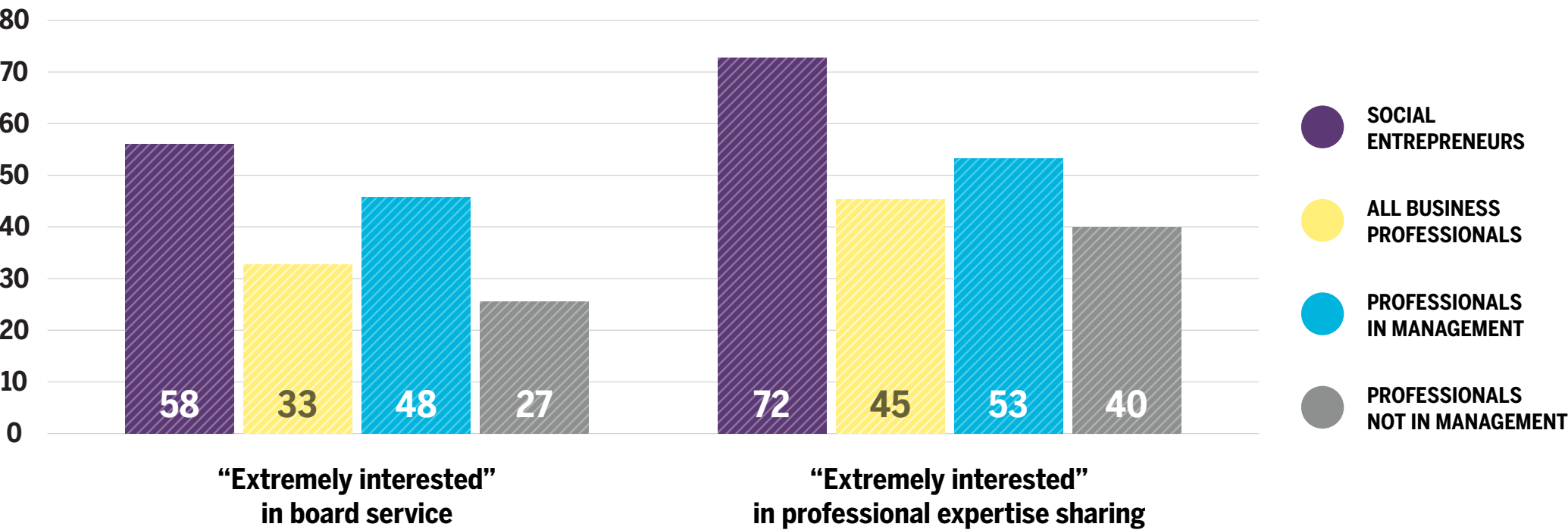
FIGURE 10

%

IMPACT OF MANAGEMENT LEVEL ON DESIRE TO PROVIDE SKILLS-BASED SUPPORT

How interested would you be in receiving /providing support in these areas?

Professionals in management positions are more interested in offering skills-based services than those in non management positions.



DIFFERING EXPECTATIONS FOR LENGTH OF PARTNERSHIP

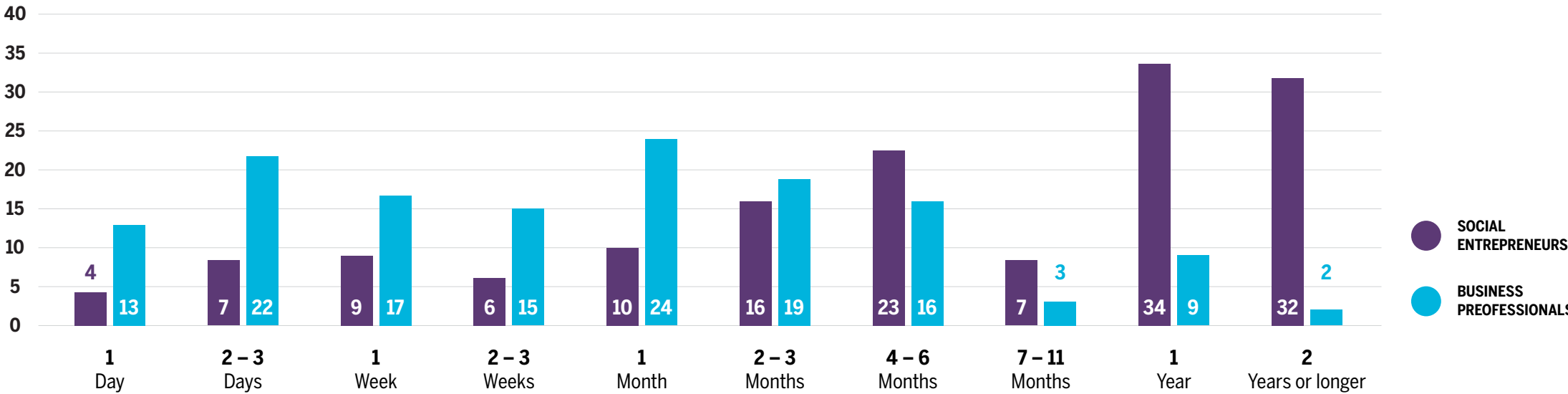
Social entrepreneurs and U.S. business professionals revealed stark differences in preference for the length of time spent working together. Social entrepreneurs want to work with business professionals for a period of 6 months to 2 years or more, and business professionals prefer 1 month or less. This suggests a need to creatively design pro bono programs that shift expectations and address the competing desires of both groups. See recommendation number 3 on page 26 for one idea to bridge this gap.

