

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for organisations

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a term that relates to the way a company will assess and take responsibility for its impact on social and environmental wellbeing. CSR is usually the term used when efforts are made with ethical reason in corporate citizenship which goes beyond the requirements of regulators or environmental protection groups.

An example of CSR is when short term costs are incurred to better social or environmental wellbeing without there being an immediate financial benefit to the organisation, this may be by taking steps to reduce the organisation carbon footprint, holding a Macmillan Coffee Morning, only using fair-trade ingredients, etcetera.

However before deciding to create a CSR strategy an organisation must understand it's own core social purpose and mission so that the strategy will be cohesive with their own governing document. It is important to be truthful and transparent to help prove the validity of actions within your organisation for regulators and to build trust in the community.

Creating a CSR strategy

- Choose a social purpose to support that is on par with your own organisation mission, perhaps by doing a survey of relevant issues for concern and caution.
- Understand the stakeholders, who cares and how much? This will help to choose the sources of input in strategy development. Therefore, you need to also understand market trends. With economic recovery or social crisis the CSR can become a greater impact.
- Using both the research about who will give what and for what cause, choose the most relevant social cause that will gain the most support. Then choose a beneficial segment of this issue to focus the CSR.
- Ensure the focus point is one that stakeholders find personally relevant. It may be that an obscured focus goes to a wide issue such as tackling mental illness, perhaps closest to the peoples own heart is getting affordable, safe and appropriate care for a loved one, ergo this is the issue to apply the CSR strategy toward.
- Use the organisation properly, gain approval from the CEO and ensure the CSR is created to a cost that meets budget. When meeting the need of others, it will only be sustainable if enough is left in the pot to meet the functions of the organisation. Also the same applies to legal implication, it is important to ensure the remit of the organisation is not being diverted in an attempt to help the social need of others. This will help to be realised by remembering to follow statutory law and your organisations governing document.

Benefits of CSR

- Your organisation will appeal to those socially conscious in the community and within your own team.
- Volunteers are more likely to turn their time and effort to your organisation if they feel your organisation is in turn offering benefit to the community.
- Engaging your team and service users in decisions about CSR will make them feel as though they have a voice.
- The effort behind CSR can bring together people of all ages and backgrounds and help to form community cohesion and even tackle loneliness. Through engagement and collaboration, the CSR will help the organisation to be more innovative.
- When trust is built through transparency and inclusion, an organisation with CSR initiatives will be at less risk during economic downturns. This is because the stakeholders see the organisation as having shared values and instils loyalty.

- Some stakeholders wish to give back to good causes without taking time going around all the charitable groups to make single donations. If your organisation adopts practical CSR by having profits donated to a single cause with a customer choice of beneficiary, this can be a win-win approach.
- The organisations that rely on grant funders will better show a community benefit and in turn have better likelihood of securing further grants when they are philanthropic.

Collaboration

Collaboration between business and small organisations rarely happens. CSR is about finding solutions that benefit society, the joined approach of interested parties will allow share of ideas and learning to better practice. When other sectors are considered the approach is not materially important and scale can be reached that opens the door to making the required improvements.

Not all organisations and business have the support or infrastructure to seek out the collaborative approaches in philanthropy. Help is available from Voluntary Action Rotherham to make those introductions and allow you to better the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for your business.

Guidance is also available in regard to legal aspects to CSR on the Gov.UK website.

Useful contact information:

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