

CSR and philanthropy



Corporate responsibility is a term we encounter more and more often nowadays. However, there are still many people who are unfamiliar with it. They don't realize that many companies are trying to make life better for those who really are in need and for many non-profit organizations. Their efforts often focus on the environment and community life issues.

The problem is that less informed people understand corporate responsibility activities as merely PR. We have to admit that sometimes this is the case, but more often it is not. Companies just want to become good corporate citizens as they are also a part of a community. And there's the dilemma: shall we talk about CSR or not? If we do, it is PR; if we don't, we will not spread the good ideas and experience.

During the last few years, there has been evident progress in reactions to this matter. People are learning that corporate responsibility is not just about giving out money for projects that help others. This is just one important part of all the whole strategy. Firms incorporate responsibility in their business as an inseparable part of their plans and life. For big companies CSR is something natural, though there is still much to be done to promote the importance of corporate responsibility within small and medium size businesses.

We are very proud that we have been active in corporate responsibility for several years. We have also transformed ad-hoc money donations into a planned grant program. Our employees are encouraged to take part in volunteering projects to use their skills and knowledge for a good cause. We also looked very closely at ways we could reduce our negative impact on the environment and the results we can see are very encouraging.

Our small grant program has been very successful. More and more employees have applied to support NGO projects, they are helping themselves or their own private projects for the communities. There is a relatively big group of people who take part in each volunteering project. We have supported both the "Our Town" and "Help the Calvary" projects for more than five years. In addition, every year we provide pro-bono professional services for several NGOs.

One can say that offices can't help much in keeping

our environment healthy, but everyone can take small steps like waste separation. Bigger projects, such as reducing paper usage, can be a real challenge. However, easy steps like double-sided printing, enhancing e-communications and the like are very efficient. For us they meant a reduction of two-thirds in our paper consumption. Using power efficient electronics can also have a big impact.

Firms see that today's students are future employees or entrepreneurs who will work for this society and economy and it's extremely important for them to be prepared and well educated.

Our aim is to enhance trainings and education not only to our employees, but also to professional public and current students by numerous teaching sessions and workshops. This is very important as today life-long study is vital for each professional. For students we organize various competitions during which they can use the knowledge and skills they've learned during their studies. The competitions are very popular

among young people as they can also use this opportunity to promote themselves to their future employers and use this experience for their future career.

Another very important part of CSR is taking care of our employees. There are basic rules stated in the Labor Code, but there are also many possibilities to do more to make people feel good. If they feel good, they are more efficient, which is one of the company's goals.

Responsible companies look to the future as well. They see that today's students are future employees or entrepreneurs who will work for this society and economy and it's extremely important for them to be prepared and well educated. That's why we often ask professionals from different areas of the economy to teach and present at universities and high schools. We believe this is beneficial because these professionals don't keep their experience for themselves—they offer it to the younger generation.

It is extremely important for all of us to realize that our contributions to society make a difference. We are all part of this community and if we work for it, we can also help ourselves make life and the environment around us better. In my own experience, I have seen how a firm's active approach inspires people to think and come up with new ideas and bring them into their private lives as well. The number of aware people is growing and growing. We are all responsible and need to spread these ideas further.



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