FIGURE 11

%

COMPARISON OF PREFERRED LENGTH OF TIME FOR A PRO BONO RELATIONSHIP

What time period would be most ideal for an engagement?



For additional data on the preferred logistical arrangements of social entrepreneurs and business professionals, see Appendix B on pages 33-34

PERCEPTIONS OF ONE ANOTHER

Most valued components of a pro bono experience

Business professionals who had previously engaged with social entrepreneurs indicated that their most valuable take away from the experience was the personal satisfaction that comes from helping, as well as the opportunity to learn from social impact leaders. Social entrepreneurs are most excited about engaging with business professionals so that they can learn and leverage business practices, skills, and experience in their own work for social good.

Worries about pro bono partnership

Both social entrepreneurs and business professionals express hesitancy with regard to having the time and capacity that may be required for collaboration.

Business professionals expressed worry that social entrepreneurs would approach the relationship with closed-mindedness toward business-oriented solutions. They want to feel that their perspective is valued.

Social entrepreneurs indicated worry that business professionals would approach the relationship without fully buying into the social mission or taking the time to understand and respect the complexity of the work they're doing. They also expressed concern that some business professionals would push solutions on them that are not well suited to or in line with their social mission.

Each of these sets of concerns echoes a common trend: each party wants to be valued, listened to, and understood. A program that makes the space for deep empathy to grow could help to assuage these concerns. Clearly framing the roles, expectations, scope, and timeline for engagements could also help to form the basis of a sound engagement.





Recommendations



Bridging

DIFFERENCES IN PERSPECTIVE

One of the most striking findings of this study is the conflicting perceptions of an ideal pro bono engagement between U.S. business professionals and global social entrepreneurs. Generally, U.S. business professionals see pro bono engagement as something to do in their spare time involving work that's not necessarily associated with their field of expertise. The most desired pro bono engagement for a U.S. business professional might look something like volunteering at an afterschool tutoring program during a short-term commitment. Social entrepreneurs, on the other hand, desire highly skilled support from business professionals over the course of a long-term relationship. Both groups, however, indicate high demand for a win-win partnership. Bridging their differences in perspective is key to achieving a partnership that works for both social entrepreneurs and business professionals.

Evolving

TOWARD WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIPS

What might a win-win partnership look like? For both partners to win, they each must be willing and able to transform as a result of their work together. If business professionals were part of a work environment where they could incorporate the lessons they learn from social entrepreneurs into the core of their work, then not only could they gain increased job satisfaction and new skills, but their companies could gain access to new markets and innovative practices. For social entrepreneurs, seeking support from business professionals could open new pathways for scaling and deepening impact.

Finding alignment between the needs and desires of these two parties is crucial to making this type of transformative partnership possible. The following recommendations offer avenues for building alignment between the types of pro bono support that business professionals want to offer with the types of pro bono support that social entrepreneurs need to further their social impact.



Principles for designing pro bono engagements to maximize satisfaction for both business professionals and social entrepreneurs

01 INTRODUCE BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS TO THE REAL NEEDS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

The significant misalignment between the stated preferences of business professionals and social entrepreneurs indicates that if a program were designed with the stated preferences of business professionals in mind, then it would not help social entrepreneurs increase their social impact. While it may be tempting for an employer or volunteer program implementer to design a pro bono program around the stated willingness and preferences of business professionals, the program must address the needs of social entrepreneurs in order to achieve social impact.

Doing so, however, would not necessitate that business professionals go against their preferences. Rather, it would offer business professionals a window into the needs of social entrepreneurs and help them develop a better understanding of how their work can have social impact, thus unlocking pathways to the kind of fulfillment and meaning that a significant proportion of business professionals desire in their work.

The survey finds that social entrepreneurs have needs that business professionals don't know about. Because the work of social entrepreneurs is different from traditional nonprofit models, it's likely that business professionals arriving at social innovation for the first time might not realize how valued and in-demand their expertise is. If business professionals knew how their skills can be used for social good, then their preferences for pro bono engagement would likely shift to be more in alignment with social entrepreneurs' needs so that their work could have more social impact. This approach would be particularly effective for the segment of business professionals who already identify as purpose-oriented as well as the segment of business professionals who identify as financially-motivated but for whom the right conditions could unlock a drive for purpose. So, it is by placing the needs of social entrepreneurs at the center of the creation and planning of a partnership that the needs of business professionals can also be met.

02 DESIGN PRO BONO PROGRAMS THAT TIE INTO THE CORE OPERATIONS OF A BUSINESS

Leadership support from companies is key to establishing value for business professionals. Ashoka's experience is that in order for a pro bono engagement with social entrepreneurs to be a win for business professionals, as well as their company as a whole, there must be avenues for employees to apply what they learn from social entrepreneurs into the operations of the company. Additionally, business professionals' pro bono experience must function as talent development which can in turn positively impact promotion opportunities. However, individual business professionals might have limited ability to drive company policies that encourage intrapreneurship and position pro bono experience as a mechanism for talent development. Thus, creating a true win-win partnership between a business professional and a social entrepreneur would require involvement and buy-in from companies at a leadership level.

