

How Corporate Social Responsibility Influences Consumers and Employees
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Abstract

This report presents a compilation of literary analyses regarding corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its impact on the organization from both an external standpoint through consumers and an internal standpoint through employees. The findings in the research conducted suggest that CSR can be utilized as a source of motivation for loyalty for both consumers and employees. Externally, CSR can effectively motivate consumers at an intrinsic level. While, internally, CSR works to fulfill even the highest of employees' hierarchy of needs. CSR's ability to gratify the motivations of consumers and employees provides them with ample motivation to stay loyal to the company. In effect, organizations are able to receive benefits regarding brand image, employee performance, and financial performance. As such, CSR can be found to provide holistic benefits to organizations. These advantages of employing CSR provoke managerial implications including the need for investment, communication, and monitoring.

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) dedicates the company's emphasis to the wellness of its stakeholders, in addition to the community and environment which it influences (Kilkenny, 2014). As such, an organization which embodies CSR pursues to make

an impact which extends beyond the bottom line. This extension is otherwise known as the triple bottom line, which is the valuation of the companies' impact on their profit, people, and planet (Gimenez, Sierra, & Rodon, 2012). In effect, companies that choose to uphold CSR have the duty to cultivate of economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic contributions (Chen, Tai, & Chen, 2015). In order to make an effective impact on the triple bottom line, the CSR value system must be embedded into these companies' strategy, culture, and operations (Gimenez, et. al., 2012). This approach can be used as a powerful tactic to enhance the organization both externally and internally.

From the consumers' point of view, the current market is comprised of a plethora of undistinguished products and services of similar price and quality. It is becoming more evident that organizations are seeking ways outside of traditional marketing techniques to create sustainable impressions of brand image and awareness (Mathur & Midha, 2012). Furthermore, the acquisition and retention of talent in the global talent war is becoming an increasingly difficult battle for companies of all fields and sizes. Organizations are struggling to differentiate themselves as more than just an exchange of wages and benefits for work in the employee's frame of mind (Bhattacharya, Sen, & Korschun, 2008). Nevertheless, an organization which employs CSR provides its consumers as well as its employees with the opportunity to align their values with the company. Therefore, CSR's ability to appeal to customers' and employees' motivations benefits companies by strengthening loyalty from both an economic and organizational standpoint.

2. Customer Motivation

2.1 Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

Psychologically, an individual's motivation can be divided into two categories: extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is defined as doing something in the "pursuit of an instrumental goal," while intrinsic motivation is often defined as 'doing something for its own sake,' (Reiss, 2012). For example, if a consumer purchases an item, such as a pair of shoes, for the primary purpose of achieving some sort of fashion status, then the consumer is motivated by external rewards. On the other hand, if an environmentally-conscious person purchases a pair of shoes because they are made from recycled material, the person is motivated by intrinsic rewards. This information is relevant to social responsibility schemes as research has shown that intrinsic motivations are actually more powerful than extrinsic motivation in predicting human behavior (Reiss, 2012). Intrinsic motivational characteristics specifically associated with support for companies embodying CSR include caring for the supported cause, possessing prosocial core values, and considering their actions affects on the well being of others (Galan-ladero, Galera-casquet, & Wymer, 2013).

2.2 Shift in Consumer Values

Today, with all of the available choices, consumers are becoming ever more conscious of their buying decisions and the effects they may have. Thus, companies are realizing the importance of viewing CSR as a differentiation necessity in their business models. Customer values extend further than simply purchasing and using a product or service. Customers now want to extend their resources to the field of corporate social responsibility (Hans & Gupta, 2013). Research explains this reaction as customers choose brands that align with their own

personal internal needs. As a result, the greater the brand is associated with the consumer's intrinsic needs, the more likely the customer will be drawn to it (Keng, Tran, & Thi, 2013).

