

Vol 1: Issue 2 | Price ₹125/-

# Reputation TODAY

A magazine for Public Relations and Corporate Communications Professionals

## FOCUS

Corporate Social Responsibility

As green  
as it gets

The changing landscape  
of CSR

## INTERVIEWS

**RAMA IYER**

Currently, CSR identity is evolving at two levels - corporate and brand.

**ROMA BALWANI**

There's more dynamism & competitive spirit among companies to outperform in CSR activities.

**N MADHAVAN**

CSR has never been a favourite issue with the media.

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We hope you enjoyed reading the first edition of India's first independent PR print magazine. If you did not get a copy, you may go online and read the online version and subscribe to get your own copy in print. We are delighted at the response and positive feedback we have received so far. We realise we have a long way to go. Several well-wishers who were sceptical about why a print magazine in the age of digital have been appreciative of the effort. We had decided that all the four issues this year would focus on themes that are emerging areas within the Public Relations business in India. In line with that decision we present to you this issue focussed on Corporate Social Responsibility.

CSR is a collection of various activities that include Corporate Philanthropy, Community Relations, Supporting Causes among other things. There is a wide array of information on the Internet about this topic. We have chosen to put the spotlight on it so that an increasing number of communications professionals realise the growing importance CSR plays in the world of business today.

CSR is a much abused term and several individuals and organisations mistake this outreach to either being a publicity tool or a favour being done by one entity to the lesser privileged. While CSR has been used for publicity, the essence of the efforts has been to give back to society and to pay it forward. CSR has been called differently over the years. The newest term is Corporate Citizenship.

Our package includes a cover story put together by senior editor Shree Lahiri who spoke to some of the senior professionals who are well versed in various aspects of CSR. We have a debate page where two young professionals share their perspectives on the subject. We also have the regular features of three interviews where we talk to a consultancy communicator, an in-house communicator and a journalist.

Work has already begun on the third issue which will be distributed at PRAXIS and dispatched thereafter to all subscribers. The team is gearing for the flagship annual event that will take place on September 23rd and 24th in Aamby Valley. We seek your constant support and guidance by sharing with us feedback, writing for the online portal and spreading the word about our existence. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we did putting it together. We hope to improve every passing quarter and become the repository of knowledge on the business that every new and existing professional can tap into.

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### Arthur W Page Society Report - The new CCO: transforming organisations in a challenging business scenario

A report from the Arthur W Page Society examining the new Chief Communications Officer (CCO) explains how the CCO of today has reached a critical juncture.

In *The New CCO*, the Page Society proposes a contemporary framework of the CCO role based on three core dimensions:

- The Foundational CCO, where the CCO is a strategic leader and counselor to the enterprise, capable of leading and advising with a broad stakeholder view in mind.
- The CCO as Integrator, as CCOs are breaking silos and emerging as leaders of and participants in cross-functional collaboration, both within the organisation and across the C-Suite.
- The CCO as Builder of Digital Engagement Systems, for the CCO has an emerging opportunity to devise sophisticated enterprise-wide digital systems for managing engagement with stakeholders at all levels, internally and externally.

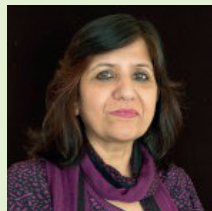


Organisations that adapt to the changes in the ecosystem, get a competitive advantage. The CCO is seen as both monitor of environmental conditions and communicator across the enterprise, putting him at the center of much of the adaptation that takes place. Therefore, the spotlight is on CCOs that help organisations to adapt to new realities, strengthening their role as critical enterprise leaders.

### PRCAI elects a new managing committee, Nitin Mantri continues as President



Nitin Mantri,  
President, PRCAI



Sunayna Malik,  
Vice President, PRCAI



Aman Gupta,  
Secretary, PRCAI



The Public Relations Consultants Association of India (PRCAI), at its elections held at the Annual General Meeting of the Association in May, 2016, elected Nitin Mantri, CEO, Avian Media, as President, Sunayna Malik, Managing Director, Text 100, as Vice President and Aman Gupta, Managing Partner, SPAG Asia, as Secretary.

“Along with the new team, we intend to continue focusing on the areas of knowledge, ethics and expertise and create more platforms for the industry to showcase its feats,” says the new President, Nitin Mantri.

The PRCAI also has a strong regional network and the elected regional chapter heads are Rohit Srivastava, MelCole PR, as Chairperson, North Chapter; Sumathi Chari, PRHUB, as Chairperson, South Chapter; Paresh Chaudhary, Madison PR, as Chairperson, West Chapter; and Basav Bhattacharya, Integral PR, as Chairperson, East Chapter.

PRCAI has been representing the consultancy firms for nearly 15 years. In the past year, PRCAI aligned with the European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA) to set norms for government engagement aimed at a higher level of transparency.





### Highlights of Global Communications Report: USC Annenberg Study

The annual Global Communications Report is conducted by the University of Southern California's Center for Public Relations — in conjunction with the Holmes Report, the Institute for Public Relations, the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, the PR Council, the Worldcom PR Group and PRSA.

USC Annenberg study reveals that the scale of change disrupting the Public Relations businesses long-term growth will be driven by content and digital but will demand different talent, bolder ideas and better measurement.

Globally, PR professionals are optimistic about the future of the business and believe that, over the next five years, they will be expected to deliver more - more strategy, more content, more channels, more creativity and more measurement.

PR business leaders predict the overall agency business will grow from its current size (estimated at \$14 billion by The Holmes Report) to around \$19.3 billion over the next five years. To accommodate that growth, PR firms anticipate people strength will increase by about 26%. By comparison, corporate leaders report that in their last fiscal year, client-side budgets increased by an average of just 2.67% - and they expect budgets to increase even more slowly over the next five years, by just 13.1% by 2020, which represents about 2.5% annual compounded growth. Client-side respondents expect an even smaller increase in headcount - 11% over the next five years. 79% cite tightening corporate budgets as a moderately to extremely important growth challenge.