A pro bono program that matches the needs of social entrepreneurs with the core operations of a company has the power to open possibilities for companies to contribute to social impact through their core operations and shift the role of work within our society from financial gain to social good. Doing so requires that business professionals shift their approach to volunteering, graduating from thinking of it as a feel-good experience to do in their free time to instead finding ways to play a tangible role in tackling complex social inequalities in their work. When employees' roles are connected to addressing a major social challenge, they can gain a sense of fulfillment in their daily job responsibilities and a deeper sense of purpose, and well as pursue talent development and intrapreneurship.

One method for driving alignment between employees' roles and social impact is pursuing co-creation opportunities between companies and social entrepreneurs. For example, Turkish social enterprise TABIT (founded by Ashoka Fellow Tülin Akin) and the international telecommunication company Vodafone partnered to co-create the Vodafone Farmers' Club. The result is a mobile platform to connect smallholder farmers with the information they need to communicate with buyers, grow their businesses, and increase their yields. TABIT benefited by unlocking social impact at a greater scale, and Vodafone benefited by gaining a loyal customer base, even replicating the model in 6 additional countries.³

Leading pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) models how to design pro bono programs that tie into core business operations through its Making More Health partnership with Ashoka. Over 5,000 BI employees have engaged with social entrepreneurs in a variety of avenues, and BI has introduced 7 new social business models through a co-creation process with social entrepreneurs. These activities are integrated into core operations, initiating significant shifts such as identifying India and Kenya as geographic focus areas and expanding approaches to R&D by learning from the on-the-ground experience of social entrepreneurs to gain insights into new markets from the patient's perspective. Additionally, BI adopted a new approach to talent development that emphasizes the qualities of social entrepreneurs, including empathy, teamwork, agility, and the ability to direct diverse teams.⁴

³ **Case Series on Social & Business Co-Creation:** The power of social entrepreneurs and businesses to build innovative business models that address societal changes at scale. June 2016. Ashoka Switzerland.

⁴ **Case Study:** How Ashoka partners with a global healthcare company, Boehringer Ingelheim, to align social & business purpose. July 2016. Ashoka Europe.

03 STRUCTURE TIME COMMITMENTS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF BOTH PARTIES

One of the most significant areas of misalignment between the desires of social entrepreneurs and business professionals was in the preferred length of time committed to working together.

One possible way of closing this gap might be to offer business professionals new models for volunteering. For business professionals whose mental model of pro bono volunteering is a full Saturday of unpaid labor, it's understandable that they might find the longer term engagements needed by social entrepreneurs to be less appealing. A longer term commitment to a social entrepreneur might sound much more appealing to a business professional if they knew they could meet the needs of social entrepreneurs through just a few hours a month over the long term.

We propose a rotating expertise share program that would match social entrepreneurs with a rotating yet cohesive stream of business professionals to meet their long term needs. For additional data on the reasoning behind such a plan as well as more detailed ideas for its operations, see Appendix C (page 36).

04 RECRUIT FOR THE SKILL SETS THAT ARE HIGHEST IN DEMAND

Since communications and marketing skills are so highly demanded by social entrepreneurs across the globe, there is a need for targeted outreach to business professionals with this skill set. Possible venues for outreach could include professional associations, alumni groups, conferences, online communities, and other conveners of professional expertise, particularly in the high-demand areas of communications and marketing strategy, business planning and development, impact measurement, and website development. There is a need to introduce business professionals in this field to the potential for social impact that their work could have.

For business professionals whose expertise is outside of the areas most in demand by social entrepreneurs, there could still be an opportunity for fulfilling engagement. Most social entrepreneurs prefer year-long help, which suggests a need for hires within the desired skillsets, not volunteers. Business professionals with expertise in organizational management, human resources, recruitment, strategic management, and fundraising could offer input on hiring decisions and recruitment avenues that would be attainable for a social entrepreneur.



05 BUILD TRUST AND EMPATHY TO OVERCOME MISPERCEPTIONS

For business professionals and social entrepreneurs to be able to engage with each other in a mutually beneficial fashion, it is vital that they trust one another. The study indicates some potential areas of mistrust between business professionals and social entrepreneurs, as well as potential misperceptions of each perspective. Thus, there is a pressing need for pro bono programs to support business professionals and social entrepreneurs in building trust, cultivating understanding, and practicing candor with one another. The opportunity to cultivate trust and understanding between participants must be built into any program proposal. This might involve:

- Building time in the early stages of a pro bono project to onboard business professionals to the social mission of their social entrepreneur partner(s)
- Vetting business professionals for their interest in and passion for the social mission of a social entrepreneur partner
- Vetting social entrepreneurs for their openness to the perspective of business professionals and willingness to try out the approaches of industries outside the social sector
- Kicking off engagements by planning time and interactions designed to help each party get to know and understand the perspective of the other
- Establishing checkins and mid project evaluations to make space for course corrections and open dialogue about the relationship

Through the implementation of such measures, business professionals and social entrepreneurs can foster the deep levels of trust, understanding, and empathy required for a fruitful partnership.



