



Let's leave the world a better place

Corporate Responsibility in Slovakia is developing quickly. We see several larger organizations getting involved, but still mostly in the form of sponsorship and donations. This article offers an overview of corporate responsibility activities at PricewaterhouseCoopers for your inspiration.

Currently, Slovakia has no particular rules or regulations which require an organization to take part in Corporate Responsibility (CR), with the exception of organizations whose business activities are detrimental to the environment. In these cases, the law requires organizations to install rectification procedures to maintain the environment to an acceptable level of satisfaction, or conduct rehabilitation activities.

In cases when businesses are not involved in activities that harm the environment, it is really up to the business to decide whether or not it is their responsibility to give back to the community in which they operate. To make this decision, they may consider a number of questions: Do they have a positive presence in the community? Do they have skills or assets that could benefit the community? Will engaging in CR activities create a more positive work environment for their staff? Are they being left behind as the companies worldwide are meeting CR challenges in full stride?

Reaching out

When we at PwC started with CR in early 2000, we focused on sharing our knowledge and helping the community to deal with issues crucial for their existence and in the heart of our expertise. We lectured to NGOs mainly on financial management issues; we did surveys among NGOs and presented the best practice on how to present their operations in annual reports using busi-

ness language and to justify their activities in order to secure funds from other businesses; we helped them to organize internal finance functions with sharing the best practices; we also organized four years of a special developmental project for students (Model CEO) giving them a chance to get in touch with top leadership in many top businesses in Slovakia.

Only recently did we put a full emphasis into the whole complexity of CR – we focus in our CR strategy on people, community, marketplace and environment. We defined CR for us as the way we integrate social, environmental, and economic concerns into our values, culture, decision making and operations in an accountable and transparent manner and thereby establish better practices within the firm, create wealth, and improve society.

CR Activities

Generally, CR activities can be categorized into three categories: volunteering, pro-bono, and sponsoring and donating.

Volunteering mostly involves getting people from the organization to participate in activities within the community. Very promising activities in this respect are the early projects of Naša Bratislava and Naše Košice organized by Pontis and the Engage Group. Companies support their employees in participating and they also organize volunteer work – and hand-on community help projects. In PwC, when surveying

our staff on CR, this came out as very attractive and important and was fully supported by the staff, but the key barrier for people to participate is time constraints. For that reason, we at PwC provide our people with the opportunity to spend one work day each year participating in hands-on, team-based volunteer assistance to community organizations.

Pro-bono in PwC is about delivering value by sharing our expertise and services are provided from across all lines of service to our charity partners.

Sponsoring and donating are about giving funds for specific and general uses, respectively. The organizations have to decide which of these they are best suited for, and how to conduct activities in a manner that will leave the most significant impact on the community.

Evaluation

One of the key elements of CR

activities is measurement and evaluation of results. Evaluating CR is not about determining how CR activities have bettered the image of an organization. Rather it should look at the outcome of the objectives set in the planning stages of each activity.

Teaming-up

An organization can conduct CR activities with its own personnel and methods, or can seek advice from CR professionals. In such cases, an organization will plan activities together with an advisor, but take ownership and leadership of the project. Sharing CR activities between organizations is another option. The benefit is that it may motivate other organizations to think about how they can get involved with CR activities of their own.

Just imagine if every organization in our community was involved with CR activities, even in hard economic times. The results will be a happy community, a respected business community and an overall great place for your employees to live and work.



*Vanda Šinková
Human Capital Manager
PricewaterhouseCoopers*

