The Events Industry Managing Corporate Social Responsibility in a Global Context

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ABSTRACT This paper addresses the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and seeks to add to the literature on stakeholder theory and corporate sustainability in an era of globalization. Companies are obliged to develop strong cultures of CSR because it is the 'right' thing to do and not simply to enhance their strategic objectives. CSR should be based on a genuine virtuosity and a desire to engage with the moral values of society. As events are on the increase globally, and thousands of specialist events are happening, CSR will enable events management companies to achieve new levels of reach and brand awareness. Where communities of practice exist and where companies interact with societal players on an ongoing basis, CSR initiatives will be more meaningful. Organisations generally exist within a wider context and need to become more closely engaged with society and use organisational as well as personal employee knowledge in the pursuit of greater business value and societal benefit.

INTRODUCTION

If we follow a virtue approach to ethics we encounter the notion of a "community". The characters of people and indeed companies, are not simply developed in isolation but are integral parts of the communities in which they operate. As companies develop, their 'personalities' are influenced by the myriad of values that the community in which they operate espouse. Companies can thus become role models for other companies. Following the Aretaic or Virtue approach to ethics, companies are driven to heed the needs of society. Companies are social entities and are orientated towards specific strategic goals while they are linked to the external environment (Daft 2001). Porter and Kramer (2006) state that all businesses need to consider adopting CSR initiatives as a matter of course. Furthermore, CSR is not to be regarded as a philanthropic gesture but rather as a strategic business imperative (Carroll and Shabana 2010). CSR is an issue which is not new but which was debated by the Classical Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato and which is echoed in the African humanitarian philosophy of Ubuntu. For a business, outcomes should include humanitarian aid to society, provision of education to assist governments, sponsorship and employee volunteer schemes (Brammer and Millington 2003), not simply lip-service to such ideas. Moral truths are in essence relationally established but without *telos*. Contemporary society copes best by creating an artificial end of utility and by postulating human rights notions which are artificial. Despite this, society and business share tacit knowledge that is a part of humanity and this leads to the creation of a moral fabric. Our moral judgement enables us to make conditioned responses to aspects of cause and effect. We create ethical culture based on moral truths which are relational responses that every person is accountable for. However, since the 1990s, globalization is challenging our paradigms. The more individuals feel a link with others around them, the more responsive and responsible they feel towards them. Consequently they are likely to conduct themselves in an ethical manner (Noddings 1984). Companies are forced to perceive the community at large as part of an interdependent network within which they operate (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1989). It is vital for business to engage communities as stakeholders and to promote CSR (Ballard and Banks 2003).

Event industry companies need to bring into line and incorporate CSR into their business stratagems. This is very often a huge task and the implication is that event industry companies thus need to interact with the environment in which they operate. They are being challenged more and more to take cognisance of the fact that they have responsibilities far beyond the production of goods and services for society for the benefit of shareholders. CSR has a number of definitions but for the purpose of this article it is "a commitment to improve societal well-being through discretionary business practices and

contributions of corporate resources" (Du et al. 2010). Companies thus have greater responsibilities in terms of CSR. What is increasingly driving these responsibilities is globalization and regulation, as well as customer awareness. There is thus an urgent necessity for a shift of paradigm in many companies (Korhonen 2002). In any case, the application of CSR will certainly enhance an event company's competitiveness and reputation" (Hill et al. 2008). Event management companies need to concede that all their stakeholders have a right to satisfy their basic needs and wants, and this is irrespective of the event management's capability or readiness to attend to them (Gummesson 2008).

Whether a business is an event management company, an event catering company, professional event organizer, exhibition organizer or production company, each has a great role to play in the society in which it operates. How companies relate to all stakeholders such as shareholders, customers, employees, the environment and the community at large are increasingly under the microscope. It is a given that companies need to make profit in order to survive but it is necessary for them to carefully consider if they are in fact working against the needs of the society in which they are operating. Business ethics, which includes strong CSR initiatives, is becoming a far more sophisticated issue in our society today. Many event management companies desire to support local communities as much as possible, and thus assign financial and further resources to embark on CSR activities that often extend beyond legal and regulatory obligations (Moon and deLeon 2007). CSR is in such cases used as a strategic response (Wood 2010).