Conclusion



The results of this study indicate exciting potential for business professionals and social entrepreneurs to come together in a win-win partnership. While historically traditional CSR pro bono programs have been primarily one-sided, organizations are increasingly seeking win-win partnership opportunities that meet both business professional and social entrepreneur goals.

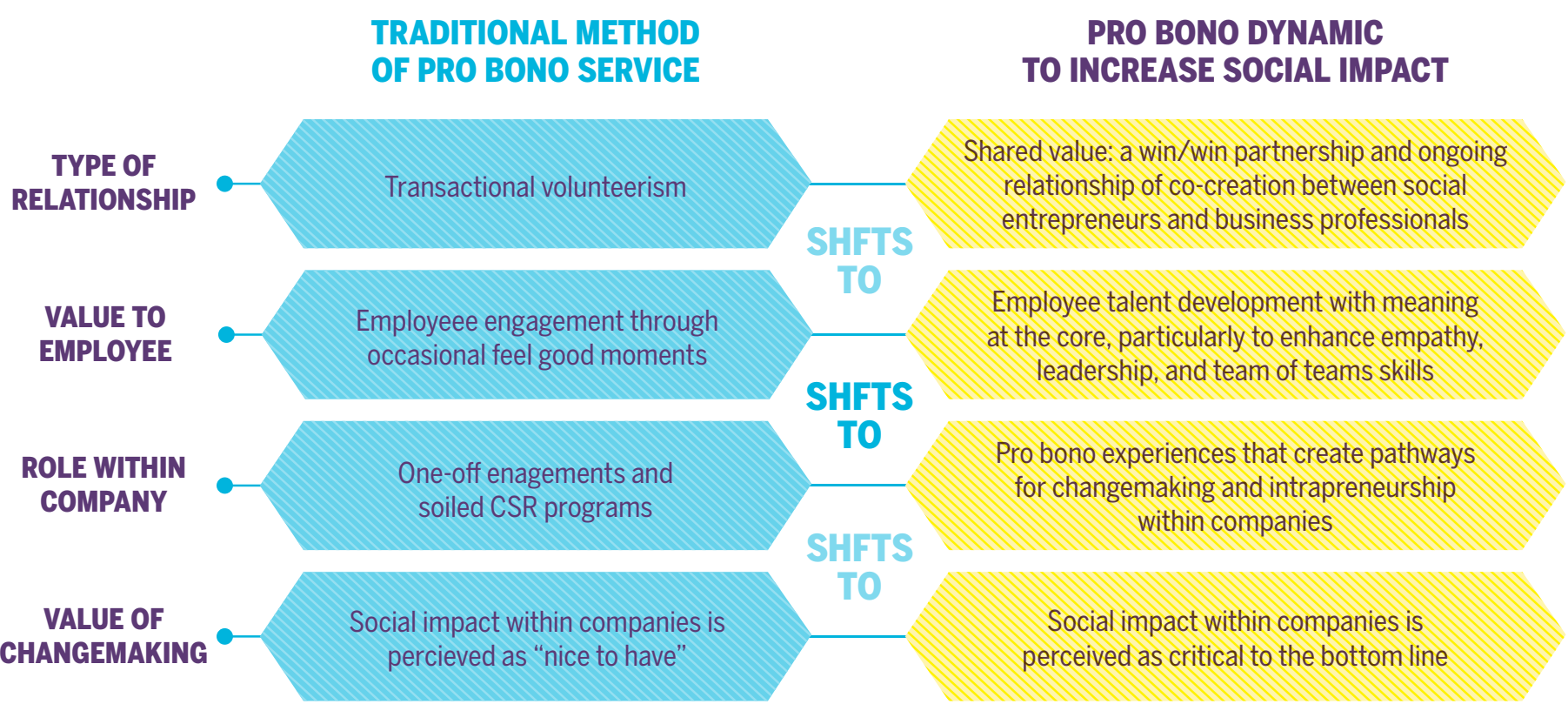
By modeling pro bono programs as mutually beneficial partnerships, we have an opportunity to transform the way that CSR is integrated into companies by incorporating social impact into employees' day-to-day responsibilities.

A distinguishing characteristic of a win-win partnership is that each party actively seeks opportunities for growth and transformation based on the ideas inspired by their collaboration. Areas for transformation might include how the company or organization innovates, approaches talent development, structures its teams, and frames its mission.

In our experience of several decades of work with social entrepreneurs around the world, Ashoka has taken away several lessons from social entrepreneurs around how corporations can have a positive social impact. Our experience has revealed that several shifts in approach to pro bono engagement have the potential to unlock new possibilities for social impact within the corporate landscape, changing the nature of work so that social impact is at the core. **These shifts include:**

FIGURE 12

**KEY SHIFTS
FOR IMPACTFUL WORK**



Pursuing these shifts alongside the abovementioned recommendations could unlock new potential for business professionals and social entrepreneurs to work together for social good.



Appendix A

Demographics Deep Dive

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS SURVEYED

Participants submitted their responses anonymously, increasing their privacy and the ease with which country office representatives and others could distribute the survey link. Baseline category descriptives were requested to enable us to understand the social interventions represented by participants.

