



From the Team:

FIRMAFACTS NEWSLETTER IS A MEMBER-TO-MEMBER FREE BUSINESS HELP & ADVICE SERVICE. IF YOU HAVE ANY HEALTHY AND CONSTRUCTIVE ADVICE, PLEASE EMAIL THE TEAM. THANK YOU!



WHAT IS CSR?

In our line of work, Team is often faced with potentially very successful business ideas yet, no money to realise these goals or, no real knowledge on how to go about doing it. For example, a simple thing such as a logo or packaging needs to be approached in a shrewd fashion so as to compete with established brands already on shelves. The importance of a website or a good and solid marketing plan can never be underestimated. Hence, what generally happens is that the product or service never really gets off the ground or is simply, not successful. This is where corporate social responsibility (CSR) comes and thus far, our members have been utterly incredible in their support. But there can be more. This month, we take a look at what CSR is.

CSR is the responsibility recognised by companies for acting in socially responsible manner. There is no single universally accepted definition of corporate social responsibility, it has generally come to mean business decision making linked to ethical values, legal compliance, and respect for people, community, and environment. CSR accepts a company to go further than required by law so as to provide assistance where possible and:

- treat employees fairly and with respect
- operate with integrity and in an ethical manner in all its business dealings with customer, suppliers, lenders, and others
- respect human rights
- sustain the environment for future generations, and
- be a responsible neighbour in the community and a good 'corporate citizen'.

Over the last 20 years an increasingly large number of business houses have responded positively to the banner of CSR. This has perhaps been partly due to their aspiration to make their operations more ethical. While for the government, the role the businesses can play in the development

of society is quite crucial, the activist community might like to take credit for the growing importance of CSR as a clear victory for their efforts in pressurising the activities of companies. To put the same in other words, companies introduced CSR reports and programmes as a response against damage inflicted on their sale and reputation by attacks from activist groups who aided by 24 hour news media in which corporate wrongdoing has been especially highlighted. While on the one hand this makes compelling news, it puts an ethical pressure on the companies to give back at least a part to society in return what they have gained from it.

On Team's level however, it is critical that members assist where possible to allow other members or new members to grow. What is particularly appealing, is that CSR can be tax deductible if you can prove that the work was done but was not paid for. It is therefore, within our Team, beneficial to be seen as no longer important for you to just make profit. While the concept of CSR has to date been relevant only to the larger companies and Team members, it is not limited to them only. The base of members of Team Namibia have a vast basket of skills and without taking out a cent, it is possible to reduce the taxes you pay, network with potential business partners and assist in fulfilling Team's mandate of a large range of quality products. If any of you are interested in presenting to Team's members or would like to assist if and when needed, do give us a call. We are 100 per cent sure that something will come up in the near future where you can assist. It is also very good for your image, after all!

In the years to come CSR will go on to gain further importance for a number of reasons including the competitive advantage to be garnered by the companies. Even now, companies in Europe and North America are waking up to the strategic possibilities and competitive advantages offered by being an environment friendly company, for example. Customers might be willing to pay more for environment friendliness and for healthy food. Environment friendly and cheaper automobiles, for instance, have attracted public attention. In other words, CSR activities can create value addition.