In 2003, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) of South Africa released its Responsible Tourism Handbook containing a range of guidelines for *inter-alia*, event managers to develop their businesses while simultaneously considering the social and economic benefits to the local communities as well as the impact of their operations on the environment in which they function. Event managers were called upon to give consideration to the economic impacts before embarking on event tourism initiatives. They were also called upon to seek to maximise local economic benefits by increasing the amount of linkages and by limiting leakages where these occur. Local communi-

ties should be involved in and ultimately also benefit from event tourism. Event management organisations need to promote local marketing and event product development whilst promoting equitable event business and pay fair prices. In terms of social guidelines, DEAT called upon event managers to make every effort to involve and muster the support of local communities in both planning and decision making initiatives. The further suggested that event managers need to take cognisance of potential local impacts and cultural diversity and demonstrate requisite sensitivity to the indigenous cultures. From an environmental perspective, impacts need to be limited when considering event tourism and all natural resources should be used in a sustainable fashion. Biodiversity should be maintained at all costs. Once such measures as these which are described above are in place, then it is conceivable that responsible event tourism is in place. In communities, there are many events that are run by a community itself and these serve the purpose of improving social linkages and are in themselves an opportunity for the community involved that it can pull together for the greater good. These include arts and music festivals and sports events, for example, and could also include even simple tree planting ceremonies. Events clearly encourage social interaction and develop and maintain social contacts. It is such social interactions which are missing and which spur on events planners to increase the opportunities for social and physical interaction in a community. Events are often major driving forces when it comes to improving the relations between local communities emanating from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Events thus play a huge social role and have a huge potential to solidify linkages between members of a community and they stimulate many other social activities and more especially tourism, which benefits a community economically. Events may thus be one way in which to enhance the economic status of an area which is in economic decline, and regenerate it ranging from short-term to long-term benefits and the economic and social benefits that are accrued could vary considerably (Law 1993). Event management companies seeking greater credibility and a positive reputation through their activities, need to create broader interactions with a wide range of stakeholders and more especially the communities in which the events they plan are

to be conducted, Such interactions will engender a clearer understanding and recognition by the participants (Biehal and Sheinin 2007). Failing to include relevant stakeholders will not bear fruit for the event management company (Carroll and Shabana 2010). The expectations of the public of companies' social contributions are rising, while the perceived performance of companies on social goals is progressively declining. Companies are called upon to assist in poverty alleviation and in meeting and addressing a wide range of community needs (Miller 2006). Approaching CSR without depth and vision can destroy a company's efforts to establish its brand and to enhance its reputation. Consequently, more than half of the world's 250 largest companies now issue separate CSR reports as standard operating practice (AME 2006).

If we follow Friedman's proposition (1970), that a company has maximization of profits for the benefit of its shareholders, as its only area of social responsibility, and that all social problems should be solved by the state, (Margolis and Walsh 2003) then, society is in trouble. Companies should be undertaking social initiatives while maximizing their profits. They need to see beyond profits and follow practices that include all the stakeholders, who are basically all those who have an interest of some or other sort in a company (Kaler 2003). Corporate misconduct and degradation of the environment cannot go on if society is to improve. It is essential for companies to address wider social issues that affect society and to adopt CSR practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The process involved in learning and understanding the milieu and growth of a selected field of study proffers insight into, current trends and prospective possibilities. Qualitative research in particular, is able to provide in-depth knowledge from multiple viewpoints along with its emphasis on, empathetic understanding, and this is particularly the case, with regard to the "how" and "why" of CSR related phenomena and experiences as they relate to the Events industry. The qualitative historical method of research which has been adopted by the researcher in this article applies to all fields of study because it includes their derivations, development, theories and problem areas, etc.

The researcher was involved in a systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence so as to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning CSR. Research was evaluative in the sense that it identified the encompassing whole of which the phenomenon or problem of CSR is part. It then explained the phenomenon in terms of its role or function within the broader Events industry. Secondary research was undertaken including the use of secondary sources including books, websites and articles concerning CSR and its management in the Events industry in a global context. A number of vital questions were addressed by the research, inter-alia:

1. How can Events industry companies can become vital CSR drivers?
2. How can companies in general be more accountable and develop sustainable business by employing CSR?
3. Why should companies create CSR longterm strategic plans.
4. What are the implications of Event companies CSR initiatives for stakeholders?
5. Which model questions could be considered in the development of CSR strategies in companies?
6. What are the possible obstacles that could be encountered and which CSR initiatives could a company adopt in its quest for sustainability?

