

# **CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance**

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Duygu Turker

# Managing Social Responsibility

Functional Strategies, Decisions and Practices

 Springer

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*I also believe that if a permanent peace is desired, the international measures that will improve the conditions of societies should be taken. The welfare of all humanity should prevail over hunger and oppression. World citizens should be educated in a manner that keeps them away from envy, greed, and hatred.*

**Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**  
*The Founder and Visionary Leader of  
Turkish Republic*

*This book is dedicated  
to Ayşe and Hayati Türker*

# Foreword

The ultimate question one has to pose when discussing business practice is whether business serves society. As my coeditors and I asked in *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility* (Wiley Blackwell, 2011): Is society better off or not for having this institution? The creation of wealth, jobs, services, and products are all good arguments that can be used to answer this question. Still, it is also recognized that business activity in general can have negative effects. Hence, the issue of regulation comes up. This is more often than not met with the business response that laws and regulations are unnecessary as voluntary *CSR* activities will rectify the problems. Negative effects of business will be offset through *CSR* engagement, thus helping to serve the public interest. One of the central assertions of *CSR* is, of course, that the organization has an obligation to the environment and society more generally.

To take social responsibility has been highlighted as being the ethical right thing to do for corporations and also something that can improve the ability to reach organizational goals. The principle of enlightened self-interest sees corporate concessions and *CSR* as helping profit, particularly in the long run. It is a practice that can help create a better reputation, forestall regulation, secure a more stable societal context for business, and reduce operating costs by avoiding conflict.

Still, a basic insight is that when you treat *CSR* as an instrument for reputation and self-interest, it will not come across as a “good deed” in itself. It is, however, hard to fault business for its inbuilt, instrumental agenda. Instead, we can try to make this institution work for the best of society by harnessing the corporate concern for reputation and regulate where needed. We set ourselves up for failure, however, if we only use what is ultimately an economic perspective to solve problem of social or systemic nature. The challenge is of course the balancing act.

In this volume, Duygu Turker takes a closer look at the very concept of *CSR*, the drivers behind the development toward *CSR* as a lingua franca, how *CSR* is linked to particular functional areas within corporations, what impact *CSR* has, as well as how *CSR* can be linked to sustainable development goals. The book provides a welcome, comprehensive literature review and gives ideas for how *CSR* can be integrated in

strategy, corporate governance, production and operations, marketing, finance and auditing, as well as human resource management. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, and the discussed theories are more than able to inform both business decisions and practices in these areas. It could potentially help provide for a better society, making business serve society, rather than the other way around.

University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway  
November, 2017

Øyvind Ihlen



# Preface

There have been a growing number of challenges that have detrimental and irreversible impacts on humanity and nature in the last centuries. It is clear that many of these problems are created by our current business system that is inherently capitalistic and exploitative since the dawn of industrial revolution. Therefore, companies as well as governments, which allow them to follow solely their own short-term profits by ignoring the larger societal and environmental interests, should be held responsible to address the underlying causes of these problems. Despite the urgent need for a paradigm shift in our ongoing production/consumption system, there is still confusion on how to convert it into a more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable one. By the introduction of sustainable development goals (SDGs) as of 2015, the United Nations (UN) provides the common set of objectives for sustainable development and invites all individuals, organizations, and nations to work collaboratively toward the achievement of those goals. Although the development of a common reference point for all entities is important, the alignment of those goals with current business strategies, decisions, and practices can be enabled by the adoption of a viable approach.

The current study proposes that such a great transformation at business organizations can be conceptually, theoretically, and practically grounded on the notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Although there is a tendency to think CSR as a separate business activity, which independently develops some principles or engages in some philanthropic projects, it can go beyond this limited role. Adoption of a truthful and honest approach toward the SDGs can be achieved by the integration of a socially responsible perspective into all functional strategies, decisions, and practices. CSR must be interwoven throughout the entire organization and across its units by diffusing a socially responsible philosophy and enabling the cross-functional knowledge transfer beyond the traditional boundaries at organizational strategy, structure, or culture. By using an implicit metaphor, the notion of social responsibility is itself a liquid and living thing like *blood*—it is pumped by the heart (CSR philosophy) and goes round the body (all functional areas). The brain (top management's commitment to CSR) coordinates its well-functioning to energize the entire

body (organization). In doing so, the circulatory system in an organization, which is consisted of departments, units, teams, and individuals, is refined and revitalized in the light of CSR.

