

## **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Description of the Field**

“Corporate Social Responsibility” emerged in the 1990’s as a new buzz in the business world, and since then has developed into a field with substantial and diverse career opportunities. The term ‘corporate social responsibility’ or CSR has been coined to define how companies behave in social, environmental and ethical contexts. Corporate social responsibility is about integrating the issues of the workplace, the community and the marketplace into core business strategies. Driving this emerging field are customers who choose products with a good reputation, investors who put money into a company with an exemplary record and firms which invest in the future or training of their employees, and in employers interested in mutually beneficial relationships with local communities.

Career opportunities in CSR reflect the diversity of the field and incorporate the private, public, and non-profit sectors.

### ***Private Sector***

The first place to find CSR-related positions is within companies. ‘CSR’ departments can be located in anything from the public relations, compliance, or legal divisions and be called anything from ‘human rights programs’ to ‘reputation management’ and ‘environmental risk’. Opportunities are also opening up in the large accounting and consulting firms, many of which are trying to compete with the niche CSR consulting firms and offering their own CSR client services. The growth of interest in socially responsible investing (SRI) has also led to opportunities working for companies which screen firms on CSR issues and produce the stock indices and socially-conscious mutual funds. As with strategic CSR consultancies, SRI jobs can be found either within larger investment houses or as independent boutique firms.

### ***Public Sector***

The public sector CSR career options can be found mainly in national government agencies, or international organizations. There are now CSR positions in international organizations such as the UN’s International Labor Organization and the World Bank (Business Partners for Development). National governments have also started building CSR departments, often in their international development branches such as USAID, UNDP in the US, and DFID or the Foreign Office in the UK. The British government has even gone as far as instituting a Minister for Corporate Social Responsibility. Internationally, both the UN and the World Bank have become very involved in promoting CSR. Through the UN, there is the International Labor Organization, the Global Compact, and some initiatives within the UNDP. Both the World Bank and World Bank Institute have their own initiatives in CSR, corporate governance and private sector development.

### ***Nonprofit Sector***

There are a wide variety of NGO’s, industry associations, think tanks, and academic institutions engaging in learning and/or advocacy within the CSR arena. These include everything from the group Business for Social Responsibility to Harvard Business School’s Center for Social Enterprise. Such groups promote and examine the use of CSR concepts within the private and public spheres.

### **Career Paths and Entry Salaries**

There is no such thing as a typical career path in CSR. A career in this field could start in big business, working in the compliance department of a firm such as Levi Strauss, and continue in the public sector, designing government policy, and go onto a niche consulting company providing CSR client services.

Entry salaries vary as much as career paths and could vary from the lower end working for a CSR non-profit to a better remunerated position in the legal department of a corporation. Between these extremes are corporate positions and those with international institutions such as the World Bank and the UN.

### **Demand**

While many of the world's industrial giants have been under the environmental and safety spotlight since the 1970s, scandals like WorldCom and Enron have broadened public and media interest in just how companies go about their business. Consumers are demanding more information on everything from where and how their goods are produced to the environmental record of the companies they invest in. Both Dow Jones and FTSE now produce specialist indices to provide investors with information on which companies score highly on CSR-related concerns. The governments of some countries are even setting new reporting requirements which require companies to assess and monitor their wider social, environmental and ethical performance. There is some debate among CSR experts on the strength of customers' CSR demands, both in "socially responsible" niche markets and in mainstream markets.

The large natural resource extraction companies such as Shell, BP and ExxonMobil were the earliest to address CSR issues and hire CSR professionals, due to the nature of their products and the places they sourced them. Later, footwear and apparel companies were forced to address the problem of sweatshops in their supply chains in the 1980s. The spotlight is widening: companies as diverse as Hershey's and Hewlett Packard are looking very carefully at their wider responsibilities, because of adverse publicity or because they see the obvious business benefits from the approach. Job opportunities in CSR have expanded as a result. In addition, there are companies, such as Timberland, Ben and Jerry's, and Stonyfield Farms, which have put CSR performance at the center of their brand image.

As a corollary to the growth in interest of CSR among these companies, the large consulting and accounting firms are now offering their own CSR-related services. These include Arthur D. Little's environment and risk services, Ernst and Young's environmental and sustainability services, KPMG's sustainability and advisory services and social auditing services, and PwC's reputation assurance practice. Even the large development consulting companies such as Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) whose clients are usually government agencies are getting in on the game due to the huge impact so many MNCs have in developing world communities.

The demand for people with an interest or experience in the CSR field is growing at a fast pace as communications improve and a demand for increased transparency and accountability in the corporate sector increases. In addition, recognition of the important positive role that the corporate sector can play in the communities it touches has encouraged companies themselves to become involved, spurred on by governments and the non-profits.