The social entrepreneurs surveyed work in a wide range of fields, with the greatest proportions engaged in economic development, learning and education, and health. The vast majority of the social entrepreneurs surveyed pursue their social mission as part of an organization rather than as an individual activist or other unaffiliated entity. The social entrepreneurs surveyed employ a variety of business models to deliver their social innovations. Half are non-profits, NGOs, or citizen-sector undertakings. The remainder employ a for-profit model or a hybrid model that mixes nonprofit and for-profit strategies. The social entrepreneurs surveyed are distributed across the globe, with the greatest number of respondents from the United States, India, South Africa, and Nigeria.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS SURVEYED

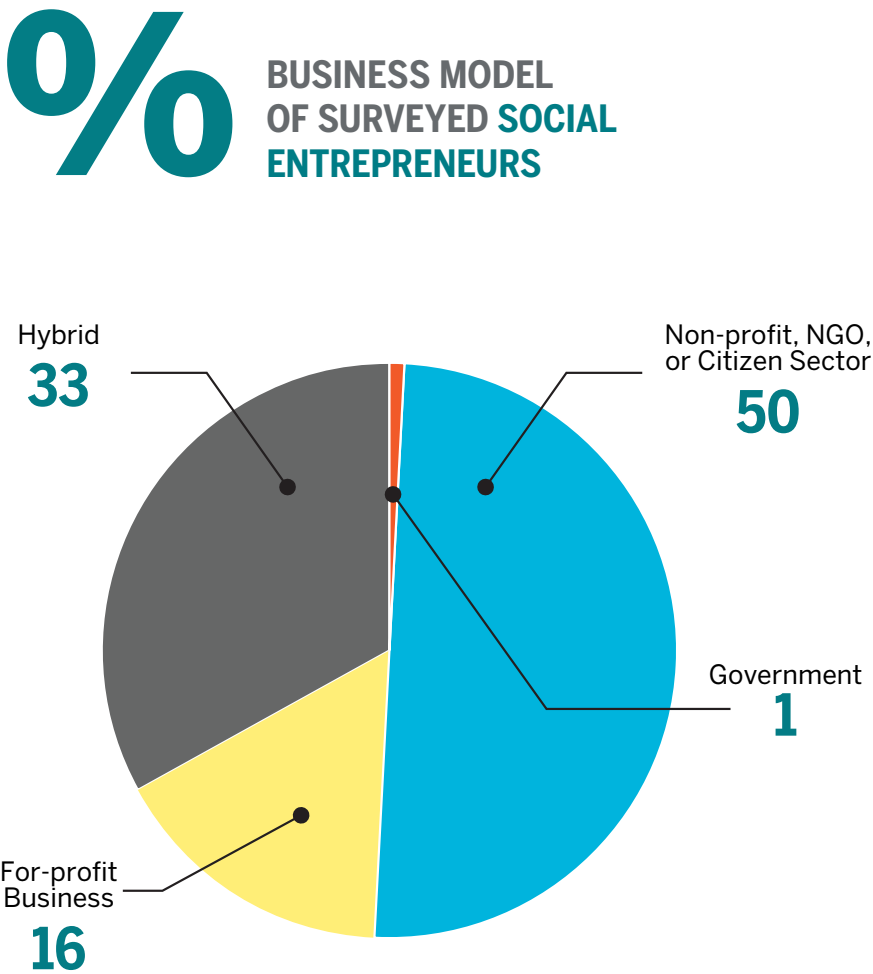
Business professionals in our sample are largely salaried, with nearly 3 in 10 working in a mid, senior, or executive management role. Roughly half of business professionals sampled are employed at for-profit companies, with the rest working in government, NGO, or self-employed settings. The median employer had between 501 and 1,000 employees, with a median annual budget of between \$10 million and \$100 million. While our sample had diverse representation across industries, the most common industries included health care, education, finance and insurance, and government and public administration.

Half of the organizations represented by the sample of business professionals offer opportunities to volunteer, and 1 in 4 offer formal volunteer programs.

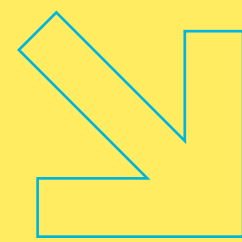
Our sample of business professionals has a +9 Net Promoter Score⁵, with 37% indicating they would recommend their employer and 28% indicating they would not recommend it.

Just 23% of business professionals surveyed consider themselves “entrepreneurial,” which indicates a need for most engagements with social entrepreneurs to offer a clearly defined scope with clear ties back to the social mission. For those professionals with an entrepreneurial bent, successful engagements might include solution-focused engagements in addition to any defined scope efforts.

FIGURE 2



⁵ Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a measure of satisfaction based on responses to a single question: How likely is it that you would recommend our company/product/service to a friend or colleague? Net Promoter Scores can range from -100 to +100, with any negative number indicating dissatisfaction and any positive number indicating satisfaction.



Appendix B

Detailed Logistics Preferences

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS' PREFERRED LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Location & Travel

Social entrepreneurs prefer to host meetings for project kick-off and conclusion, with digital meetings in between. Many social entrepreneurs were open to traveling, even overnight, to meet with a business professional. While neither business professionals nor social entrepreneurs relish the prospect of traveling to accommodate project collaboration, social entrepreneurs are more willing to travel when there is value in doing so.