CSR as a blood is not an entirely perfect analogy, but it works how the notion of CSR might spread across the functional areas and then become an interplay among them. This book views CSR as a social innovation as well as the drivers of other social innovations and figures out its integration at the functional and cross-functional strategies, decisions, and actions from the systems perspective. The interactional and iterative approach at CSR adoption may unveil its idiosyncratic nature at organizations; each organization becomes a unique example of its kind by configuring diverse inputs and creatively transforming them into different outputs. Therefore, CSR turns into a dynamic and interactional landscape across organizational units and an emergent learning process wherein the functional strategies, decisions, and practices may create an invaluable synergy. It is believed that developing a socially responsible mind-set at business organizations can help us to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Yasar University, Izmir, Turkey  
November, 2017

Duygu Turker

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There are no words sufficient to express my deepest gratitude to my dear parents, Ayşe and Hayati Türker. They teach me that the only way of living a meaningful life is to back up my thoughts with an ethical insight and work hard to fulfill my aspirations. I also want to thank the members of my dearest family—my husband Serkan, my sisters Yelda and Yasemin, my niece Deniz, and my nephews Kerem Tuna and Yiğit for their constant support and patience during this process. They are the ones who make me laugh even at the most stressful moments.

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# Contents

## Part I Concept and Drivers

<b>1</b>	<b>Corporate Social Responsibility: A Conceptual Model</b> . . . . .	3
1.1	CSR as a Social Innovation . . . . .	4
1.2	CSR from the Systems Perspective . . . . .	6
1.3	Linking CSR and Sustainability . . . . .	9
1.4	Conclusion . . . . .	11
	References . . . . .	13
<b>2</b>	<b>What Are the Drivers of Social Responsibility?</b> . . . . .	17
2.1	Individual Level . . . . .	17
2.2	Organizational Level . . . . .	21
2.3	Environmental Level . . . . .	25
2.3.1	Task Environment . . . . .	26
2.3.2	Institutional Environment . . . . .	28
2.3.3	Global Environment . . . . .	30
2.4	Conclusion . . . . .	31
	References . . . . .	32

## Part II Integrating Social Responsibility into Functional Areas

<b>3</b>	<b>Strategy and Social Responsibility</b> . . . . .	43
3.1	Social Responsibility Strategy . . . . .	44
3.2	How to Align CSR into Strategic Directions . . . . .	46
3.2.1	Proactive . . . . .	49
3.2.2	External-Orientation . . . . .	50
3.2.3	Internal-Orientation . . . . .	51
3.2.4	Minimalist . . . . .	52
3.3	Conclusion . . . . .	54
	References . . . . .	55

<b>4</b>	<b>Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility</b> . . . . .	59
4.1	The Paradox of Conceptualization . . . . .	61
4.2	Pioneering the Ethical Responsibility . . . . .	63
4.3	New Responsibilities in the Nexus of CG and CSR . . . . .	64
4.4	Conclusion . . . . .	66
	References . . . . .	69
<b>5</b>	<b>Socially Responsible Production and Operations Management</b> . . . . .	73
5.1	Operations in the Nexus of External and Internal Environments . . . . .	74
5.2	Managing Socially Responsible Operations . . . . .	76
5.2.1	Facility Location and Management . . . . .	76
5.2.2	Product . . . . .	78
5.2.3	Process . . . . .	81
5.2.4	Procurement and Supply Chain Management . . . . .	83
5.3	End-of-Life Products: Closed-Loop Supply Chain . . . . .	87
5.3.1	Services . . . . .	88
5.3.2	Stakeholder Collaborations: Clusters, Networks, Allies . . . . .	91
5.4	Conclusion . . . . .	92
	References . . . . .	93
<b>6</b>	<b>Socially Responsible Marketing</b> . . . . .	99
6.1	Societal, Sustainable, Socially Responsible Marketing: A Conception Problem . . . . .	99
6.2	Guiding Principles . . . . .	101
6.3	Socially Responsible Marketing Mix . . . . .	102
6.3.1	Product . . . . .	102
6.3.2	Pricing . . . . .	104
6.3.3	Customer Communication . . . . .	106
6.3.4	Distribution . . . . .	108
6.4	Conclusion . . . . .	109
	References . . . . .	111
<b>7</b>	<b>Socially Responsible Finance and Accounting</b> . . . . .	115
7.1	Financing CSR . . . . .	116
7.2	Socially Responsible Investment . . . . .	118
7.3	Measuring and Monitoring CSR . . . . .	122
7.4	Communicating and Reporting CSR . . . . .	124
7.5	Conclusion . . . . .	127
	References . . . . .	127
<b>8</b>	<b>Social Responsibility and Human Resource Management</b> . . . . .	131
8.1	Towards a Policy Framework . . . . .	132
8.2	Ensuring Fundamental Human Rights . . . . .	135
8.3	Management of Ethical Issues . . . . .	136
8.4	Philanthropy Towards/with Employees . . . . .	139
8.5	Conclusion . . . . .	140
	References . . . . .	141