It should also be noted that the commitment to CSR and hence supply of related jobs is, at present, more developed in Europe than it is in the US, although the market is growing rapidly on this side of the Atlantic.

### **Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field**

There are no prerequisite qualifications to enter in this field. Because the field itself is relatively new, direct experience in the sector is less important than it might be in some other professions. Rather, transferable skills and knowledge is valued, for example a law degree might be necessary for certain human rights positions, or a scientific degree or background to work in environmental CSR.

In addition to content knowledge, it is important to demonstrate a long-term interest in the subject and to be conversant on the current CSR debates. Interest can be shown through extra-curricular involvement in CSR societies and conferences (such as Net Impact), coursework, internships, or a variety of other activities. The CSR community is still relatively small, and it is much easier to network and to become familiar with current issues than in more established fields.

### **Sample Group of Employers**

#### ***Academia and Research***

- Harvard Business School, Social Enterprise Initiative <http://www.hbs.edu/socialenterprise/>
- Kennedy School of Government, Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/cbg/CSRI/>
- Boston College, Center for Corporate Citizenship - <http://www.bcccc.net/>
- KLD Research Analytics, Inc <http://www.kld.com/>

#### ***Associations***

- Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) <http://www.bsr.org>
- Business Leaders' Forum (IBLF) <http://www.iblf.org/>
- Human Rights Business Institute (Denmark) <http://www.humanrightsbusiness.org>
- Net Impact - <http://www.netimpact.org/>
- The Women's Network for a Sustainable Future (WNSF) <http://www.wnsf.org/>

#### ***Consultancies***

- AccountAbility <http://www.accountability.org.uk/>
- SustainAbility <http://www.sustainability.com/>
- PricewaterhouseCoopers <http://www.pwcglobal.com/>
- Development Alternatives Inc. <http://www.dai.com/>
- Foundation Strategy Group <http://www.foundationstrategy.com/>
- Ellen Weinreb Social Responsibility Consulting <http://www.ellenweinreb.com>
- Alternative Consulting <http://www.altconsulting.org>
- LUCITÀ <http://www.lucita.net>
- WSP Environmental Inc. <http://www.wspgroup.com/>
- Fresh Marketing <http://www.freshmarketing.com/>
- The Corporate Citizenship Company <http://www.corporate-citizenship.co.uk/>

### ***Corporations***

- Exxon Mobil <http://www.exxonmobil.com/corporate/>
- Hewlett Packard <http://www.hp.com/>
- Reebok International <http://www.rbk.com/index.asp>
- Home Depot <http://www.homedepot.com/>
- Polo Ralph Lauren Corp <http://www.polo.com/home/index.jsp>
- Starbucks Coffee Company <http://www.starbucks.com/>
- Procter & Gamble [http://www.pg.com/en\\_US/index.jhtml](http://www.pg.com/en_US/index.jhtml)
- Cisco Systems <http://www.cisco.com/>
- The Gap <http://www.gapinc.com>
- Timberland <http://www.timberland.com/home/index.jsp>

### ***International Organizations***

- The United Nations <http://www.un.org>
- The World Bank <http://www.csrwbi.org>

### ***Law Firms***

- Baker McKenzie <http://www.bakernet.com/BakerNet/default.htm>

### ***Nonprofits***

- Verite Inc. <http://www.verite.org/>
- Rainforest Alliance <http://www.ra.org/>
- Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org/>
- CSR Europe <http://www.csreurope.org/>
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Corporate Citizenship (CCC) - <http://www.uschamber.com/bclc/default>

### ***Socially Responsible Investing***

- AccountAbility <http://www.accountability.org.uk/>
- Ethical Investment Research Services (EIRIS) <http://www.eiris.org/>
- SocialFunds.com <http://www.socialfunds.com/>
- Calvert Group <http://www.Calvertgroup.com>
- The Conservation Company <http://www.tccgrp.com/>
- Acumen Fund <http://www.acumenfund.org>

### **Future Challenges of the Profession**

Alongside the increasing interest in and development of the field of CSR there are some challenges of the profession. Like every new field some people have tried to try to downplay its importance and labeled it a 'trend' which may go out of fashion. There is certainly a backlash in some quarters: Nestlé pulled out of some of its commitments and Nike has fought to defend some statements it made back in 1996 about its working conditions. Economic downturn has made honoring CSR commitments difficult for some firms. In addition, there is also much work to be done to make the CSR field itself more rigorous, to find ways to gather qualitative and quantitative information more efficiently and easily and make standards more uniform and accepted in specific sectors. Despite these challenges a momentum behind the CSR 'movement' has been created which would be hard to reverse and people with CSR-related skills and experience are likely to be increasingly sought after.