When asked about specific services that will drive future growth, agency and client-side respondents were focused on increased demand for content creation (81%) and social media (75%), as well as more traditional activities such as brand reputation (70%), followed by measurement and evaluation (60%). Traditional media relations still ranks relatively high for both corporate and agency leaders (55%). However, advertising/paid media (18%) ranked last of 18 possible growth drivers. "Overall, we are sensing a continued optimism about the direction the industry is headed, which is good news for people entering the field," said Fred Cook, Director of the USC Center for Public Relations.

The future of PR is definitely evolving. In fact, only 27% of agency leaders believe by the year 2020 the term "public relations" will clearly and adequately describe the work they do. But, all survey respondents agree that in five years their jobs will become more complex, challenging, and strategic.

### PAFI announces new committee, Rahul Sharma: President



Rahul Sharma,  
President, PAFI



Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) has announced the new committee for 2016-17. Rahul Sharma, President, Rediffusion

Communications, is the new President of PAFI taking over from T S Vishwanath, Principal Adviser, APJ-SLG Law Offices. Harish Krishnan, Executive Director, Public Affairs & Strategic Engagements, Cisco India & SAARC is the new Vice President.

Dr K C Ravi, Vice President - commercial acceptance & public policy, South Asia, Syngenta India Limited, is the new Secretary and Raman Sidhu, Chairman, EBG Federation, India (erstwhile European Business Group), is the new Treasurer.

"PAFI's growth has been remarkable and this year the focus will be on capacity building, not only for our members, but also for many who aspire to become public affairs professionals," says Sharma.

Since its formal inception in 2012, PAFI has been actively promoting public affairs as a profession and organising forums to exchange views and share experiences, with the belief that public affairs will play a significant role in organisations, as well in India's economy.



## CONCLAVE REPLAY

### Role of Communications and Reputation Management

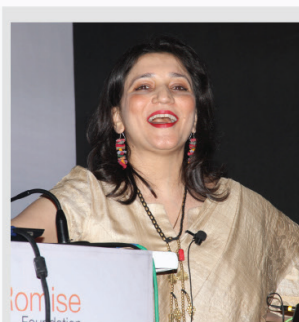
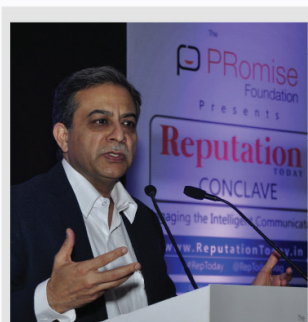
The first edition of the Reputation Today Conclave held at Vivanta by Taj, Gurgaon on April 20, was a huge success with speakers like Banmali Agarwala, President & CEO, GE South Asia; Yatish Rajawat, Founder and CSO, Local Circles; Nikhil Pahwa, Founder, Medianama; Vijay Nair, CEO, OML; Sairee Chahal, CEO, Sheroes and Vivek Mehra, MD & CEO, Sage Publications.

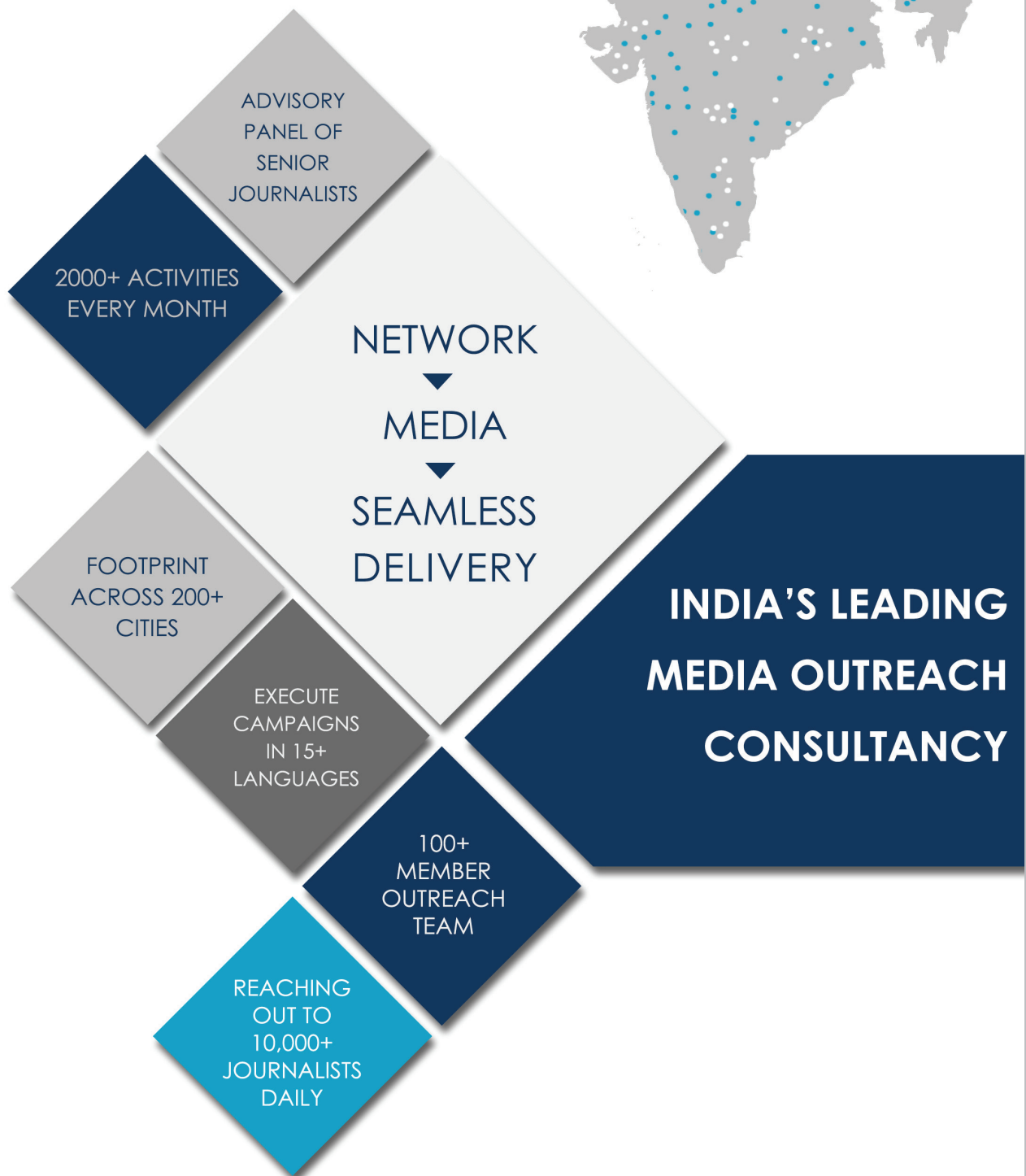
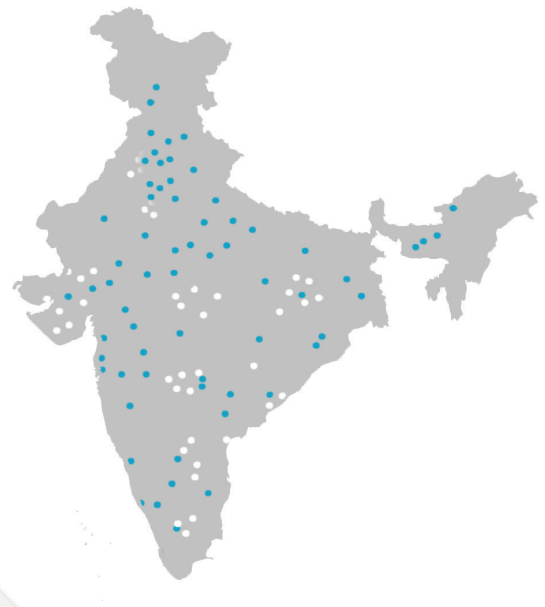
The audience witnessed engaging discussions on the Role and Power of Communications, Community Media, Crisis Management, Golden Rules for Reputation Management and Net Neutrality.