**Part III Outcomes and Future Implications**

- 9 What Are the Outcomes of Social Responsibility? . . . . . 147**
  - 9.1 Individual Level . . . . . 148
  - 9.2 Organizational Level . . . . . 148
  - 9.3 Environmental Level . . . . . 151
    - 9.3.1 Task Environment . . . . . 151
    - 9.3.2 Institutional and Global Environment . . . . . 152
  - 9.4 Conclusion . . . . . 154
  - References . . . . . 155
  
- 10 Global Challenges: Aligning Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Goals . . . . . 161**
  - 10.1 Goal 2: Zero Hunger . . . . . 162
    - 10.1.1 Socially Responsible Foods . . . . . 162
    - 10.1.2 Support to Urban Farming . . . . . 162
  - 10.2 Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being . . . . . 163
    - 10.2.1 Fight Against Health Problems . . . . . 163
  - 10.3 Goal 5: Gender Equality . . . . . 163
    - 10.3.1 Support to Women Entrepreneurship . . . . . 163
    - 10.3.2 Distorted Body Image Among Women . . . . . 166
  - 10.4 Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure . . . . . 166
    - 10.4.1 Digitalization and New Responsibilities . . . . . 166
    - 10.4.2 New Business Models for Sharing Economy . . . . . 168
  - 10.5 Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth . . . . . 169
    - 10.5.1 Supporting Inclusive Politics for Migrations . . . . . 169
    - 10.5.2 New Digital Platforms for Learning and Employment . . . . . 169
  - 10.6 Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production . . . . . 170
  - 10.7 Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions . . . . . 171
    - 10.7.1 Stand for Justice . . . . . 171
  - 10.8 Conclusion . . . . . 172
  - References . . . . . 172
  
- Index . . . . . 177**

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# List of Figures

Fig. 1.1	CSR from system perspective .....	7
Fig. 1.2	Integrating socially responsible strategies, decisions, and practices into functional areas .....	8
Fig. 1.3	Consolidating the efforts of major societal actors towards SDGs .....	11
Fig. 1.4	Traditional (top) versus new continuum (bottom) for approaches .....	12
Fig. 3.1	Four strategic positions to align CSR into business strategy .....	47
Fig. 5.1	Operations, factors, and stakeholders in the internal and external production environments .....	76
Fig. 7.1	Integration of domains in sustainability and social responsibility communication .....	125
Fig. 10.1	The gender gap in entrepreneurship in OECD as of 2015. Source: OECD (2017) .....	164



# List of Tables

Table 1.1	Sustainable development goals .....	10
Table 2.1	The ten principles of the UN Global Compact .....	31
Table 3.1	Examples of SRS .....	45
Table 3.2	Nestlé crises, responses, and commitments .....	53
Table 5.1	Supplier code of conducts examples (BASF) .....	85
Table 5.2	Exemplarily GS activities .....	89
Table 6.1	Socially responsible objectives of pricing, promoting, and distribution components .....	105
Table 7.1	Five companies spending most on education .....	117
Table 7.2	Sustainable and responsible investment assets by region: growth and proportion to total managed assets (2014–2016) .....	121
Table 7.3	Growth of seven strategies (2014–2016) .....	121
Table 7.4	GRI’s topic-specific standards .....	126
Table 10.1	CSR projects for women employment in Turkey .....	165