

Evaluate Ethics, Sustainability, and Social Issues in Twenty-first Century Businesses

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## **Introduction**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a necessity for corporate entities wanting to be a success not only in business but also to the community and environment. Because of the wide outreach CSR covers, it helps guarantee the development of successful strategies that appeal to the “Triple Bottom Line”, people, planet and profits (Babin, et al., 2011).

This paper will identify what the common initiatives are, propose one social responsibility plan to include a sustainability initiative that you and your organization can use in the next 6-12 months. Also addressed by this paper is a concern that organizations face on ethics and technology.

## **Common Social Initiatives**

Here is a compilation of common social initiatives companies have integrated into their business that allowed the blending of profit for a cause (Hessekiel, 2016). The intent of this list is to improve understanding that initiatives focused on the establishment of good community rapport can result in business opportunities and increased corporate presence in society.

### **Cause Promotion**

This initiative caters to activities that raise awareness of an outstanding community issue leveraged by corporate funds or donations. This takes the form of fund-raising or volunteering time for a good cause. To give a good idea, here is a project organized by Pet Valu in spring 2016. They established donation centers in their stores where customers donated \$2, \$5 or \$10 to support animal charities. In exchange, customers received a Pet Valu paper dog paw where they placed their names symbolizing support for animal rescue and welfare. This initiative was able to raise \$2 million for animal rescue and care. The use of this initiative improved consumer attitude towards Pet Valu products and increased sales. It also motivated Pet Valu employees to do better at work for a cause (Hessekiel, 2016). The participants here are the employees and the benefactors the organized community issue identified.

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**Your challenge.** How to find a community issue to support for a cause for these initiatives.

**Recommendations.** There are so many non-profit organizations available for this. Employees can provide names of non-profit organizations they are already in working with. The corporate role is to organize this endeavor.

### **Cause-Related Marketing**

This involves profit sharing from corporate sales for a cause. This needs a contractual agreement between the non-profit organization recipient of the donations and corporate entity where the money go. For instance doing promotional offers that include advertising co-brands will need to follow state regulation and industry guidelines. Here is a good example. Tim Horton donates whatever profit they get from their coffee sales on Day Camp towards supporting kids to partake the experience of camping. Last year, they were able to send 19,000 children from low-income family to camp (Hessekiel, 2016). The participant here is the whole corporate organization and the benefactors are the non-profit organization supported.

**Your challenge.** Creating contractual obligations and following state regulations and industry guidelines can become tasking.

**Recommendations.** This is a common knowledge. Anything that encompasses the changing of money will need documentation to protect the company giving and the non-profit organization receiving. Follow all state and industry guidelines. The guideline lists are available from state agencies.

### **Corporate Philanthropy**

A corporation contributes towards a charity of choice. Usually given in cash, donations or free services. An example is the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation in 2004 established by Indigo Books & Music Inc. Created to fund public schools and their libraries, so far it has contributed \$23 million to the project that helped more than 2,600 elementary schools restore

Evaluate Ethics, Sustainability, and Social Issues in Twenty-first Century Businesses and restock their libraries (Hessekiel, 2016). The participant here is everyone in the whole corporate organization and the benefactors the charity supported.

**Your challenge.** Incorporating philanthropic work time to employees regular work time.

**Recommendations.** Philanthropic work for employees needs support and budget. Employees should have full days or half day off for engaging in this initiative depending on the scale of activity.

### **Role of Ethics and Technology in CSR**

When it comes to marketing ethics, the line between ethical and unethical actions sometimes become gray. The efforts toward affecting ethics in the corporate world are ever changing (Bellow 2012). The ethical approach to making sure that marketing processes and negotiations are truthful is in effect here.

Ethics does play a major role (Brookes, 2011). The ethical values corporations have influenced the development and distribution of products. These values also have an effect on how they treat their customers to include the maintenance of relationships with them. Fraud, cheating, non-compliance of company core values, poor quality of products are but some of the breaches of the code of ethics that corporate need to avoid. The key that makes corporations successful and good is that they have predefined ethical guidelines laid out. This translates to practices ingrained into their corporate culture. The success of CSR initiatives will depend on the accurate definition and implementation of their code of ethics. Integration of correct CSR practices to the corporate enables ethical practices to become second nature.

Technology, on the other hand, is infinitely progressing. Computer ethics have surfaced a few decades back but has since been on the front. The presence of complex hackers are not only in the movies but has become a nightmare and an unavoidable reality (Films Media Group, 2014a). Their brazen attacks are no longer on customers but the corporations as well. Instead of targeting credit cards and bank accounts, they have taken their attacks to the next level, destroy

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infrastructures and corporate data. They have achieved the ability to steal money, names and identities of customers, and even their dark secrets. Hackers have even stopped the creation of nuclear arms in Iran (Films Media Group, 2014a). Unfortunately, this has snowballed into one of the hardest viruses to break as it has spread itself all over the world. People now have become the weaker link in technology. It has become a cancer that has metastasized in all aspects of everyone's lives not only of the corporate world. Yet Forbes Technology Council (2017) reported that if used in positive ways, hacking can be ethical. Hacking can be essential for security as they can help test system defenses and make sure that they are impenetrable.

On a different light of technology, the ever-presence of social media has become an industry marketing phenomenon (Films Media Group, 2014b). When used as intended, these social tools can help build a company up and allow it to reach out to its customers with speed. It is easy to configure, very affordable and most of all can connect immediately to customers by a single stroke of a key. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram & Pinterest, and Yelp to name a few of the top social networking sites can become vital tools to promote your company, products, and services. Online presence is now a must. Customers expect it. But corporations need due on their end. Check the social media. Plan how to deal with chatters within them. Plan how to deal with criticism and also praise on your products. These are small prices for the overall benefit of social media which is instant information to customers about the newest corporate products to complement the latest news.

### **Conclusion**

I finish this paper with noteworthy tidbits from other materials that may prove important to the business. A recent research by Bode and Singh (2017) focused on how CSR strategies can arise from the bottom up stated that any employee can become a social catalyst. I agree. But to become successful in this endeavor, an employee should seek stakeholders' confidence underscoring a business case around it. Letting corporate buy into the program is the start. Do consider this.

Babin et al. (2011) surmised that the growth of cooperation between providers and buyers on CSR activities will continue. Practices that will enhance the CSR for companies will evolve to the ever-changing need of the companies. Collaboration between them will be dependent on the success of the CSR initiatives implemented. So make sure that your corporate CSR strategy meets the stringent test by management.

Romani et al. (2016) concluded in their research that skepticism by consumers should be minimized to ensure maximum efficiency of a CSR. An important motivational piece for its sustenance is a tight hold on moral values. Once participants are totally absorbed to the pro-social goal of a CSR initiative, their engagement to the positive social activities becomes broader and inherent. Aim to meet this need consistently.

Lastly Persons (2012) mentioned that there is a need for students to learn social responsibilities as early as possible so that they will turn into CSR advocates in the future. I applaud this effort. Indoctrination of ethics through culture is doable. There are no such things as too late or too old to learn. This includes educating employees on the proper way to handle CSR policies starting with management. Managers will serve as CSR facilitators during implementation.

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