Length of Engagement

Social entrepreneurs prefer longer engagements, with the median choice being engagements of 4-6 months, and the majority preferring engagements of 1 year or longer. They prefer meeting with business professionals several times a month.

FIGURE 14

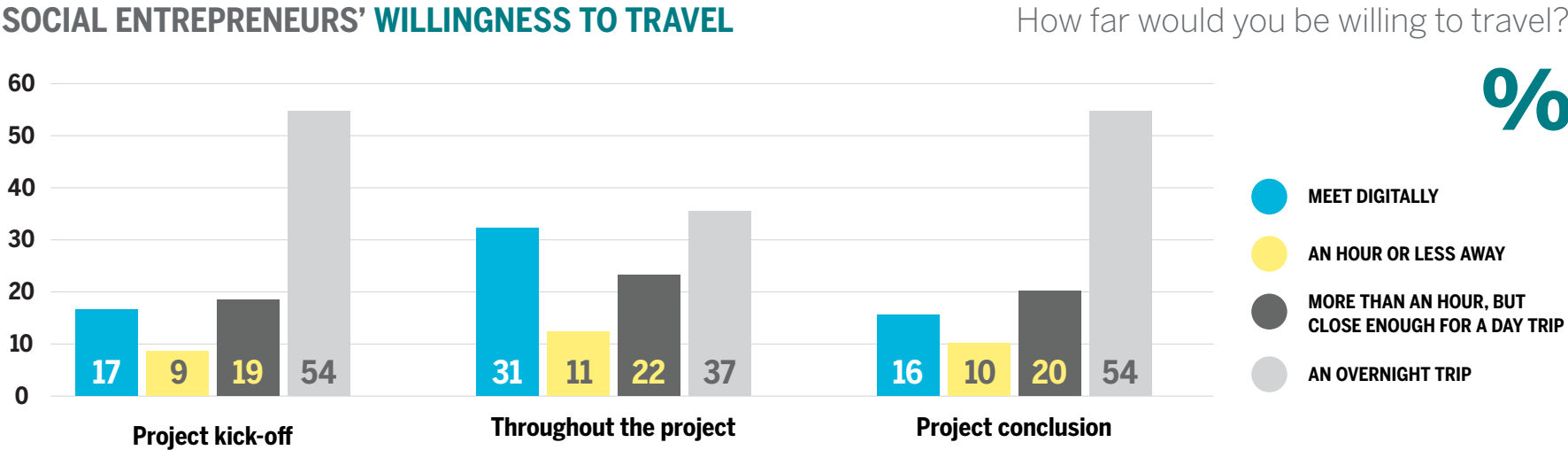
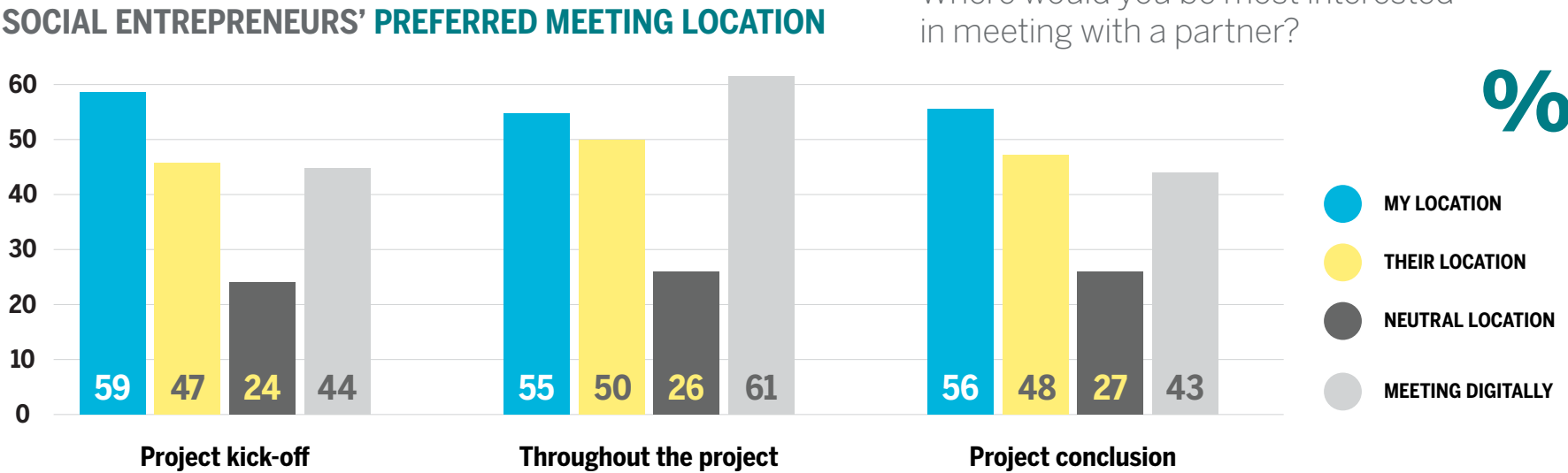


FIGURE 15



U.S. BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS' PREFERRED LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Location & Travel

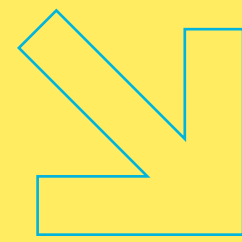
U.S. business professionals prefer a neutral location for meeting with a social entrepreneur (especially when working independent of their employer). While 40% of business professionals also report a willingness to travel to a social entrepreneurs' location, few have interest in overnight travel.