The researcher identified a need for certain knowledge in the Events industry in terms of CSR and its application. Relevant information about the problem was gathered after which the researcher then tentatively explained the relationships between various factors. A rigorous analysis was made of relevant evidence in the literature that was reviewed. The researcher then selected, organized, and analysed the most pertinent evidence, and then drew conclusions and recorded these in a meaningful narrative so as to elucidate the value of CSR application in the Event industry.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

A South African Case

The events market is diverse and ever-changing and can have a huge impact on an area. An example of such an event is the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, held annually in South

Africa, which is the largest event of its kind in Africa. This quaint Eastern Cape city is transformed into the country's creative melting-pot for 11 days each July. From theatre to dance, opera to cabaret, fine art to craft art, classical music to jazz, poetry readings to lectures, every art form imaginable is represented in one of the most diverse festivals in the world. And there's something for every taste, with techno raves, mediaeval banquets, craft fairs, cyber cafes, carnivals and buskers (www.places.co.za/html/grahamsfest.html).

The National Arts Festival, which is organised by the Grahamstown Foundation, began in 1974 with about 60 items. Currently there are about 600 events on the Main and Fringe programmes and close to 1800 performances on offer. Initially, supporters came in their hundreds; now it is estimated that they total around 100 000. They attend for either personal, social or organizational reasons. It is thus a major opportunity for event organizers to show CSR sensitivity and do play a role building a better future for society. They can show innovation, environmental awareness and social responsibility towards especially sustainable development, in how they organize the event. Grahamstown is an ideal venue for promoting social upliftment. On the hillsides around the town, there are poor dwellings and shacks as far as the eye can see, and these serve as a constant reminder of how harsh racial policies divided societies in Apartheid South Africa. Buildings from the colonial era on the one hand, contrast with squatter shacks. The festival tends to attract the attention of the media, both local and foreign, as well as government and can thus be used to boost CSR initiatives and influence public opinion concerning the plight of the poor on a national scale.

CSR Acceptance Today

CSR is accepted as a major component of a company's growth and leads to its sustainability. CSR entails economic, ethical and legal responsibilities as well as philanthropic activities (Carroll 1989). The ethical responsibilities are not *per se*, legally required, but promote philanthropy on the part of companies which are keen to uplift society in terms of quality of life and who seek the welfare of the community at large. The problem is that moral 'truths' are not easily rationally identified. Companies thus do not easily see the effects of their actions on society. If they do see the effects, they are not always certain as to what the relational response should be. There is an increasingly global propensity for companies to be more concerned with issues directly relating to CSR (Halme et al. 2009). Globalization is encouraging the promotion of the idea of partnership among organizations and this should be extended to include more communities and governments (Rugman and D'Cruz 2000). This is despite the notion that Westerners and Asians for example, literally tend to experience the world in different ways (Nisbett 2005). There is thus a good reason to question the assumptions about what could be termed universal models when it comes to CSR initiatives.

In society today, moral values are twisted to suit the needs of many companies that intent on enhancing only the 'bottom-line'. Many totally avoid their responsibilities concerning the legal requirements of the society within which they operate. More alarmingly, many show no or very little concern at best, for the social and environmental impacts of their business operations on local communities. Clearly, companies have adopted a plethora of positions regarding CSR and these appear in a spectrum ranging from high degrees of involvement in communities to low degrees of involvement (Barney and Griffin 1992). Some companies do nothing to help solve societal problems and promoting CSR, and are not too concerned about avoiding legal requirements. Others, while observing all the legal requirements for their operations, are reluctant to become involved in society and do nothing concerning CSR. They generally view the government as the custodian of the people and the environment. Then there are those who exhibit very high degrees of CSR. These companies see themselves as part and parcel of society and are only too keen to make meaningful contributions to uplift the society in which they operate. As events are opportunities for a leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal choices of everyday experience, and have played a great role in society since the beginning of recorded history, they are ideal for promoting CSR (Shone and Parry 2004). Some companies make vast contributions to non-profit organizations, provide humanitarian aid and assist the governments in its endeavours on many fronts (Brammer and Millington 2003).

