



ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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Abstract:

A proper CSR communication can increase the brand image of the company to multiple folds and thus necessitates the importance of having a communication strategy. Being experts having strong communication skills, we can prepare CSR communication strategy which would include identification of stakeholders, modes & method of communication for the stakeholders, frequency, timeline content development etc. Business that addresses the needs of communities, people and their employers. CSR provides frameworks for successful enterprise that is harmonious with its surroundings.

Key Words: Fair Trade, Stakeholders & Brand Image

Introduction:

CSR is an opportunity to generate honest, authentic good-news stories that a business and its community can be proud of Corporate Social Responsibility communication strategies that are adapted individually, case by case to the needs and standards of the company and its environment. All these Corporate Social Responsibility communication strategies are also separated into internal and external measures and are adjusted to the status of the project. We work on project levels from local to international, with years of experience in transforming internal CSR projects to broadly accepted and acclaimed company measures

Evaluation of Corporate Social Responsibility:

The Corporate Social Responsibility was coined in 1953 with the publication of Bowen's Social Responsibility of Businessmen" (Corporate watch report, 2006). The evolution of CSR is as old as trade and business for any of corporation. Industrialization and impact of businesses on the society led to a complete new vision. By 80's and 90's CSR was taken into discussion, the first company to implement CSR was Shell in 1998. (Corporate watch report, 2006) With well informed and educated general people it has become a threat to the corporate and CSR is the solution to it. In 1990 CSR was standard in the industry with companies like Price Waterhouse Copper and KPMG. CSR evolved beyond code of conduct and reporting, eventually it started taking initiative in NGO's, multi stake holder, ethical trading.

Objective of Corporate Social Responsibility:

- ✓ Communication of the CSR projects and its impact further re-in forces the company's commitment to be socially responsible.
- ✓ It also enhances the brand image by sending the message to all its stakeholders thereby increasing credibility.
- ✓ Hence the communication of the CSR strategy and projects to the stakeholders is as important as the CSR programmes itself

Implementation of Effective CSR Communication Strategies:

- ✓ Seek CSR activities that fit into the business strategy: Before deciding to allocate resources on a certain CSR activity, the company should fully evaluate how the activity fits within the business strategy as well as the ability of stakeholders to naturally perceive such congruence.
- ✓ Emphasize CSR commitment and impact to foster consumer advocacy: Any CSR communication strategy should adequately emphasize and document the long-term commitment by the company and the concrete impact of its CSR activities.
- ✓ Seek credibility through the support of independent, external communication sources: The less controllable the communicator is from the company's perspective, the more credible the CSR message is to the stakeholders.
- ✓ Encourage employee and consumer word-of-mouth: A CSR communication strategy should strive for various forms of stakeholder engagement. Employees, in particular, through their social ties, may have a wide reach among other groups of interest in the company.
- ✓ Select social initiatives with high-issue support: Companies should monitor what their key stakeholders consider as priority issues, and undertake those initiatives with high issue support.

Methodology:

Communication Steps during CSR Projects:

Introduction: Announcement and explanation of the process, its goals and benefits to the employees, partners, shareholders, consumers, suppliers, and all other stakeholders. Designing measures tailor made to all participants in the process as well as all employees, major stakeholders and opinion leaders.

Supportive: During the project. Depending on the size/scale of the project there will be different communication steps:

- ✓ Awareness raising
- ✓ Involvement measures
- ✓ Dialogue structures
- ✓ Information on progress
- ✓ Image creation
- ✓ Research usage

Depending of the need and duration these measures will be internal (employees) and/or external (partners, suppliers, stakeholders)

Final:

- ✓ Internal (Involving – communicating the individual roles and benefits for all stakeholders) next steps, learning and new achieved standards