Length of Engagement

Business professionals prefer shorter engagements, with the median choice being engagements of 1 month, with meetings happening on a weekly basis. Those interested in sharing professional expertise prefer even shorter engagements, with a median preference of 2-3 weeks.

FIGURE 16





Appendix C

Ideas for a Rotating Expertise Share Program

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS FOR RECOMMENDATION #3

In a rotating expertise share type program, social entrepreneurs could benefit from receiving a commitment of professional expertise that meets their needs for larger scopes of work, perhaps lasting several years, while individual business professionals would only be obligated to commit to more manageable sub projects, perhaps lasting a few weeks or months. Such an arrangement is in alignment with the desires indicated by social entrepreneurs, who voiced strongest interest in working with a team of business professionals from different organizations over the long term.

A rotating expertise share program could be based upon a larger strategic scope of work that can be broken down into sections of sequenced deliverables so that each volunteer or team is working toward a completion criteria and could gain the resulting satisfaction.

Often a long term relationship would be better suited to be managed by a company, with employees taking on shorter sequenced engagements. This type of sequenced pro bono work could take many forms. For example, it could start with a general diagnostic leading to scoping for the critical need, then move into a series of interrelated deliverables.

Data-driven Approach

Further support for this type of program is that business professionals indicated a slight preference for supporting social entrepreneurs by working alongside professionals from various companies, and social entrepreneurs expressed a slight preference for receiving support from business professionals from different organizations working together.

FIGURE 17

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS' PREFERENCE FOR TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT

Would these types of partners be helpful in achieving your social mission?

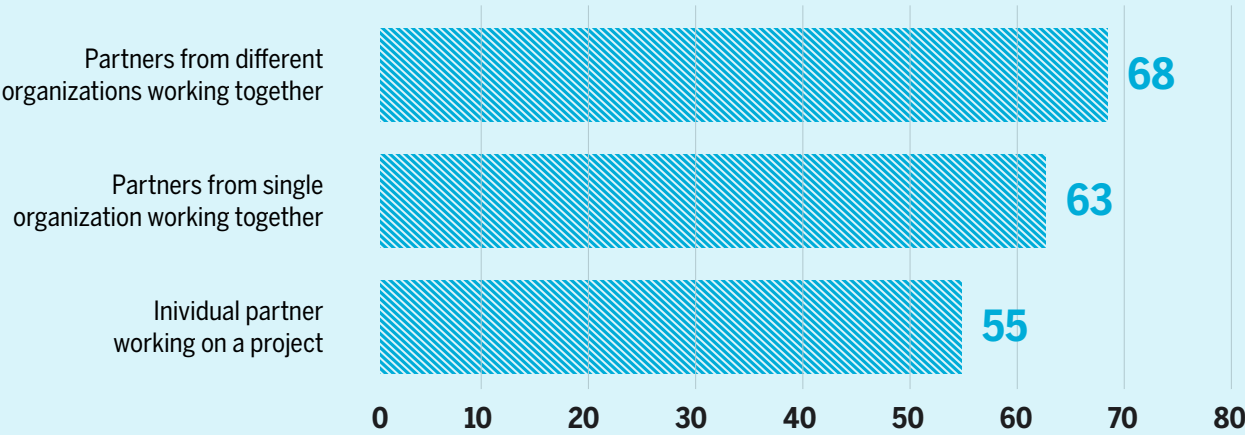
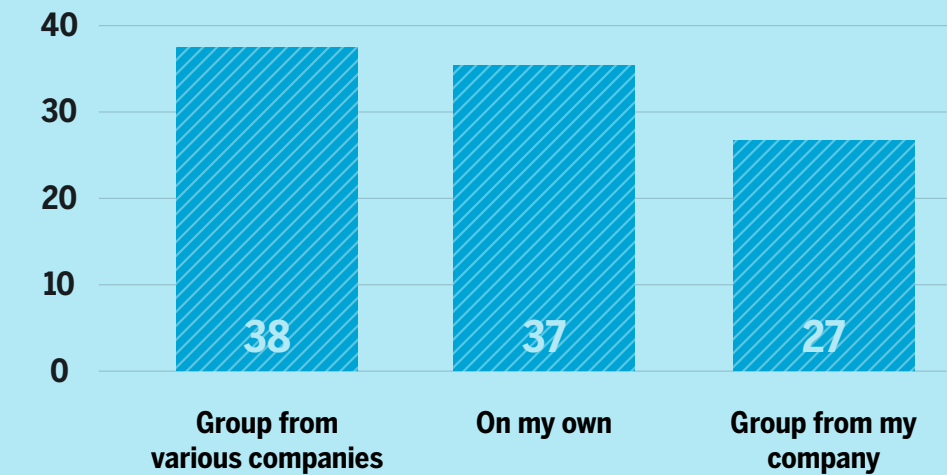


FIGURE 18

U.S. BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS' PREFERENCE FOR TEAMWORK

How interested would you be in working with the following?



