



Engaging your people on CR

Start at the top

If you're going to engage people in the organisation, the message has to come from the top. The message is that, by looking after each other, customers, the community and the environment, everyone benefits. Directors have to believe in CR activity, do it and be seen to do it.

Create a can-do culture

Establish a culture that enables people to play a part. So that people can say, "I want to work for this company" or "This isn't right, let's do something about it." Create the communication and action channels to ensure that things can happen quickly.

Understand it's about you

Make CR part of everyone's job description. See that people understand CR is about them, not just about corporate reporting. Create examples in your own department and make sure that people are aware of what you're doing to help, whether it's using recycled paper or taking part in charity events.

Get the balance right

Ensure people understand how they can get involved with the corporate programme and show them how they can contribute. But also let them create and carry out their own local initiatives. Support them in their contribution to both corporate and local CR initiatives and report these widely through communications channels.

Champion the champions

Set up a network of champions as advocates and educators for the programme who can get out on the front line making sure it's fulfilled. Make sure these people have respect at all levels – their role is not to police but to help everyone meet the company's mission. Give the champions the support, training and time they need to fulfil their CR roles.

Speak people's language

If people want to call their CR activity Investing in the Community, let them. It doesn't have to be called CR, CR, or sustainability. De-mystify CR and translate it into language that will work in the organisation.

Show people the difference they are making

CR reports are new but already being treated as boringly as annual reports and read as widely (i.e. hardly at all). Keep shouting about CR through existing communication channels and give feedback on successes and awards. People need to know they're making a difference.

Make it real

Create an interesting look, feel or style that is instantly recognisable as a CR commitment. Give people something to talk about and work with that symbolises the difference they are making. CR will work better if people engage in it because they want to rather than because they have to.

Make it second nature

Don't spend thousands of pounds taking people quad-biking when you could be identifying a local charity where your organisation trades and giving it support. Show by example that CR is built into the way the company does business. Make doing something for the community your first thought.