How Events Industry Companies Can Become Vital CSR Drivers

Andrews (1987), asserts that corporate strategy is indeed far more complex than simple economic alternatives. The decisions that managers make and take on a daily basis affect and impact a wide range of stakeholders, some of which are directly impacted while others may be indirectly affected. Managers are now more concerned with making important corporate changes that have significant strategic implications and these must of course be coupled with carefully crafted business strategies that consider aspects such as CSR (Coutinho and Macedo-Soares 2002). Events industry managers and their companies should thus view CSR as a business opportunity as they can increase their revenue behind services. Although events may vary considerably and are highly diverse in nature, they share a common denominator: thousands of attendees, thus providing the event organizers who promote and manage them with great scope for CSR initiatives. Companies should seek to create within their employee base an occupational community which works not only for the bottom line, but for 'profits, people and the planet'. Such a community would be: '[A] group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; who identify (more or less positively) with their work; who share a set of values, norms and perspectives that apply to, but extend beyond work related matters; and whose social relationships meld the realms of work and leisure' (van Maanen and Barley 1984).

More importantly a community of practice should be created (Wenger, 1998) in which there are a number of important indicators that CSR is well on track. These could include inter-alia sustained mutual relationships between society and companies and a shared idea of engagement, in which there are rapid setups of problems at hand that require urgent addressing without petty talk. This also requires a clear understanding of each participants role and what may if what is proposed as a solution to a problem can in actual fact be workable. The participation of a company in society is thus the social experience of existing in the world in terms of belonging to social communities and by being actively engaged in socially benefitting endeavours. This is invariably broader in scope than mutual engagement (Wenger 1998). Some of the literature is different to Wenger's framework in the sense that there is no direction or support from management for CSR initiatives. Nonetheless there is still a community of practice in that there are often non-company controlled communities of practice such as 'hobby' networks, 'business opportunity networks', 'best practice networks' or 'professional learning networks' (Büchel and Raub 2002) in which employees are involved in CSR initiatives as volunteers. Only once management is directly involved is there a formally constituted community of practice that can be more beneficial to society due to the scale of what can be achieved.

There is thus generally a broad consensus that companies have a great role to play in helping society fulfil basic human rights and in finding sustainable solutions to societal problems such as poverty, disease and lack of education. Companies that have CSR initiatives in place have great opportunities to differentiate themselves in a highly competitive global marketplace. For example, they could adopt cause-related marketing (CRM) which is an integration of public relations advertising which shows linkages between a company and especially non-profit organizations (NPOs). These initiatives are tax-deductible and tend to foster long-term ties between the company and the society in which it operates. Companies provide income and employment and help broaden the tax base for the development of governmental services, but need to do more to help promote human development. Whilst it is important to provide shareholders with value through high performance and good growth in profits, it is equally important to develop and nurture partnerships with the community at large and to maintain good relationships. Partnerships between large companies and governments and society in many countries are considered to be to the benefit of all parties (Rugman and D'Cruz 2000). To engender a true and meaningful "organizational learning," in matters relating to CSR, managers at all levels and in particular the upper echelons of companies must introduce and uphold norms and values that often challenge prevailing organizational cultures where only the bottom line matters. Leaders of companies require strongly affirmative vision, highly advanced skills in change management matters, and, more particularly a desire to serve the broader community in which their companies operate.

According to Schwartz and Gibb (1999), in the last century, and more particularly the 1980s, companies tended to place an enhanced emphasis on stability and efficiency and shareholder value was considered to be the only one that mattered. However, things have changed somewhat nowadays as CSR is assuming a much greater importance. Society now has greater expectations of what it is that companies should be doing and there are many stakeholders who experience the impacts of company operations. In essence companies have a moral responsibility towards society at large and what they do has to be both within the bounds of legality and legitimacy.