2.3 Brand Personality

Furthermore, by understanding the prioritization of market consumers' intrinsic motivations over their extrinsic motivations, companies can use their social responsibility efforts to create brand personalities (Hunjra, Azam, & Humayoun, 2011). Brand personality, which can be established by human characteristics identified in a brand, is a particularly useful tool in distinguishing a corporation from its competitors (Malär, Nyffenegger, Krohmer, & Hoyer, 2012). CSR asks for sympathetic and altruistic responses from its audience (Hunjra, Azam, & Humayoun, 2011). By utilizing social responsibility, organizations become associated with personality traits such as being warm, generous, responsible and compassionate. In turn, the basic understanding of an organization's target consumer motivations can help develop a corporate persona with which consumers can identify with and potentially stay loyal to (Galan-ladero, et. al., 2013). This marketing effort can enable consumers can relate to on a more personal, internal level. (Malär, Nyffenegger, Krohmer, & Hoyer, 2012). It should be noted that females generally favor socially responsible brands more than males. However, both genders still regard socially responsible companies in a positive light (Galan-ladero, et. al., 2013). As a result, the process of shaping brand personality through social responsibility builds brand equity and market share in the long run (Valette-Florence, Guizani, & Merunka 2011).

3. Customer Loyalty

3.1 Attitudinal vs. Behavioral Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty can be categorized into two segments: attitude and behavior. A customer can be attitudinally loyal without being behaviorally loyal or vice versa. A customer can also show qualities of both types of loyalty. Attitudinal customer loyalty, refers to loyal customer who have a greater inclination to spread brand awareness with positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Watson, Beck, Henderson, & Palmatier 2015). Behavioral customer loyalty, on the other hand, pertains to the customer's tendency to purchase from the same organization. As such, obtaining customer loyalty is a meaningful marketing result (Galán-ladero, et. al., 2013). The combination of loyalty attributions is optimal for company success. Fortunately for companies, both types of customer loyalty can be encouraged when CSR initiatives are implemented (Watson, et. al., 2015).

3.2 Attitudinal Customer Loyalty

Research shows that CSR encourages positive customer attitudes towards a broad array of elements including corporate image, service quality, and purchase intentions (Huang, et. al., 2014). Since companies that employ corporate social responsibility generally have a positive brand image and post-purchase satisfaction rate, their customers are more willing to share their positive experiences with the brand (Hunjra, Azam, & Humayoun, 2011). Positive word-of-mouth is particularly beneficial to a company's brand as it possesses the power to increase the amount of trust consumers have for a brand. In addition, it has the ability to positively influence consumer purchase intention. In effect, CSR can lead to desired consumer behavior greater than the initial outcome as it encourages current customers to

attract new customers (Long-Yi & Lu 2010). This generates additional sales for the company and contributes to an ongoing cycle of customer post-purchase satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth.

3.3 Behavioral Customer Loyalty

Social responsibility enables customers to feel positively about their purchase intentions due to the general service their purchase could provide to society. The positive affects of CSR are showcased by research findings in which CSR enables consumers to identify positively with companies, which, in effect, increases purchase intentions (Chen, Tai, & Chen, 2015). Interestingly, the higher consumers perceive a company to be socially responsible, the higher consumers' purchase intentions become (Huang, et. al., 2014). These findings present how CSR is instrumental in the making companies relatable to their consumers. The research results also prove that CSR is a motivating factor for purchase intention. It should also be noted that purchase intentions lead into an actual purchase, which leads to re-purchasing and the purchasing of bulk orders. This demonstrates that CSR is able to encourage behavioral customer loyalty (Hunjra, et. al., 2013). Nonetheless, consumers are not the only stakeholders that can be motivated by CSR. CSR is also proven to positively influence employee motivations and behaviors.

4. Employee Motivation

Psychologically, people regard organizations as human-like entities capable of having motives, intentions, and accountability as a way to understand their relationships with companies (Bauman, Christopher, Skitka, & Linda, 2012). When companies incorporate the

principles of CSR, the employee-company relationship expands beyond an exchange of a paycheck for work. Instead, employees begin to humanize the company as an entity that they can relate to (Bhattacharya, Sen, & Korschun, 2008). CSR initiatives help confirm a company's values, specifically ones that imply morality such as justice, caring, and purity (Bauman, et. al., 2012). These values enable employees to identify and relate with the company to the point of motivation as CSR initiatives fulfill Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Bhattacharya, Sen, & Korschun, 2008 and Bauman, et. al., 2012). These needs include safety and security, belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

4.1 Safety and Security

Employees' safety and security needs are fulfilled simply by providing an income to meet material needs. It is true that these needs can be satisfied by relatively any steady-paying company. However, it can be argued that individuals exchange work for pay feel a greater sense of security with organizations that have perceived morality. This stems from the peoples' belief that if the organization is moral, then it will be less likely for the company to exploit them or treat them unjustly. As such, employees' need for safety and security are gratified to the extent by which CSR is believed to be moral (Bauman, et. al., 2012). Thus, companies which choose to utilize CSR principles, when compared to companies that abstain from CSR, are more inclined to satisfy their employees most basic needs. The remaining higher needs can also be attained simply employing CSR.