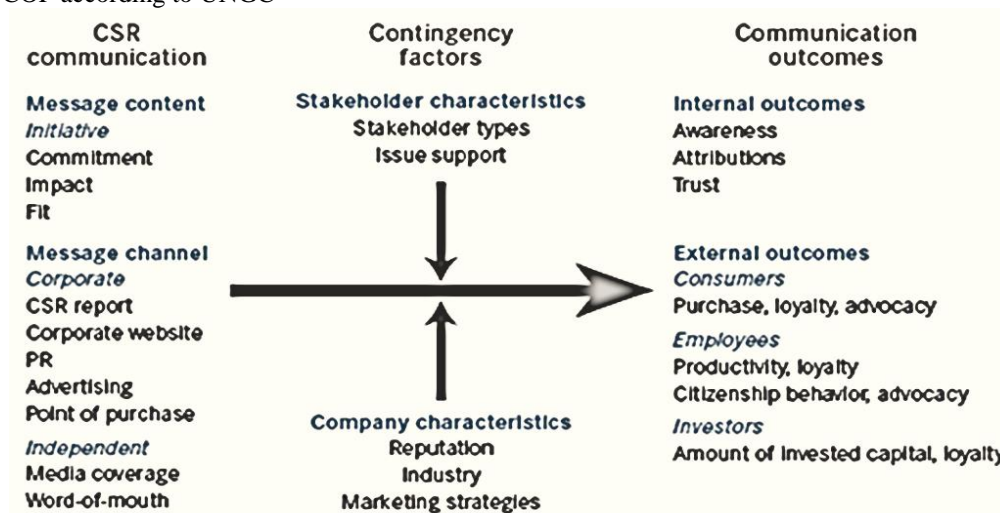
External:

- ✓ New positioning and strategy
- ✓ New look and feel
- ✓ New philosophy/ message/ themes
- ✓ New audio and visual communication language, tonality
- ✓ New communication channels and media
- ✓ Eventual rebranding (process starts with the CSR project)

Additional Individual Communication Tools:

Reporting:

- ✓ Annual reporting
- ✓ CSR Report based on GRI
- ✓ COP according to UNGC



Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility:

- ✓ **CSR and Brands:** Brands are basically the identification in which a company's product is identified by the consumer. The sales and revenue of the company are widely dependent on the brand they give to their product. Here are some CSR traits that positively / negatively affect the brand Positive Marketing/ Brand Building - Times of India (kalingatimes.com). Brand insurance - NIKE (Corporate Social Responsibility, 2003)
- ✓ **CSR and Globalization:** As companies expand through globalization, many challenges have waited for them from Government regulations to the varying standards of what is deemed to be labor exploitation, these challenges have the potential to cost companies millions of dollars. Some companies are of the view that these policies are merely a cost hindrance, while other companies use CSR tactics as a strategy to gain public support for the presence in the global market.
- ✓ **CSR and Human Resources:** A CSR program can be an aid to hire and retain staff particularly within the competitive graduate student market. Potential recruits often inquire about a firm's CSR policy, and having a comprehensive policy can give an advantage. CSR can also add value in the perception of a

company among its staff, particularly when staff can become involved through fundraising activities or community volunteering. Also CSR can be driven by employees' personal values, in addition to the more obvious economic and governmental drivers.

- ✓ **CSR and Risk Management:** Managing risk is a central part of many corporate strategies. No matter how hard a company tried their reputations which took decades to build up can be questioned in a matter of minutes through incidents such as corruption or environmental accidents. These can also draw unwanted attention from courts, governments and media. Building and promoting great CSR policies can sometimes offset the risks.
- ✓ **CSR and Government Policies:** Businesses in the interest of protecting stakeholders and shareholders. With the absence of proper business regulation societies can be misled, manipulated and exploited, therefore the government needs to be responsible and regulate businesses in order to provide a level playing field where all business have the opportunity to operate and expand. Governmental policies have been designed and put in place to assist not only consumers both organizations as well, by protecting consumers from unfair business practices as well as protecting the organizations from public misconduct and interference.

Conclusion:

Our paper has built on the recent development of theories on stakeholder management and critically drawn on public relations theory in the development of strategies for CSR communication in order to better conceptualize how managers inform, engage with and involve important stakeholders. In particular, we focus on areas of strategic importance for managers as they embark on CSR communication. The general assumption that managers need to improve their corporate 'stakeholder information strategy' to keep the general public better informed about CSR initiatives to achieve legitimacy and good reputations is challenged

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