Companies promote a favourable climate for CSR to flourish by putting in place ethical actions such as entrusting what they are passionate about protecting in society to every stakeholder, including employees, suppliers, the community at large, service providers, customers, trade unions, government, shareholders, directors, trade associations, non-governmental bodies (Freeman 1984). This implies that enhanced communication is in place to make all the stakeholders aware of a company's CSR activities. It is a relatively new notion to include local communities as 'stakeholders'. In the 1990s, once non-financial reporting became the vogue, effective communication with stakeholders was considered to be important to a company's image. However, it was only at the turn of the century that local communities were viewed as important stakeholders (Elkington and Wheeler 2003). As the ethical compass of society is eroded daily, there is huge consensus that ethical behaviour and morality are grounded in beliefs and values which are embedded in the particular community, culture, and society in which individuals reside. Piper et al. (1993) state that while ethics may be taught, ethical behaviour entails personal attitudes and values, belief, opinion and actions, all of which are entrenched in a the possession of a strong sense of self in relation to those around one. Companies are increasingly held accountable by society for negative impacts they are having. Those that do not face this reality are placing their operations at risk as positive stakeholder perceptions are very important for long-term growth in which a company's performance is maximised. After all, long-term shareholder value is the aim of a business striving for success. Sustainability will, for one,

increase revenues and reduce risk. By taking into consideration diversity in society and accessibility, sustainability is promoted.

The reputation of a company will be enhanced as it improves the environment to the benefit of the local economy. Companies that invest in the community play an increasingly important role in helping governments meet both their short and long-term development goals in areas such as education and health care. Countries in Africa where there is extreme poverty and where the environment is degraded and child mortality rates are soaring, require company interventions in which businesses assist governments to face head-on, the plethora of problems plaguing society. Responsible business practices in which companies are accountable are non-negotiable. Employees must have a meaningful Code of Conduct to adhere to, which they should have input in developing and should be governed effectively by responsible directors who are bound to true financial reporting. Integrity in business management and transparency are imperative if CSR is to be at all successful. Transparency is vital to many aspects of CSR. Only through effective reporting can real transparency be possible and marginalised people not be exploited by ruthless companies. More and more companies are involved in 'sustainability' reporting as an aspect of CSR. In 2004, 45 percent of the Global Fortune top 250 companies published non-financial reports (CAER 2004).

Companies invariably possess inherent skills that can address many societal problems and are indeed the cause of many of these problems. By investing in local communities and helping societies to help themselves, companies are also creating stronger economic climates in which their products and services can be purchased, to the benefit of all stakeholders. Clearly companies must take the lead, in partnership with governments, to address social issues and create environments in which people can develop their full potentials and lead meaningful lives that are productive. Educational and economic opportunities for local communities can be developed through the promotion of civic responsibility and the improvement of fundamental human rights.

Many companies help develop economic opportunities for the 'have-nots' by equity investment in SMME's (small to medium sized

enterprises) and by the creation of employment opportunities. CSR initiatives can target education and health services, help improve the quality of public sector governance and promote a climate for business that is less prone to corruption. There can be drives to encourage diversity awareness and to eradicate gender biases. Initiatives such as these will ultimately encourage new market development and give companies greater powers of advocacy.

How Can Companies be More Accountable and Develop Sustainable Business?

A company has to first and foremost, understand how it fits into society and how its employees are relational beings. Accountability should not be perceived as something in the macro-environment that affects a company, but rather as an inherent part of the micro-environment which is the business and in which certain ethical and moral practices have to be nurtured (Painter-Morland 2005). A moral and philosophical basis should govern a company's CSR policy and it should be guided by equity, human rights and justice (Margolis and Walsh 2003). If CSR is to be useful to an events company which applies it, it needs to be structured in such a way so as to support the company's business actions in terms of their strategic plan and must be located well within the local community's as well as the customers' limits of acceptable actions. An event should be a value proposition for all stakeholders and any CSR activity must seek to enhance societal well-being (Du et al. 2010; Mackey et al. 2007). Accountable companies know about right and wrong behaviour and understand their role in a partnership with government in growing sustainable communities. They see that partnerships with society can achieve mutually beneficial synergies and ultimately contribute to innovation and business development. The critical factors for creating useful social strategies, increased market opportunities, improved internal resources and competences, organizational values based on ethical foundations which are cognisant of the broader societal needs, and which encompasses all stakeholders, ought be directly related to the core business of every organisation (Zadek 2005). In a nutshell, a discourse including stakeholders enhances the reputation of a company and goes a long way to increase the 'bottom-line' and also serves to give a strategic competitive advantage to the company involved (Alsop 2004). Including stakeholders thus contributes to sustainability.