4.2 Belongingness

The need for belongingness is achieved through CSR by society's affirmation of upholding meaningful values. This benefit can be explained by the self-categorization theory (Bauman, et. al., 2012). The theory discloses the psychological mechanism behind when and how individuals change their self-concept, which consists of both personal identity and social identity. It suggests that individuals will suppress personal identity to the extent to which they develop their social identity, and vice versa. Individuals' social identity expands as their perceived similarities between themselves and the group increases (Turner & Reynolds, 2011). The more similarities individuals see between themselves and the group, the more secure they feel about their position within the group. In effect, research shows that individuals favor groups which they deem comparable to themselves, particularly if these similarities are positive. Employees are better able to identify shared values when companies actively carry out esteemed values through means such as environmental conservation, charitable contributions, and diversity efforts (Bauman, et. al., 2012). As such, it can be inferred that if CSR principles are employed and communicated consistently throughout the organization, then current and potential employees may identify a favorable fit in the organization which can enhance their desire to commit to it. In effect, companies that utilize CSR not only appeal to individuals with similar values, but can also be a viable means for recruitment and retention by making them feel like they belong in the organization.

4.3 Self-Esteem

Peoples' need for self-esteem can be satisfied by forming a favorable social identity (Bauman, et. al., 2012). As such, employees are more likely to join or stay in a company if they

feel as though their work establishes them with a good reputation (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). Companies can cultivate this response by implementing CSR. When employees identify intergroup similarities with individuals in the organization and the organization itself, they find a source of pride and value as well as a source of validation for their own personal beliefs and values (Bauman, et. al., 2012). As mentioned, it is easy for employee to identify these similarities when companies are properly conducting CSR. Furthermore, employees can enhance their self-esteem if their work gives them a sense of accomplishment. (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). When an individual works for a socially responsible company, their efforts directly fulfil a purpose that extends beyond the company. By contributing to the socially responsible company, they are also contributing to the surrounding community and the benefactor social causes which the company supports. Thus, CSR not only provides employees with a positive social reputation, but also offers them a greater sense of accomplishment.

4.4 Self-Actualization

Theories on human nature suggest that people aim to have more than just materialistic satisfaction and social status and recognition (Bauman, et. al., 2012). The final tier of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is self-actualization, which employees can attain self-actualization by achieving a rooted sense of purpose in the workplace (Sadri & Bowen, 2011; Bauman, et. al., 2012). It is known that individuals in this tier are often searching for philanthropic or humanitarian opportunities (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). As such, it is suiting that CSR assists in facilitating this optimal fulfillment through the very nature of its principles.

Many companies which employ CSR internally offer employees with a more hands-on approach to making an impact on the world as a whole.

Reputable CSR companies achieve this through volunteer grant programs, charity donation matching, and paid company volunteer days (Sadri & Bowen, 2011). One exemplary organization which enables employee self-actualization is Microsoft. Microsoft donates \$25 per volunteer hour to the non-profit organizations that each employee donates their time to. Microsoft also matches employees' donations to their charities of choice at a 1:1 ration for up to \$15,000 per year (Microsoft Careers, n.d.). This demonstrates that the organization not only upholds CSR as a whole, but it also strives to support the individual causes that each of its employees care about. Thus, the company provides its employees with the opportunity to fulfill their need for self-actualization at a more personal level. As such, it can be shown that CSR enables organizations to foster their employees' hierarchy of needs, even at the highest levels.