The first print issue of the Reputation Today magazine was launched at the Conclave. This was done in a unique way as the publisher, the editors and the esteemed audience unveiled the magazine in unison.

The second edition of the Reputation Today Conclave took place at JW Marriott in Bengaluru on May 19. The audience witnessed discussions on diverse topics like – Leadership Communication for 21st Century, Value Creation through Smart Reputation Management, Communication in an Experience Driven Economy, Building the Reputation of a City through a Think Tank, Managing Gender Diversity in Corporate India and Focus of Public Relations being Business.

The speakers were names like Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, CMD, Biocon Limited; K Ganesh, Founder, Protea Medical and Founder GrowthStory; Umang Bedi, MD, South Asia, Adobe; Revathy Ashok, Angel Investor, CEO & Managing Trustee BPAC; Devita Saraf, CEO Vu Technologies and Aparna Jain, CEO, Zebraa Works.





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# As green as it gets:

## The changing landscape of CSR

- By Shree Lahiri

It's two years down the line since the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) law came into effect and we see that the landscape of CSR in India has evolved. Companies have initiated a number of CSR projects.

Let's take a look at how some leading corporates like Yes Bank, PwC, Apollo Tyres and PVR have taken to the concept. We caught up with some leaders to discuss how their journey has been so far.

### CSR: charity or philanthropy?

CSR in India has moved many steps ahead - from pure philanthropy during pre-colonial times to social development post independence.



"I see a paradigm shift in the mindset towards CSR. It has emerged as a key point in the boardroom agenda and is viewed as a strategic alignment with the company ethos, business objectives and social requirements, creating an ecosystem that accelerates India's inclusive social development," says Prerana Langa, CEO, YES FOUNDATION

"Our belief is that CSR shouldn't be viewed as charity or philanthropy — it makes perfect business sense," discloses **Jaivir Singh, Vice Chairman, PwC India Foundation**. For businesses to be viable, "it is important for them to be an integral part of social development as there is a deep linkage between the country's economic growth and social well-being."

At Apollo Tyres, the belief is that work in the community "is an investment and an opportunity, to create a difference in the lives of our stakeholders and customers, which requires sustained efforts for a longer period of time". And whether it is charity or philanthropy, **Sunam Sarkar, President & Chief Business Officer, Apollo Tyres Ltd** is of the opinion that "These, in no way, can be

clubbed with one-off charity or philanthropy initiatives undertaken by companies or individuals".

"We believe that we have been able to make a difference in the lives of our stakeholders, especially the trucking community with our HIV-AIDS awareness and prevention programme, and for the community around our manufacturing plants, with our livelihood generation initiatives," says Sunam Sarkar.

### The CSR journey: how did CSR strategies develop?

The CSR sector is in its nascent stage, points out Prerana Langa and "there is tremendous potential to innovate and action solutions. Every day brings an opportunity to learn something new and contribute meaningfully to nation-building". With the YES BANK ethos of innovation and focus on sunrise sectors, they clearly did not want to follow a 'me too' model when setting up the YES FOUNDATION and defining its focus.

In 2013, YES FOUNDATION launched its flagship program, 'YES! I am the CHANGE' (YIAC) which serves as a platform to facilitate a connection between youth and social causes, trigger inner transformation of youth and connect their untapped energy to voices less heard through the impactful medium of films. While developing this program, we followed the mantra of our Chief Mentor, Mr. Rana Kapoor – 'Visualise, Strategise and Actualise', says Prerana Langa. The project features a series of basic film workshops followed by a filmmaking challenge and film festivals across the country. It is a matter of great pride that in less than three

years, YIAC has emerged as the world's largest social film movement," she points out.

To further social impact and harness the energy of youth in nation-building, they recently launched two new programs – YES FOUNDATION Media for Social Change Fellowship and YES Social Film Grant in association with UNDP.

For PwC, their journey began in 2008, when CSR guidelines were not yet in place.