Why Companies Should Create CSR Long-Term Strategic Plans

Globalisation has greatly increased pressure on companies to implement CSR initiatives. All the stakeholders, especially institutional investors, are increasingly aware of what companies do and thus apply pressure on companies to do 'the right thing'. Companies should become a community of practice when it comes to CSR initiatives. A community of practice is: '*groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis*' (Wenger *et al.* 2002).

Companies are increasingly called upon to align their business strategies with CSR and community involvement (Hess et al. 2002). In any event, an ever-increasing number of companies are publicly demonstrating taking great pride in promoting CSR. This has become so pronounced that a global standard to monitor best practices and ethical manufacturing of products has been developed- Social Accountability 8000 (SA 8000). In terms of this standard, companies are monitored on aspects of business conduct including health and safety, compensation, disciplining of employees, the promotion of human rights and the eradication of cheap and inhumane child labour. Companies that meet a required standard in terms of meeting the standard are awarded a certificate which attests to their CSR practices (Fabian 1998). A company's actions should deal with profitability and the social issues, and any strategies that are crafted need to take cognisance of the social aspects plaguing communities and this could be in a competitive milieu. Generic social issues need to be considered (Porter and Kramer 2006) as once these are part and parcel of a company's strategy it is likely that a competitive advantage will be gained over company's that fail to heed the call of the disaffected and poor. Event Management companies seeking to develop some value from CSR initiatives must include representatives of all the stakeholders in their CSR planning (Murray and Montanari 1986).

Any CSR initiatives employed by companies help improve the investment climate and this is especially true in developing countries. They promote healthy societies in which education increases and in which companies face less risk to productivity due to political upheaval that is the direct result of extreme inequality. By partnering with governments and other stakeholders in society, companies are able to focus on their core strengths and provide specific knowledge and experience to bear on a venture. Research clearly supports the notion that any CSR activity should be understood in a broader and long term outlook covering more than mere financial performance (Carroll and Shabana 2010). There is thus an all encompassing management philosophy in the wake of CSR initiatives that acknowledges a societal interdependency that makes available direct and indirect relationships with a company's performance (Carroll and Shabana 2010). Consequently, where CSR is a market positioned positive social behaviour, it improves a company's all round performance in terms of the UN Global Compact. There are a wide range of implications for Event Management Company CSR stakeholders (see Fig. 1).

