



Corporate
Social Responsibility
(CSR)

Getting Started
'How To' Handbook

What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is concerned with the way organisations conduct their business. It takes the view that as well as making money businesses have further responsibilities such as acting in an ethical manner, treating employees fairly and with respect, limiting damage to the environment and making a positive impact in the communities in which they operate.

What are the benefits?

Cost savings – better environmental management will almost certainly mean you can reduce costs to your business through:

- o Reduced use of energy and resources
- o Reduced waste and more efficient ways of working

Reputation – The construction industry in general is being seen as becoming more and more responsible. Main contractors are increasingly choosing to work with like minded businesses making your reputation on CSR even more important

Competitive Edge – It's a crowded marketplace, so what makes you different? Awareness of environmental issues? Community impact? A focus on CSR can make you stand out from the crowd

"The time is not far off when companies will have to justify their worth to society, with greater emphasis placed on environmental and social impacts than straight economics."

Dick Dusseldorp (Bovis) Lend Lease Founder, 1973



Getting Started

It's not as difficult as you may think, very few companies set out to be irresponsible!

What this means is that a number of areas of CSR, most notably health and safety for example, are likely to have been central to your organization for some time. Many of the other areas covered in this brief outline will not be new to you, and the ones that are we hope we have given simple ways of addressing.

The Corporate Social Responsibility agenda grows ever more important, year on year, and we hope this will be a pain free introduction to starting a basic CSR strategy for your company irrelevant of your size.

The following pages will cover the key areas of

Environment
Community
Workplace
Customers

In providing an overview of each area and some key pointers under each heading, we hope you will find it useful.

Let us know what you think at info@collinsmchugh.co.uk



Environment

Environmental management requires knowledge of the impacts arising from all areas of your business's activity. Good practice involves understanding these impacts and acting upon them.

Primarily this relates to

- Energy (how much you use)
- Waste (how much you throw away)
- Water (how much you use)

The benefits of improved environmental management include,

Efficiency gains

Wasted energy, wasted water and wasted raw materials costs your business money. A focus on your environmental impact can improve your bottom line profit.

Market opportunities

A competitive edge can be achieved by those businesses that are quick to develop new products or services which conform to a more environmentally conscious world.

Client and consumer expectations

Clients and consumers are now more willing to vote with their feet. They are becoming increasingly demanding and are looking for businesses to present them with answers.

Legal requirements

Pressure on you from environmental legislation continues to grow, and a focus on the environment now will help your business be prepared for future legislation.

"Why should I care about future generations what have they ever done for me"

Groucho Marx



What you can do

Resource and energy

Publish a clear environmental policy with responsibility at senior level.
Identify someone within your business to monitor environmental impact and report on progress.

Make employees more aware of efficient energy and resource use and tell your clients what you are doing.

Where possible monitor energy and water use by taking monthly meter readings. Set targets for reduction and create action plans to achieve your targets.

Pollution and waste management

Reuse and recycle your business waste in preference to sending waste to landfill. Save paper costs by buying recycled paper and reusing discarded paper for notes. Recycle toner cartridges and use environmentally friendly cleaning products.

Consider opportunities to reduce toxic chemicals eg: batteries, copier toner, paints, cleaning supplies etc and if required, ensure their safe disposal.

Travel

If possible, allow more flexible working to reduce the environmental impacts associated with employee travel. Save time and reduce emissions by using conference calls rather than travelling to meetings where possible.

Summary

In managing your environmental behaviour the key first step is to begin to understand your impact by measuring energy and resource use. Only once you understand this can you put in place procedures to seek to manage the key areas of energy use; water use, waste; and travel.

Key Points

- Establish an Environmental Policy
- Set targets to reduce energy use
- Set targets to reduce waste

For more information see www.carbontrust.org.uk / www.envirowise.co.uk

Community

All businesses, large or small, have an impact on the communities in which they operate. Managed well, this impact can bring significant benefits to both the community and to your business. Your business can support the community through a variety of ways.

For clients it can be the most visible part of your business's CSR approach.

The benefits of improved community engagement include,

Marketing

Building brand familiarity and reputation.
Sales promotion.

Human Resources

Boosting employees' morale.
Developing team building skills.
Management development and training.

Public Relations

Generating positive media coverage.

"Companies that understand their links with the communities they operate in, and their impact on the environment , are most likely to prosper in the long term"

Sir Digby Jones – Director General of the CBI (Jan 2006)



What you can do

In the first instance your community impact will be assessed by how you deliver your core service or product. Are your employees polite and courteous? Do you deliver your service in a responsible manner especially in relation to noise? Traffic movements? Is a site managed in a clean and tidy manner?

Considerate constructors stand out!