5. Employee Loyalty

The fulfillment that CSR fosters for employees can prove to provide them with ample motivation to work productively and stay committed to their company. Like consumers, employees' loyalty towards their organization can be both attitudinal and behavioral (Brammer, He, & Mellahi, 2014; Bauman, et. al., 2012). Employee attitudinal loyalty can be summarized through the extent of their job satisfaction (De Roeck, Marique, Stinglhamber, & Swaen, 2014). Job satisfaction is characterized by an employee's positive emotional state towards their overall job setting (Tziner, Oren, Bar, & Kadosh, 2011). Meanwhile, employee

behavioral loyalty can be demonstrated by their following commitment to the company. This is especially important for companies as organizational commitment is a significant factor in turnover intention and turnover itself (Stanley, Vandenberghe, Vandenberg, & Bentein, 2013). With a combination of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment,

5.1 Attitudinal Employee Loyalty

Job satisfaction is dependent upon whether individual needs are met at the workplace. As the principles of CSR require that an organization uphold a high level of responsibility towards social and natural environment, it is only natural for the organization to also uphold the same level of responsibility towards its employees (Tziner, et. al., 2011). In other words, CSR is an understood extension of organizational ethics and organizational justice, which contribute towards greater job satisfaction and positive attitudinal loyalty (De Roeck, et. al., 2014; Tziner, et. al., 2011). In addition, CSR enables employees to find meaning in their job and feel more accomplished in their duties (Vlachos, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2013). As such, CSR enhances job satisfaction not only through ethical and just company culture, but also through making the work itself more enjoyable.

5.2 Behavioral Employee Loyalty

Employees' higher job satisfaction helps to explain why CSR leads to lower turnover rates (Tziner, et. al., 2011). Furthermore, turnover and turnover intention can be avoided by increasing organizational commitment as organizational commitment is negatively related to the turnover process (Stanley, et. al., 2013). As recruiting and training new staff can be an expensive process, it is important for organizations to consider the importance of

strengthening organizational commitment. While research shows that CSR is positively related to employee commitment in general, it is important to acknowledge that employees' organizational commitment can be broken up into four specific subsets: emotional attachment, moral obligation, sacrifice related with leaving, and lack of employment alternatives (Glavas & Kelley, 2014; Stanley, et. al., 2013). Fortunately, CSR can strengthen each of these subsets of organizational commitment.

CSR contributes to emotional attachment as it makes work-related activities more enjoyable since employees feel a greater sense of pride in their company (Glavas & Kelley, 2014). CSR also enhances employees' moral obligation to the organization as their contributions to the organization are tied towards their contributions to greater society (Bauman, et. al., 2012). Thus, when companies employ CSR, the sacrifice their employees make when leaving affects not only their own well-being, but also their personal input into society. Furthermore, as CSR is a source of fulfillment for the highest of employees' hierarchy of needs, it limits the amount of employment alternatives which can effectively fulfill these needs on the same levels when they leave the organization (Sadri & Bowen, 2011; Bauman, et. al., 2012). In effect, CSR is a powerful tool for holistically encouraging organizational commitment.

While many companies may struggle to employ initiatives which fulfill these needs or neglect to fulfill them altogether, others are able to cover the hierarchy of needs simply by embodying CSR. CSR companies are better able to fulfill various levels of employees' needs including (1) safety and security from gratifying material needs, (2) belongingness through

the expansion of social identities and society's affirmation of meaningful values, (3) self-esteem from forming a favorable social identity and (4) self-actualization for achieving a deeper sense of purpose through global contribution. As such, organizations with CSR initiatives are better able to acquire a competitive advantage for talent acquisition and retention.

6. Benefits to the Organization

6.1 Brand Image

Brand image can be defined as the complete set of consumer perceptions about a brand (Ulusu, 2011). Brand image has its own dimensions including brand perception and brand association (Popoli, 2011). As such, how consumers perceive CSR and how these perceptions impact what consumers associate with the brand should be investigated for a comprehensive understanding of CSR's affects on brand image (Pfrogner, Rohrmann, & Farshid, 2013). Research shows that, overall, consumers have favorable perceptions towards brands that embody CSR when implemented genuinely. These perceptions align with the findings that consumers associate a positive brand image with each of CSR's dimensions, which includes ethics, philanthropy, and sustainability. However, out of each of these dimensions, ethics has the strongest positive affect on brand image (Gudjonsdottir, Jusubova, Ekelund, & Tjärnemo, 2015). These findings help demonstrate that CSR initiatives can be leveraged to improve an organization's brand image.