How to Go About Creating a CSR Sensitive Company

Companies should embrace principles such as human rights promotion, effective leadership, action to address societal problems and the creation of an *esprit d'corps* between all stakeholders. They need to muster stakeholder support for their CSR initiatives to be effective and should also implement new workplace practices in line with human rights and the protection of the environment in which they operate. In this regard, the United Nations Global Compact must be adhered to. In terms of the Global Compact, companies are asked to put in place core values
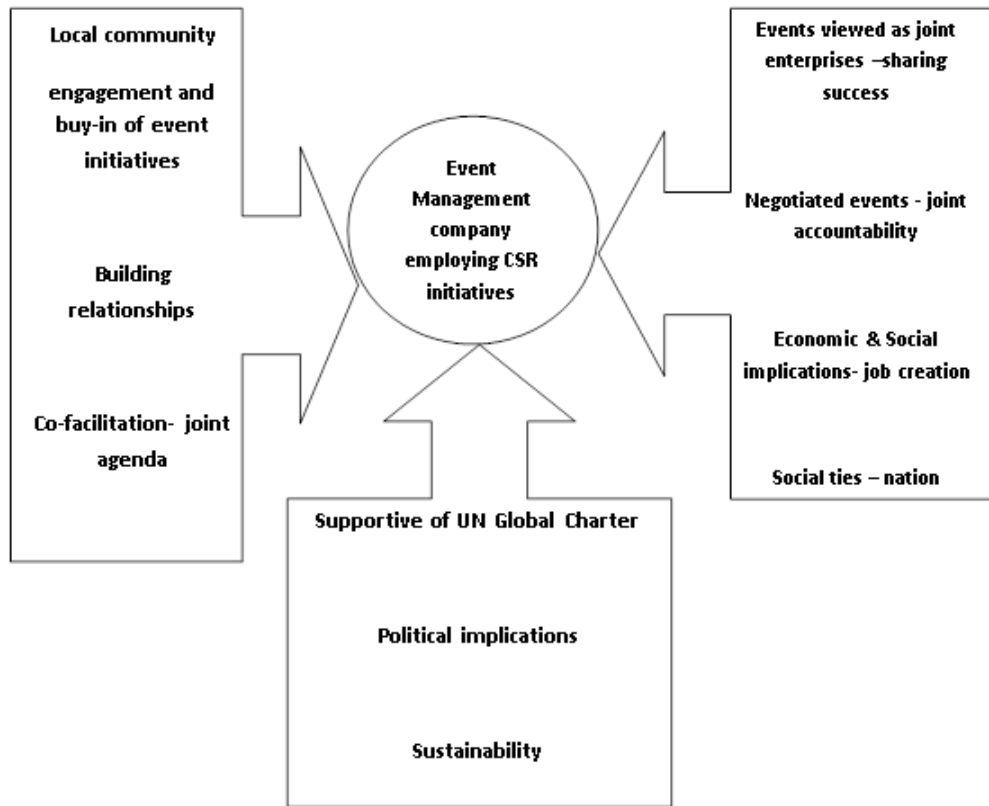

Fig. 1. Implications of event companies CSR initiatives for stakeholders

that are in line with anti-corruption, fair labour practice, observation of human rights and environmental sustainability initiatives. Child labour, forced labour, environmental degradation, discrimination in employment practices, the right to collective bargaining as well as bribery and corruption are all considered in the Compact and businesses are required to support initiatives to foster a better world for all (UN Global Compact 2005). It is argued that only by engendering morally and ethically correct core values can businesses hope to survive and prosper. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to be striven for which centre around people and which should be supported by governments' as well as civil society. Some of the MDGs include the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger in especially depressed areas such as Africa, the provision of education up to at least primary school levels, the reduction in child mortality rates, the combating of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, provision of fresh drinking water for the billions of people without it and an improvement in gender equality and the empowerment of women in the global community. Without the input of companies, goals such as these cannot hope to be met. It is companies that possess the inherent skills that are needed to meet objectives and targets of the UN Global Compact. In much of the literature on CSR research there is a lack of distinct CSR measures that can be taken especially relating to Events Companies. Below follows a series of questions that need to be asked in terms of CSR as well as potential obstacles and suggestions for CSR initiatives

A Model for the Development of CSR Strategies in Companies

In order for effective CSR initiatives to be undertaken it is imperative to develop a strategic plan based on the following questions as pointers:

1. What CSR *opportunities* exist in terms of savings due to eco-friendly products and services?
2. Can CSR initiatives be adapted or integrated into the existing operational practice?
3. Does the company wish to earn customer loyalty through products and services and also through helping society to solve problems?
4. Does the company want to make greater profits?
5. Is the company serious about retaining performance driven employees?
6. Is the environment and culture enabling in that ethics is freely discussed and unethical conduct put under the spotlight?
7. Is employee performance monitored and evaluated?
8. Are employees listened to?
9. Does the company want to be seen to develop partnerships with society and to deliver superior service on an ongoing basis?
10. Is the company bent on keeping good relationships with all stakeholders where it is operating and does it have a good reputation with both internal and external stakeholders?
11. What are the *strengths* and weaknesses of a company?
12. What would it cost to/not to implement CSR?
13. What are the *threats* to CSR in terms of regulation and non-involvement with communities?
14. Does management 'walk the talk' and communicate morally and ethically appropriate values that guide decision-making or are there major inherent *weaknesses*?
15. What are the values of the business founders?
16. Is the company seen as a 'good neighbour'?
17. Does management share its vision through effective communication on how it wishes to operate?
18. Is management committed to and involved in CSR policies?
19. Are employees responsible enough to handle CSR initiatives?
20. Are there mechanisms in place to ascertain employee buy-in?
21. What are the main business drivers in terms of a company's reputation and risk management?
22. Is the company committed to both domestic and international standards in its operations (i.e. UN Global Compact as well as governmental legislation)?
23. Does the company apply and consider UNESCO and ILO initiatives?