%

Mitigating Risk

Taproot Foundation's years of experience creating pro bono programs for nonprofit leaders and business professionals indicates that switching out the expert over the course of a pro bono project can lead to a dissatisfying outcome for the nonprofit organization, particularly if a volunteer drops off unexpectedly and someone else needs to jump in and fill their role. To mitigate this risk, a rotating expertise share program could structure the work load so that each set of volunteers is responsible for a discrete piece that together culminates into something larger. In this way, individual business professionals are responsible for a piece that feels manageable to them, and their employer or the implementing organization is committed to long term support of the social entrepreneur, thus meeting the desires of each party.

It is vital to establish expectation setting such as reaching an agreement for the length of the engagement or the completion criteria so that expectations are managed on both sides of the commitment. Long term support would need to tie in strong project management to bridge the different short-term teams and deliverables together into the larger goal and deliverables.

Social entrepreneurs indicated that there can be a significant time burden associated with onboarding a business professional to their social mission. One way of ensuring a satisfying and impactful experience not only for the business professional but also for the social entrepreneur could be to set the expectation that the labor of onboarding the next volunteer is not on the social entrepreneur but instead is the responsibility of the business professional.

Desired Outcome

At the end of rotating expertise share type engagement, the social entrepreneur would have a finely-tuned best practice project and the business professional would have the satisfaction of iterating and contributing to a meaningful mission. Such a structure would also help to improve accountability as each business professional in the chain must hand off their efforts to the next, with feedback from the social entrepreneur along the way.



IDEAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following are ideas for additional research that could be useful in continuing to improve the effectiveness of pro bono engagements between social entrepreneurs and business professionals.

1. IDENTIFY PURPOSE-ORIENTED BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS AND COMPARE THEIR RESPONSES

Thought leaders in the field of meaningful work, such as Imperative, have already developed, tested, and validated robust research methodologies for determining the motivations of business professionals and are able to identify purpose-oriented professionals who desire to achieve positive social impact through their work. Building off of these methodologies, it would be revealing to compare the preferences and desires for pro bono engagement of purpose-oriented business professionals versus business professionals whose primary motivations are not purpose-oriented.

One hypothesis is that purpose-oriented business professionals might be more interested in longer and more skills-based engagements. Pursuing this line of inquiry could reveal strategies for vetting the business professionals who are best suited to engagement with social entrepreneurs as well as uncover methods for identifying and igniting the business professionals who have the potential to be purpose-oriented.

2. DEVELOP A TOOLKIT FOR IDENTIFYING IDEAL PARTNERSHIPS

Organizations like Ashoka that work to match social entrepreneurs with business professionals could benefit from the development of a toolkit for vetting social entrepreneurs, business professionals, and companies for their viability and potential for social impact. For example, social entrepreneurs need to screen out business professionals who are uninterested in social impact and who are merely looking for a single feel-good experience, or corporations that are using CSR as a smokescreen for harmful business practices. They need assurance that their partner isn't measuring success by good press or the number of volunteer hours logged but instead is measuring success by true social impact. They need to find businesses with core values and methods of operating that are aligned with their social mission. Similarly, business professionals and companies need to find social entrepreneurs who are truly open to a productive relationship, with the ability to provide constructive feedback and adequate onboarding and who present a genuine openness to learning from outside expertise and perspectives. Additional qualitative inquiry into the best practices of particularly effective partnerships and the failures of ineffective ones could significantly build on the results of this study to produce a user-friendly toolkit for vetting potential partners.

3. EXPAND STUDY BEYOND U.S. BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Expanding the survey to include business professionals from outside the U.S. could be done by segmenting business professional inquiries among top-priority non-U.S. business professional audiences (U.K., China, Brazil, India, South Africa, Nigeria, etc.), seeking any nuanced or divergent preferences for non-U.S. professionals open to collaboration with social entrepreneurs. For such an effort, we would build on the current study design and engage trusted quantitative recruiting partners in each target country to manage in-country language/culture translation (in cooperation with Ashoka field offices) and fielding of the study. We have found that no provider has a reliable, high-quality footprint in every region globally, so this would need to be a multi-partner or vendor effort to deliver valid and comparable results. We realize this is a high-cost inquiry, so likely not a top priority area of research. Expanding to non-English speaking social entrepreneurs would be simpler considering Ashoka's network, but would require significant translation support for the data analysis.

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Contributors: Meredith Hahn, American Express; Jessica Hammerman, Taproot Foundation; John Raffaeli, Imperative; Madden DeGarmo Manion, Points of Light; and Ashoka contributors Matt Barr, Sarah Jefferson, Bob Spoer, Nadine Freeman, Stephanie Schmidt, Fernande Raine, and Beth Inabinett

Thank you for the additional support provided by Reem Rahman, Elena Correias, Dani Matielo, Cynthia Drayton, Sachin Malhan, Sarah Voelkl, Tim Slattery, Tangut Degfay, and the Ashoka team across the globe who helped to spread the survey to Ashoka's network of social innovators.

Ashoka is grateful to American Express for their funding and support which made this research possible.



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