6.2 Employee Performance

Over the course of the past twenty years, substantial research has shown that CSR

positively influences organizational performance. In fact, further research shows that when their organization is socially responsible, employees are more inclined towards favorable employee behavior such as enhanced employee creativity and job performance (Brammer, et. al., 2014). The extent of the employees' creative and performance effort is dependent upon their psychological safety and security, a need which CSR is proven to fulfill (Bauman, et. al., 2012; Brammer, et. al., 2014). Employee efforts towards productivity and creativity are also dependent on how much employees are able to identify with the organization; another requisite which CSR gratifies. These favorable employee behaviors are important achievements for organizational performance as they help to establish competitive advantage (Glavas & Kelley, 2014).

6.3 Financial Performance

Evidence has been found which demonstrates, through a regression analysis, a causal effect of CSR on financial performance in general. This includes an increase in shareholder value and operating performance. When each of these dimensions are studied in detail, studies show that CSR can enhance sales growth, labor productivity, employee satisfaction, and efficient technologies or production processes (Flammer, 2015). However, it should be also noted that research findings on whether there is a direct positive link between CSR and profit maximization, in particular, have been mixed. Some researchers report that there is a positive link while others find a negative link or are unable to find any link at all (Young & Makhija, 2014). These differences in results makes these studies largely inconclusive. Therefore, while the implementation of CSR is found to enhance financial performance in

general, it is still important that further research be conducted to emphasize the direct ties between CSR and profit maximization. Establishing this relation could prove to be extremely helpful as companies consider whether they should practice CSR.

7. Managerial Implications

7.1 Investment

The findings in this report suggest that organizations should seriously consider investing into CSR initiatives for benefit not only externally from consumers, but also internally from employees. On the consumer end, CSR generates a favorable consumer response and economic returns (Brammer, et. al., 2014). For employees, CSR positively influences talent acquisition and retention, along with general satisfaction and productivity (Vinerean, Cetina, & Dumitrescu, 2013; Tziner, et. al., 2011; Brammer, et. al., 2014). Obviously, the company's primary investments should be towards carrying out its CSR initiatives. However, the organization's next investment objective should be directed towards properly communicating its CSR efforts in order for it to make a significant impact on its consumers and employees (Brammer, et. al., 2014).

7.2 Communication

For consumers, investments must be made in communicating the company's differentiation by its CSR efforts. This act works towards creating a brand personality which consumers can relate to. This involves a heavy emphasis on transparency with the company's operations (Hunjra, Azam, & Humayoun, 2011). It would also be beneficial for the company to invest in marketing the impact their consumers' contributions are making on society by using

the company's product and/or services. This tactic assists in connecting consumers to the brand. It also helps consumers feel as though they are making a responsible contribution to society through their consumption habits (Moon, Lee, & Oh, 2015).

For employees, an organization's external CSR activities should also be heavily emphasized in the organization's internal communication channels. The more employees are able to socially identify with the company, the more secure and productive they are. CSR assists in enhancing this social identification process (Brammer, et. al., 2014). Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that consistent internal communication occurs in order for this process to ensue. It is also important that leadership exhibits charismatic qualities. Research shows that when managers engage in behaviors such as inspiring a common vision, instituting challenging objectives, and tending to their employees' well-being, subordinates associate their work obligations with their societal obligations to do good (Vlachos, et. al., 2013).

7.3 Monitoring

An organization's investments into CSR efforts should be measured and monitored in order to justify the organization's CSR investment and pinpoint opportunities for any additional investment. For external CSR performance, monitoring tools should emphasize results and objectives such as revenue increase, reputation rankings, and economic performance. However, from an internal perspective, additional measurements should also be put into place to measure employee identification, security, and commitment (Brammer, et. al., 2014).

8. Conclusion

In essence, CSR enables companies to differentiate themselves to both consumers and employees by providing them with the opportunity to align their values with the organization. This opportunity not only appeals to customers' and employees' motivations, but also strengthens their loyalty towards the company. CSR is able to appeal to consumers' intrinsic needs as well as employees' hierarchy of needs. CSR's ability to fulfill these needs provides them with ample motivation to exhibit loyalty towards these organizations both attitudinally and behaviorally. This combination of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty for both consumers and employees is essential for organizational success. Specifically, organizational success from CSR can be showcased by an increase in brand image, employee performance, and general financial performance. Nonetheless, in order to achieve this organizational success through CSR, it is important that the companies make strides to invest in CSR initiatives and communication channels. Finally, when implemented, the companies must establish ways to monitor the success brought on by CSR.

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