Social. Habitat Apollo is the umbrella environment initiative, which showcases Apollo's commitment towards ensuring environmental sustainability by inculcating eco-friendly behaviour, resource conservation and green thinking in the people. Within Habitat Apollo, they undertake several projects under Biodiversity Conservation, Watershed Management, Waste Management and Climate Change Mitigation.



"Our objective then and now remains the same—to use our skills, expertise and passion for the benefit of the societies that we operate in," reveals Jaivir Singh.

They have come a long way and today, with 15 programmes running across nine states of India, they continue to explore avenues to reach out to underserved communities.

Apollo Tyres, being conscious of the "triple bottom line concept – People, Planet and Profit", has developed a CSR framework identifying and prioritising its key stakeholders. The clear objective of all CSR activities is to have a positive impact on the everyday lives of the key stakeholders and on the business.

PVR Ltd. the nation's largest cinema exhibition chain has been an early adopter of CSR. PVR Nest, a decade old social program of PVR Ltd. started its foundation in 2006 as a not-for-profit nodal body aimed at providing a dedicated approach to community development and also to fulfil company's CSR commitments. "The challenge has always been building the multi-stakeholder partnerships," informs **Deepa Menon, VP, CSR and Corporate Communication, PVR Ltd.**

## Focus areas in CSR

Harnessing media for mindset transformation of the youth and triggering their emergence as responsible citizens, thus catalysing India's inclusive development – is the focus area of YES FOUNDATION. "We strongly believe that responsible youth citizenship should not be a singular journey but a vector with both direction and speed. With youth, the association with social causes has to be experiential and hence we connect with them in the language they understand - media," says Prerana Langa.

The CSR activities of the company, under Apollo Tyres Foundation, are categorised into two verticals - Environment and



"Recognising the importance of our stakeholders and the society we operate in, we also undertake Health and Community Development initiatives with the focus on sustainable development," notes Sunam Sarkar.

Through the PwC India Foundation, we address some of India's fundamental problems, says Jaivir Singh. Their main focus has been Education and Environment Sustainability and recently expanded to other areas - Sanitation, Social Entrepreneurship Issues of Urban Children and Disaster response.

The areas of focus for PVR are: Education, Nutrition & Health, Employability and Well Being & Rehabilitation. PVR Nest works extensively with children and youth. Their program Childscapes helps by improving the quality of life of children living in difficult circumstances in and around PVR Cinema complexes. The output of the program is - mainstreaming children into formal schooling, employability and rehabilitation treatment for children under substance abuse.

They have conceptualised CineArt: Cinema & Art for social convergence, which engages with young adults through experiential methodology. Some examples of their successful CineArt program editions are - CineArt: Steer to Safety program, CineArt - Healthy Children, Happy Children and the Campus Ambassador Program which aims to empower the youth of the city to come together and work towards building a safer city using the power of media.



## Transforming the lives of communities

The belief behind YES FOUNDATION's YIAC launch was that stories can change the world. "The most amazing experiences have been interacting with YIAC participants enthused about contributing to social transformation, post the filmmaking challenge. Seeing their zeal and passion for contributing to the country's inclusive development is so moving," recalls Prerana Langa.

# COVER STORY

The impact is wide. Touching over 20 crore lives (in 2015) through YIAC, it is not merely about the numbers but “the ripples of change this mindset transformation program creates”.

Take the case of Kuljeet Chaudhary, an IT professional from Delhi, who has today been transformed into a youth leader in the space of animal welfare, after starting an initiative – ‘Samarpan’. Leena Kejriwal, a Kolkata-based artist working on the issue of sex trafficking of women, was inspired to use public art and raise awareness on this important social cause. Her public art initiative, MISSING is now an international movement, sensitising people on this pertinent social issue.



“Our learning in CSR has been evolving, which has led us to areas such as urban sustainability and community initiatives. We partner with Government, ministries, embassies, corporates, NGOs, INGOs, schools, artists and the film fraternity who support and contribute in our programs,” explains Deepa Menon.

In FY16, PwC touched 18,000 lives directly through various projects and 20,000 lives through their pro bono advisory services. Recently, they concluded the first phase of the sanitation project across six



Government girls’ schools with NGO partner FINISH Society that has benefitted 4500+ girls. The project is cohesive as it looks at all aspects of sanitation - from supporting infrastructure development, providing operations and maintenance support for a year to conducting 90-day health and hygiene session.

Apollo Tyres has reached out to more than 3 million people under their HIV-AIDS awareness and prevention programme, and nearly 80,000 have been tested for HIV. Under Community Development projects, they have provided skill-building training to approximately 1500 women and youth, while collecting nearly 70,000 kgs of waste under their Waste Management initiative, and planted 100,000 teak trees for carbon sequestration.



## Creating opportunities for employee participation

“Our employees are our assets. Their passion and enthusiasm to contribute keeps us going,” admits Jaivir Singh. Last year, PwC clocked 2800 employee volunteering hours. They organise a host of initiatives ranging from simple donation drives and blood donation camps to using their skills to provide career counseling, mentoring and tutoring children. Some of their flagship projects allow employees to get out of their comfort zones and conduct sessions in areas and with people who would not usually be a part of their working lives.

Along with this, some of their client servicing teams provide pro bono advisory support to NGOs and Foundations - aiding them to improve their systems, programmes, and processes. Last year, 1000 hours were spent on such projects and they aspire to do far more.



Across the company’s operations, “we regularly create opportunities for employees to voluntarily participate in CSR activities,” says Sunam Sarkar about the efforts put in by Apollo Tyres. At the manufacturing locations, the employees work with the CSR team on the community development initiatives or for tree plantation activities, and they regularly contribute by donating books and clothes to the underprivileged.

Some initiatives carried out internally with employees at PVR are - donation drives, toy bank initiatives and mentorship programmes. PVR employees volunteer at Childscapes centers to mentor the children and build their skills/competencies.



## Measuring and tracking progress and shortcomings

To analyse the impact of any activity, some measurement system must be in place. The same holds good for the CSR window too.