Other ways to support your local community include

Financial Support

Set up a payroll 'Give as you Earn' scheme for employees.
Sponsor events or community clubs. Consider this in terms of promoting your business.

Give Employee Time

Find out if your employees volunteer in the community in their own time. For example as school governors, trustees of charities or non-executive positions in community organisations. Can you support this further?
Offer professional expertise free to a voluntary organisation.

Gifts In Kind

Donate equipment and materials to schools or voluntary groups.
Offer long and short-term work experience placements to young people.
Provide use of your facilities such as allowing a community group to hold a meeting on your business premises or providing office accommodation for a community group.

Being A Good Neighbour

Support local community events.

Summary

Community engagement needn't be expensive or time consuming, a small well managed programme can have a big impact.

Key Points

Remember your employees are your main point of contact with the community
Draw up a short action plan for community activity, gifts in kind etc
Publicise on your web site, in your tender documents etc what you are doing

For more information see www.ccscheme.org.uk

Workplace

For most businesses, large or small, people make the difference in how profitable you are. The work environment of your employees very much influences their quality of life, their family life and their health and safety.

A responsible approach to your employees will ensure they finish the working day as healthy as they started it, that they are trained and competent in the tasks they have to do, and that they are both motivated and productive.

What are the benefits?

A safe and healthy workforce

Safe working practices protecting your employees, the public at large and your reputation

Workforce diversity

Attracting the most talented employees, regardless of race, gender, disability or age.

Improved productivity

Stronger employee motivation provides greater productivity.
Reducing business costs through retaining employees for longer periods of time.
Reducing lost days through illness.

Employee development/training

Training and development creates stronger employee motivation and competency

"People who feel good about themselves produce better results"

Author unknown



What you can do

Employee Communication

Listen to and involve employees in both targets for the future and potential improvements in how you deliver your service.

Health and Safety

Promote health and safety procedures dictated by legislation to ensure the safety of your employees.

Learning and Development

Provide training and development opportunities to employees.
Have training plans to support the growth and development of your employees.
Review performance.

Diversity and Equality

Promote non-discrimination by creating a policy statement on equal opportunities.
Commit to recruiting locally where practically possible.

Summary

Through promoting health and safety, training and diversity you can increase the motivation of your employees at the same time as contributing toward their job satisfaction. This should improve your business resulting in a better service to your clients.

Key Points

Ensure your health and safety policy covers all current legislative requirements
Introduce an equal opportunities policy if you do not have one
Engage with your employees about the operation of your business

Links

Business in the Community <http://www.bitc.org.uk/workplace/index.html>



Customers

Attracting clients through strong performance on price, quality and service is still important but increasingly there are other factors behind client's buying decisions. A positive and trustful image of your business helps to keep critics at bay and enhances your reputation. This can amount to an effective form of advertising.

Ensure that the positive impacts of your business on the environment, in the community, and the fact you have a well trained polite and receptive workforce are well placed in your customer communications

What are the benefits?

Attracting and retaining clients

Clients are becoming increasingly demanding of business over and above price and quality.

Controlling risk

Clients will remember clearly your business if your behavior seems to fall short through poor performance, badly trained employees or poor communications

Providing solutions

Larger companies are being judged on the company they keep and your business's potential clients are keen to establish supply chains that reflect their own values.

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that you will do things differently"

Warren Buffet



What you can do

Good relations with clients and suppliers

Communicate your commitment and actions on responsible business practice to clients and suppliers. Invite suggestions for making your products/services more responsible.

Ethical competition

Ensure that all employees, suppliers and creditors are paid on time. Avoid aggressive selling practices or sales quotas / bonus systems that encourage sales people to commit unreasonable or unethical acts.

Responsible marketing and advertising

Avoid misleading marketing and advertising to ensure that all information about your products and services is presented in a clear, concise and accurate way and based on honest statements.

Listen and respond to client feedback and complaints. This ensures that clients have appropriate opportunities to provide positive feedback and/or complaints to the business.

Summary

A number of issues extend across a wide range of activities but in essence it is about your business operating to the highest standards of business integrity and taking account of the impact of your behaviour in the marketplace. Is your business open honest and transparent?

Key Issues

Communicate your wider positive impacts

Be open honest and transparent in your business dealings

Develop a short customer charter to outline what all customers can expect from your business. Invite feedback from all clients

Useful Links

<http://www.bitc.org.uk/marketplace/index.html>



You're on your way!

If you have worked through this booklet and addressed the key points you will have the basis for a short CSR Strategy. As you progress you can adapt, improve and extend this strategy as you feel will best serve all the companies stakeholders – customers, employees and the wider community.

For further information visit

www.collinsmchugh.co.uk

www.bitc.org.uk