24. Is a company's style of governance enabling for CSR initiatives to be put in place or are there weaknesses in this regard?
25. Are there meaningful stakeholder relations in place already?
26. What are the estimated costs of CSR initiatives?
27. Do employees feel proud working for the company?
28. Does the company communicate its CSR efforts without being seen as superficial and self-serving?

Once these questions have been addressed, initiatives can be prioritised and the company's values can be publicised in a Code of Ethics which can govern CSR initiatives.

Possible Obstacles to CSR Endeavour

1. Lack of commitment or interest on the part of the hierarchy in a company resulting in inertia.
2. Lack of expertise, knowledge and skills on how to go about promoting CSR.
3. The view that only government is responsible to society.
4. Lack of coordination between business and government initiatives.
5. A young business struggling to survive and still trying to 'find its feet.
6. The belief that profits will fall if CSR is undertaken and CSR activities do not have a strategic intent.
7. Lack of awareness of environmental and social impacts.
8. The low status of CSR as a business imperative in a company.
9. Form partnerships with both public and private sector organizations to address the many environmental and social challenges in the communities in which events are undertaken.
10. The communication of CSR is not as efficient as other market communications of the company.

Possible Events Industry CSR Initiatives

1. Develop innovative events with a CSR emphasis as core business practice.
2. Encourage support of a community project such as the Nelson Mandela Childrens' Fund.
3. Introduce 'new' concepts of caring for others in an increasingly materialistic world.
4. Support community objectives with respect to the upliftment of the poor.
5. Aid fund-raising for charity.
6. Involve the community-at-large in public development projects of the state.
7. Create new events in remote and poverty stricken areas, thus giving back to society.
8. Promote the exchange of ideas between culturally diverse groupings in society.

CONCLUSION

CSR implies voluntary business strategies that go beyond the legal requirements of the environment in which a company operates. Companies are increasingly called upon by society to make commitments to it based on consultation between employers and employees that are adapted to suit particular societal needs. Companies that promote CSR initiatives are complementing laws and social dialogue and the work of governments. Industry and government must, via constructive and responsible dialogue, jointly develop and establish strategies aimed at improving the sustainability of society. The core purpose of business could well be a social goal, but does not necessarily have to be in order to make a meaningful contribution to societal development.

Adopting a CSR perspective that fits in with the strategic objectives of a company for profitability and growth in the long-term is commendable as it enhances community trust in a company. Companies that offer only lip-service to CSR are soon discerned to be doing so. It is thus imperative that when undertaking CSR initiatives, a company must be totally committed to its supportive role of society, rather than simply putting up a façade of concern. Companies must honour their moral duty to society and to all the stakeholders in their business operation and will increasingly be called upon to do so as public opinion swings more and more towards fairness and justice. By being moral and ethical companies will become more effective and successful. There is clearly a bottom-line pay-off for CSR sensitive events industry companies'.

In the next decade, the competitiveness of companies will increasingly hinge on their social awareness and how they adopt CSR initia-

tives. They thus now have a golden opportunity to promote their own sustainability by respecting human rights and by protecting the environment. This is the challenge facing today's business leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Businesses promoting special events development, which have a developmental impact, can showcase CSR as an image-enhancing mechanism which may improve the environment or have some other image transformation impact such as developing public involvement in charitable endeavours, or fund-raising for special projects.

The competitive advantage that is derived from CSR is evidenced via the influence of what it does in improving society and how it seeks to enhance its image. Its success is also measurable by its ability to retain employees and by its reputation in society in terms of for example, adherence to the principles of the UN Global Compact of 2007, assuming it has sought to embrace these principles.

Companies must consider the critical importance of strategically embracing CSR as this will bring about improved financial results as well as provide a strategic competitive advantage. They will simultaneously be providing much needed help to society in its desire to limit the extent of social problems that plague communities.

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