We have a strict due diligence process to select only appropriate



NGOs in the sector, says Jaivir Singh. Before any project kicks off, a rigorous streamlined process of outlining the indicators to measure outcome and impact is in place and their partner NGOs are obliged to share regular progress reports. Plus, their business teams extend their support to monitor and evaluate the progress of their community projects too. Also, monitoring and evaluation of projects by third parties helps us understand the pitfalls and provide course correction, he added.



It's KPMG that takes stock of all progress at YES FOUNDATION. But, Prerana Langa reveals that, measuring mindset transformation is a challenge! It also happens that participants, after YIAC Challenge continue their association with social causes in terms of volunteering, fundraising etc. Apart from the case studies on the impact of YIAC participation on the youth, and the Changemaker Awards, they are also in the process of commissioning a large impact assessment and SROI study to measure the impact of the program.



For Apollo Tyres too there is a tracking system well in place. "We have developed a well-defined monitoring and evaluation system for all our initiatives," assures Sunam Sarkar. Monthly reporting of all projects is carried out, along with regular reviews that help in bridging the gaps, if any. Further, projects completing three years undergo mid-line assessment, whereas, an impact assessment study is carried out after five years of the programmes. The company has also undertaken Social Return of Investment (SROI) study for the HIV-AIDS prevention and awareness programme, which in addition to highlighting the minor gaps, provided recommendations to improve.

Each program of PVR Nest has a separate assessment index, which measures the progress and shortcomings. The Childscapes program has 'Individual Development Plan,' which focuses on age appropriate growth outcomes for them; CineArt program has clubs and experiential knowledge session where they carry out the behavioral assessment.

### The road ahead

For the corporate world, the firm resolution is to continue with their CSR efforts in all seriousness.

Prerana Langa reveals that they will soon be launching 'YES! i am the CHANGE 2016' and "this year we plan to make it 'bigger' and more impactful with new value additions and features, to further deepening the impact and create inclusive ecosystems. We intend to reach out to the Indian diaspora across the world - especially US, UK, Singapore and GCC and engage them positively in India's inclusive development."

And, that is not the end of their story. They will also be launching YES FOUNDATION Responsible Youth Citizenship program and YES ENABLER - a high impact program promoting DICE (Design and Innovation-led Creative Entrepreneurship) to maximise social impact of Non-Profits and government.

The future for PVR envisages projects for building partnerships with government bodies like NCPCR, where they are trying to build child friendly spaces for their observation homes and special homes. They are also working on a youth led 'Campus Ambassador Campaign' on gender equity, enabling youth participation in city's planning, safety and design.

With strong commitment in place, Apollo Tyres continues to serve its expanding stakeholder base through CSR initiatives across its operations, reports Sunam Sarkar. "In the coming times, we see further strengthening and introduction of newer programmes that shall address the needs of our stakeholders and make a happy difference in their lives," he adds.

The road ahead is perfectly clear for PwC India Foundation. "Our vision is straightforward - we wish to contribute in areas and in communities that are underserved and hard to reach. Going forward, we wish to create more cohesive projects that cover these aspects and provide a scalable solution for others to replicate and solve some of the critical challenges that India faces," observes Jaivir Singh with clarity.





## COVER STORY

### The need for CSR has never been greater

To conclude, it appears, across the business landscape, the need for CSR has never been greater. The scene is getting greener. And, it has been proved that adapting sustainable policies will have a huge impact on the bottom line.

So, let's hope that this movement gets greener...as green as it could get.



## IN THE LEAGUE

At the heart of Tata Steel's CSR policy is Jamshedji Tata's dictum: a free enterprise, the community is not just another stakeholder in business, but is in fact the very purpose of its existence.



Infosys Foundation supports several programmes aimed at alleviating hunger, promoting education, improving health, assisting rural development, supporting arts and helping the destitute.



Their vision is "to actively contribute to the social and economic development of the communities in which we operate. In so doing build a better, sustainable way of life for the weaker sections of society and raise the country's human development index".



RIL has been involved in various Social Responsibility initiatives. These efforts have substantially improved the quality of lives of people through health care, education, livelihoods and community development initiatives, making their living experience dramatically better.



At Aircel, it is a structured CSR framework called the '3Es Framework' to include the most pressing issues - Employability, Education and Environment. The attempt is to ensure a sustainable future for the needy, their families and the environment.



Wipro believes that it is critical to engage with the social and ecological challenges that face humanity. Wipro's social and sustainability initiatives center on Education, Ecology, and Community Care.



Biocon's CSR initiatives are based on the principle of making enduring impact through programs that promote social and economic inclusion. They have adopted an integrated strategy focusing on social change and empowerment of rural communities.



ONGC has a long and cherished tradition of commendable initiatives, institutionalised programmes and practices of CSR which have played a laudable role in the development of several underdeveloped regions of the country.



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## CASE STUDY

### Mahindra and Mahindra's 'Nanhi Kali'



*Radhika Nandwani is a communications professional based out of New Delhi. She is a founding team member and the Marketing Communications Manager of India's first independent school for Communications (SCoRe). She spent the foundational years of her career with a leading PR firm specialising in technology clients. She is an award-winning professional who has driven outstanding campaigns for her clients.*

The Indian Companies Act 2013 mandated corporates who have a net profit of Rs. 1000 crores to spend 2% of their net profits for the preceding three years on CSR.

In 2014, Mahindra and Mahindra took the top spot for a study conducted by The Economic Times, titled 'The Best Companies for CSR'. This made me study their various CSR programmes. 'Nanhi Kali', the flagship programme of Mahindra and Mahindra was set-up by Anand Mahindra in 1996 and aimed at providing primary education to underprivileged girls in India. As per the last available figures, until November 2015 more than 114,000 underprivileged girls were educated by the 'Nanhi Kali' project.

While the company's overall CSR programmes focus on assisting farmers, improving public health and environment related issues, 'Nanhi Kali' remains their most prominent project. It is active in 10 Indian states and girls are given academic support in the form of workbooks or study classes and material support in the form of books, uniforms and bags. The project focuses on two things - Increase enrollment of girl students and Decrease dropout level to less than 10%.