## Resources for Additional Information

### *Internet Resources*

- Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals <http://strategic-alliances.org> - ASAP serves those who manage strategic alliances in the modern enterprise.
- Boston College's Center for Corporate Citizenship <http://www.bcccc.net/> - features job postings in CSR.
- Business Ethics Magazine <http://www.business-ethics.com/>
- Business for Social Responsibility <http://www.bsr.org/jobs/csr/index.cfm> - helps companies achieve success and demonstrate respect for ethical values; its job listings are from the organization's member companies in the private, non-profit and public sectors.
- CSR Chicks - students interested in CSR jobs can also subscribe to [csr-chicks-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:csr-chicks-subscribe@yahoogroups.com), a listserv that circulates job postings in this field. CSR Chicks is a network of professional women (U.K. based) working in the field of corporate social responsibility.
- CSR Europe <http://www.csreurope.org> is a non-profit organization that helps companies combine corporate social responsibility and business practice. It provides CSR job listings in the US and Europe at private and non-profit firms.
- CSRwire <http://www.csrwire.com> corporate responsibility newswire service
- Ellen Weinreb Social Responsibility Consulting <http://www.ellenweinreb.com/resources.htm> - has a fantastic list of links for CSR jobs
- Ethical Corporation <http://www.ethicalcorp.com> provides business information about corporate social, financial and environmental responsibility, and links to CSR job and internship listings at private and non-profit firms around the world.
- Good Money <http://www.goodmoney.com/jobs.htm> provides investment handbooks on companies with socially responsible records; the firm posts private-sector corporate responsibility job announcements on its website.
- Idealist.org <http://www.idealist.org> A project of Action without Borders contains job and internship listings in economic development, social services, human rights, environment and more. Users can search for jobs by country, state and city.
- Moving Ideas Network <http://www.movingideas.org/content/en/jobs.htm>. Tries to improve collaboration and dialogue between policy and grassroots organizations, and promotes their work to journalists and legislators; the site posts job and internship listings in public policy and public interest work.
- Net Impact: New Leaders for Better Business <http://www.net-impact.org>
- Oxford HR [www.oxfordhr.co.uk](http://www.oxfordhr.co.uk) –is a consultancy that helps agencies recruit for management and specialist posts in the areas of development aid, emergency relief, environmental conservation and ethical business.
- Starting Bloc (for undergraduates, but sponsors many events) <http://www.startingbloc.org>
- Sustainability Practice Network (SPN) <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/SPNetwork/> - A NYC-based forum for professionals working with corporate responsibility and sustainability issues to build a community based on learning, discussion, information and idea exchange.
- The European Business Campaign for Corporate Social Responsibility <http://www.csreurope.org/whatwedo/EABISCSR>

- [http://www.pensionsatwork.ca/english/pdfs/conference\\_2005/goel\\_guide\\_to\\_instruments.pdf](http://www.pensionsatwork.ca/english/pdfs/conference_2005/goel_guide_to_instruments.pdf) - A summary guide of major international codes of conduct on a variety of issues important to socially responsible investing.

### ***Publications***

*Common Interest, Common Good: Creating Value through Business and Social Sector Partnerships* by Shirley Sagawa, et al, Harvard Business School Press, 2000.

*Compassionate Capitalism: How Corporations Can Make Doing Good an Integral Part of Doing Well*, by Marc Benioff and Karen Southwick, Career Press, 2004.

*Harvard Business Review on Corporate Social Responsibility*, Harvard Business School Press, 2003.

*How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, by David Bornstein, Oxford University Press, 2004.

*Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, et al, Back Bay Books, 2000.

*Profits with Principles: Seven Strategies for Delivering Value with Values*, by Ira A. Jackson and Jane Nelson, Currency Publishers, 2003.

*Raising the Bar: Integrity and Passion in Life and Business: The Story of Clif Bar Inc.*, by Gary Erickson, Jossey-Bass, 2004.

*Saving the Corporate Soul and (Who Knows?) Maybe Your Own: Eight Principles for Creating and Preserving Wealth and Well-Being for You and Your Company Without Selling Out*, by David Batstone, Jossey-Bass, 2003.

*Shameless Exploitation in Pursuit of the Common Good*, by Paul Newman and A.E. Hotchner, Nan A. Talese, 2003.

*The Cathedral Within: Transforming Your Life by Giving Something Back*, by William H. Shore, Random House, 2001.

*The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits*, by C.K. Prahalad, Wharton School Publishing, 2004.

*Tomorrow's History: The Collected Writings of Simon Zadek*, by Simon Zadek, Greenleaf Publishers, 2004

*What Matters Most: How a Small Group of Pioneers is Teaching Social Responsibility to Big Business, and Why Big Business is Listening*, by Jeffrey Hollender and Stephen Fenichell, Basic Books, 2006 .