

What Is CSR Anyway?

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December 2009

More recently, terms referring to companies' responsibility to society seem to be as common as general business terms like human resources or accounting. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), social investment and sustainability are terms that seem to be on the tip of everyone's tongues these days. But what does it all mean?

According to *CSRWire*, an online newswire for corporate social responsibility news, CSR aligns business operations with social values, integrating the interests of stakeholders into the company's business policies and actions. CSR focuses on the social, environmental, and financial success of a company—the triple bottom line, with the goal being to positively impact society while achieving business success.¹

Today, consumers, business leaders and government leaders insist companies take on more responsibility for their policies and practices impacting employees, communities, and the environment. There is a lot of negative press about companies being held responsible for their actions and impact to society and environment. But there are many companies that don't get enough attention that have maintained more socially responsible practices as a way of doing business today and for a sustainable future.

Companies that invest more in socially responsible practices are not only making a positive impact but they are ensuring the future of their business in a positive way. Food and beverage companies like Coca-Cola and PepsiCo whose products depend upon access to clean water have taken a role in improving access to clean water globally through financial investment, education and action. Global companies with operations in communities where diseases like HIV/AIDS or malaria plague the communities conduct programs to reduce disease rates. Companies like Anglo American, a UK based mining company, have experienced significant success in reducing disease rates in communities where they operate². Companies that see this kind of success often replicate their programs to implement in other areas with high disease rates to share their success. As a leader in farm-to-market success, Land O'Lakes shares its skills and experiences to assist farmers, cooperatives and agribusinesses in developing countries, with the goal of generating economic growth, improve health and nutrition and alleviate poverty.³

These are a few examples of large companies engaging in corporate social responsibility, providing business value as well as social impact. All companies, large and small can benefit from CSR activities. The activities must be strategically planned to align with the companies' mission and values while positively impacting society and/or the environment.

About Mosaik Strategies, LLC.

Mosaik Strategies is a Washington DC area based consulting firm that specializes in creating profitable solutions through strategic company-community relationships, meeting the needs of the organization and creating the greatest overall impact. For information on planning CSR strategies or other services, go to www.mosaikstrategies.com.

¹ What is CSR? *CSRWire*, 22 January 2003, www.csrwire.com.

² *Anglo American continues its global leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS*, Anglo American Press Release, 02 December 2009, http://www.angloamerican.co.uk/aa/media/releases/2009pr/world_aids_day. *Anglo American Report to Society 2008*, <http://www.angloamerican.co.uk/aa/development/sdreports/gr/>.

³ Land O'Lakes, Inc., International Development Division, *Innovative Solutions for Global Prosperity*, <http://www.idd.landolakes.com>.