After studying the programme in detail I feel there are several reasons that have made 'Nanhi Kali' a remarkable initiative.

#### Selection of implementation partners

While the programme was started in 1996, since 2005 it is jointly managed by the K C Mahindra Education Trust and the non-profit Naandi Foundation based in Hyderabad. Initially Naandi Foundation was bought in as a supporter and soon after a year, they were recognised as a joint managing partner. In the first year, Naandi Foundation did a commendable job, exceeded targets and proved themselves to be important in the overall success of the programme. As per the last available figures, Naandi alone is responsible for supporting 71,000 'Nanhi Kalis' on the academic and material front.

#### Support from NGO partners

As per the report released by the K C Mahindra Education Trust, 'Nanhi Kali' programme has the support from 20 NGO

partners, which includes some well-known names such as - Bal-Jeevan Trust, Each One Teach One, Amarjyoti Charitable Trust etc. The Trust works closely with these NGOs to ensure regular monitoring of the NGO activities and provides inputs and support wherever needed to curb dropouts and ensure smooth functioning of the programme.

#### Corporate supporters

'Nanhi Kali' programme has a long list of Corporate Supporters as well. The annual 2013-2014 report lists 45 major corporate supporters for the programme. The big names include Capgemini, Castrol, Cox & Kings Foundation, Hindustan Colas Limited, Johnson & Johnson Ltd., Microsoft among several others.

#### Consistency in creating and sustaining creative campaigns

Within the 'Nanhi Kali' programme, Mahindra and Mahindra releases various campaigns that give great support to the cause. They have partnered with companies like HDFC to increase donations through personal loan applications applied by a woman customer. They have consistently garnered support through 'Running for a Girl Child' at marathons like Airtel Delhi Half Marathon, TCS World 10k, and Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon.

#### Support from Public Relations

Mahindra and Mahindra has done a remarkable job in not only supporting the girl child in numerous ways, but also in spreading the word. One may find several media stories and social media traction on their recent partnerships with companies like Uber, Jet Airways, TATA AIG etc. All these partnerships are written about and talked about because they are creative, new, consistent and well communicated to the target audience. Public Relations has helped them get the much-needed corporate and public support for a good cause.

While studying the 'Nanhi Kali' initiative closely, I realise the big impact of our small contributions. All it takes is Rs. 3000 a year and you get a detailed profile with regular updates of the 'Nanhi Kali' you are supporting.

## Make your CSR a Movement!



**Kavita Kowshik** is MD at Maitreya CSR Systems Pvt Ltd, India's first CSR specialist company. A brainchild of Kavita Kowshik, Maitreya CSR Systems develops CSR strategies for businesses, implements, manages and monitors their performance and impact. Calling herself a "cynical idealist and an ideal cynic", she is now totally focused on bringing about Social Change.

### Social Accounting can be a successful tool for CSR

With increasing awareness of CSR, organisational success is measured not only by its financial performance but also by its social and environmental impact.

The Social Accounting concept, that has been gaining in importance, has been recognised as one of the key elements of "good practice" in CSR. Interest in this concept has grown both in large corporations and voluntary organisations too.

When Corporations create 'Foundations,' or when they take up focused CSR work, their objectives become similar to that of a voluntary organisation. So, for the purpose of this Opinion piece, I will refer to Corporations doing CSR and Voluntary Organisations, as - 'organisations'.

The primary objective of development organisations is to achieve social, economical and community benefit. Although financial sustainability is essential to achieve these objectives, it is still of secondary concern. The organisation and all its stakeholders need to know if its objectives are being met; if it is living up to its values and to ensure that those objectives and values remain relevant and appropriate.

### Social Accounting facilitates the CSR process

Social Accounting can be defined as a way of demonstrating the extent to which an organisation is meeting its stated social or ethical goals. It touches on the effect an organisation has on society and its relationships with all stakeholders. It enables the organisation to be accountable to its stakeholders; and is also a management tool to improve organisational performance.

Further, social accounting is a framework that allows an organisation to build on existing documentation and reporting, develop a process whereby it can account for its social performance, report on that performance, draw up an action plan to improve performance, understand its impact on the community and be accountable to stakeholders.

Each organisation may have its own reasons for adopting Social Accounting like: it helps in improving financial performance, brings

out clearly the link between improved social performance and improved financial performance, helps in enhancing relationships with stakeholders and in managing risk; helps in establishing clear alignment in strategy and operations with aims and values and in specifying the organisation's boundaries of responsibility.

Other reasons for voluntary organisations are: it brings into focus critical aspects of accountability in a positive, innovative manner and increases transparency, which enhances the organisation's reputation for practicing its values; it provides a comprehensive feed-back from stakeholders, thereby, focusing the management's attention on the outcomes and how to respond; it also highlights the stakeholders' view of the organisation, and is a voluntary, participatory process.

The process of Social Accounting should primarily involve three steps: internal data collection and analysis, an independent audit of the results and reporting (for disseminating the outcome). A process that stops short of auditing and dissemination is termed a "Social Review".

Social accounting provides a comprehensive framework for proper accounting, auditing and reporting against an organisation's social objectives. But, "doing social accounting" alone is not adequate. It is the framework into which impact assessment information can be placed. The process is viewed as a good move towards social impact assessment. For many organisations involved in community development, social objectives have often been a driving force; many of them have struggled to collect information amounting to a social impact assessment, in order to legitimise their existence – primarily to donors, or the public at large or Governments, if not themselves.

An integral part of Social Accounting and Audit is an SROI analysis - a process of understanding, measuring and reporting on the social, environmental and economic value that an organisation creates.

Simply put, the SROI process involves dialogue with stakeholders to identify what social value means to them, understanding how that value is created through a set of activities, finding appropriate indicators, or 'ways of knowing' that change has taken place, putting financial proxies on those indicators that do not lend themselves to monetisation and comparing the financial value of the social change created to the financial cost of producing these changes.



*CSR can certainly impact reputation and offers an opportunity for businesses to promote, improve communities and empower them. But plenty of communities in India are crying out for more engagement. The question is - are companies doing enough for CSR?*

### **Most companies perceive CSR as a compliance necessity to meet the requirements of the 2014 rules.**

Since the Companies Act 2013 and its amendment in April 2014 mandated a segment of companies in India to carry out CSR activities and spend 2% of their profits on this exercise, a lot of companies are still in the process of understanding and implementing this directive. A lack of effective monitoring and execution also add to the lacunae in the enactment of the Act.

Most companies perceive CSR as a compliance necessity to meet the requirements of the 2014 rules. There is also the perception of CSR as a standalone philanthropic initiative and not one integrated into the business strategy. CSR is perceived as a brand value enhancing machinery, which is the only return on investment that can be extracted as any other business return from a CSR investment does not qualify as per the rules.

While there have been a number of companies that have been driving CSR initiatives even before the mandate, they were a handful of activities that were driving change and were being measured for impact. While there is intent, it is currently misplaced or misdirected and there is a gap between the corporate sector and the Civil Society Organisations from a need versus opportunities viewpoint.

Companies should understand that CSR activities need investment of time and resources; it should be planned as any business project is, with resources, timelines and measurable outcomes with mandated pro-bono hours that employees put in. A donation or a one-off activity or event is not construed as CSR; engagement and execution are vital to creating positive impact.

Efforts are needed in sensitising employees, top leadership and stakeholders alike to the concept of CSR and what it entails. The journey has just started for a lot of companies and while it is work in progress, the good news is, the headstart has been made, but there is still a long way to go.

### **Today, there is renewed focus on CSR and corporates are gearing up for engaging & empowering people & communities.**

One clause in the Companies Act 2013 that has generated widespread debate and dialogue among corporates, is the mandate that businesses above a certain size, spend 2% of their profits on CSR. The result: many companies structured their CSR programmes better, reinforced their processes, chose causes more thoughtfully and incorporated systems to make their projects quantifiable.

Today, there is a renewed focus on CSR that corporates are gearing up for - one such being engaging, empowering people and communities, which undoubtedly, is going to be the only way to operate. With a long-term association, it is important to assist the local people with their development, as we ultimately, owe it to them. Besides, doing business in the community is also fulfilling and rewarding. No company can think of long-term sustainable business operations without considering surrounding communities.

Community-led CSR has several positive benefits: provides businesses a platform to achieve a positive impact on communities, enhances value creation by integrating business into communities, solves many manpower related issues by generating meaningful employment opportunities, addresses the issues related to local economic-political environment and boosts corporate equity and corporate citizenship objectives.

Keeping communities in mind, we at Welspun Group have focused our CSV (Corporate Social Value) initiatives on 3Es ie: Education, Empowerment and Environment & Health.

What is more crucial while designing a CSR programme, is a better assessment of your stakeholders, analysing their needs and aspirations to create an action plan, that can run for several years. Along with the 2% investment, companies should look at committing 2% of their senior management's time to the CSR initiatives and this should be driven top-down. Also, employees need to be encouraged to whole-heartedly participate in the CSR programs. This will give them an opportunity to contribute their time and talent to bring about a sense of purpose in their own life.

*Shreya Krishnan* heads Marketing, Communications and CSR at First Advantage India. She oversees Advertising, Branding, Marketing Strategy, Marketing Communications, PR, Events, Digital Media Marketing and Lead Generation.



*Naveen Soni* is VP - Corporate Communications at the Welspun Group and has 17 years of cross-functional experience across journalism and corporate communications (external and internal stakeholder management).







## Make Your CSR a Movement!



*Bishalakhi Ghosh*

Co-Founder & Director -  
GIV Central

Recently while attending a social gathering I was asked to participate in an interesting discussion. The discussion and (a bit of) debate centered on section 135 of the Companies Act which was included in 2013 to make corporate social responsibility (CSR) a compulsory affair. While one group was vocal on the changes it brought in through the CSR spending, the other was unhappy about the voluntary option becoming an obligation. As a CSR and communication professional, it was indeed a discussion I wanted to know more about.

To read the complete article, please visit:

<http://reputationtoday.in/views/csr-as-a-means-to-equitable-growth/>

## A Combined Effort is the Need of the Hour



*Roshan Alexander*

Education Entrepreneur &  
Co-Founder February Networks

CSR is not a new concept in India. We have one of the oldest traditions of CSR. In the past the rich merchants have been sharing their wealth to help the society in their own way, especially during famine and epidemics by giving food and monetary help securing an integral position in the society. In the 19th century, with the arrival of colonial rule the approach towards CSR changed. The industrial families in pre-independent India like Tata, Godrej, Bajaj, Birla etc. were more open towards giving back to those with poorer social and economic considerations.

To read the complete article, please visit:

[http://reputationtoday.in/views/csr-as-a-means-to-equitable-growth](http://reputationtoday.in/views/csr-as-a-means-to-equitable-growth/)

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### “CSR is most effective when it is linked to the core business.”



**Rama A Iyer**, Founder Director, WhiteKettle Consulting Pvt Ltd strongly believes that as corporate India grows, so does the need for a more progressive relationship between businesses and communities. Today, a company's CSR policy defines who they are, where they want to go and how people perceive it. So it comes as no surprise to see so much debate and dissecting of the topic, she discloses. Speaking with Shree Lahiri she reveals her exclusive take on some of the fundamental points of discussion in India's evolving CSR culture.



#### **Q.** Some companies' CSR reports focus on philanthropy as a driver of CSR. Please comment.

Ans: When it comes to giving, intent matters.

If you look back at our history, the simple act of giving back is not new to India or Indians. Though much of this giving has often stemmed from an inherent guilt, where those who have a lot felt the need to give back to those who didn't.

In the era of empires, it was the kings and queens who ensured the welfare of their people — be that with regard to health, livelihoods or support through disasters like droughts, wars etc. Things changed in the Gandhi era, when it was big industrialists like the TATAs and Birlas that engaged in philanthropy, looking after their employees in terms of home or medical benefits. And even today, the guilt-giving continues. You don't have to look to far to see the same principle in action, when we 'take care' of our staff, like with their child's education or health benefits. Essentially, this is because the State does not provide social welfare, so naturally the onus is on those who are at the top to help those who aren't. I've found that a lot of times, CSR is seen as an extension of this. That if the corporate makes any kind of benefit (not necessarily profit), it takes away from 'giving' and therefore isn't really CSR.

This is why intent matters. Personally, I look at philanthropy as an individual 'CSR'. From a corporate point of view, where it's not individual wealth and you are answerable to shareholders, CSR is most effective when it is linked to the core business. That's when a corporate has a more purposeful approach to their CSR mandate, which allows them to then not only contribute wealth, but also R&D and expertise. Most importantly, the organisation remains rooted to the cause long enough to see genuine benefit in the community, with pure intent.

#### **Q.** Do you think CSR is an investment for the future?

Ans: Changes can be quick, but long lasting ones take time.

To answer in a word, yes. CSR is very much an investment in the future. Look at it this way — it's no different from addressing a key market need, only much more layered, complex and deep rooted. Like take the issue of child malnutrition. It's not as straightforward as children not getting enough food — it's the fact that most of the mothers are malnourished, so the likelihood of her baby being the same, is high. Then you have to ask, why is the mother malnourished? It's because in some communities, the women eat last, and mostly the leftovers. So you can't achieve success unless you address the intrinsic gender issues.

It might sound clichéd, but you need to have a comprehensive approach and to stay with it for a while to be able to get to the core of the issue.

#### **Q.** How are companies today focusing on directing social responsibility to touch lives of communities?

Ans: Your approach defines the impact you ultimately have.

So there are three kinds of people who take on CSR:

First, the ones who do it because it's mandated and they want to abide by the law.

Then there are corporates who have found the perfect overlap between their business needs and a social cause — for them CSR becomes a huge area of focus throughout the organisation, in terms of resources, people and commitment.

And last, there's the mid belly — who want to do CSR the right way, they initiate interventions in the known areas of education, health etc, and are now getting together with NGOs or groups to monitor outcomes and overcome different challenges.

So naturally, the more hands on the approach, the more involved and committed it is, the stronger is the impact on the communities.

## **Q. Considering CSR activities in India today, are companies doing enough?**

Ans: Is there any such thing as doing enough good?

Honestly, it depends on how you define 'enough.' But rather than that, companies should focus more on ensuring that what they are spending, is being spent well and that resources are maximised. Personally, I think they can achieve a lot more if they get CSR to be driven by their core team; where it's not just a day's worth of volunteering by the employees, but a part of their Management by Objectives (MBO) and time set aside for it. They need to have more involvement, to really care. Which brings me to my final point, the need to believe in the outcome as their objective, and not the mere act of giving that '2%'.

## **Q. Have companies created a clear CSR identity? Any examples?**

Ans: A crucial step for every corporate on their CSR journey.

Currently, CSR identity is evolving at two levels - corporate and brand. Two very successful examples are Lifebuoy and IDEA, where the brands had already found the social filter as their core differentiator and have therefore reinforced this, post the bill. Take Lifebuoy, who in positioning itself as the hygiene expert, is perceived to be the leader in preventing diarrhoea-led deaths among children. IDEA again has used their platform of an idea to solve a social issue, and what I assume started off as a creative idea is now its identity.

For corporates to have a clear CSR identity it will take longer, because it will need visible, scalable success stories.

## **Q. What do you think are the common problems faced in this area?**

Ans: Too many successful pilots with very few successful scale-ups. I see the key reason being the way we measure our progress. We've always looked at it in terms of input, amount and man hours spent.



Even in terms of outcomes, we look at it rather analytically. But like I said earlier, India's social issues are highly complex and subjective, so measuring them is even more difficult. We are still grappling with it, even after being in this space for over 7 years.

And it doesn't help that we don't bother to learn off each other. Reporting, monitoring and sharing of information is low, making it even harder to determine success.

## **Q. What do you think is the way forward? Do you see any definite scenario emerging?**

Ans: The next step is the only one that counts.

The conversation began at 2%, now it's up to us what we say next. My belief is that the next discussions should be about focus on outcomes, and not input. Not just 2% profits but 2% employee time and commitment. Let's have a few, more tangible goals drawn from the Bill, and all energies and resources focussed towards it. And hopefully that's the direction we are already taking. I think there will be few focus areas: more corporates and stakeholders coming together to jointly address needs.

But above all, I believe the biggest change agents will be our children. They will grow up more aware of their rights, and demand that all stakeholders comply so that India and the world are a better place for them to live in.





## NOTES FROM LEADERS

### CSR is not Charity, it's your duty!



It may be difficult for a single company to undertake major projects. But, I am a proponent of pooling in CSR funds for a project that can impact people.

*B N Kumar is the National President – Public Relations Council of India, and Head of Community Relations at Concept PR*

Not many companies seem to be taking CSR seriously. In fact, some even tend to look at it as a mere charity that you do on a corporate scale.

Has the new Companies Act changed the situation? I don't think so, since these charity givers now seem to take it as a legal obligation. I have come across companies that are not willing to spend a single penny on CSR and carry forward the 2% allocation to the following year.

Can't CSR be bit creative? Can we Corporate Communications

professionals think of ways and means that make CSR interesting and create an impact on the society around us? There was a talk that the government may make it mandatory to allocate part of CSR funds for Swachh Bharat campaign. Is that enough to sweep the streets and bus depots and railway stations for photo ops? Can we not do something for urban garbage management? From NGOs to Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), many have come up with ways to produce energy from garbage. Can India Inc. or various industry associations/forums not plan to spend CSR funds on garbage management, so that the people get relief from garbage mounds at various city entry points?

It may be difficult for a single company to undertake major projects. But, I am a proponent of pooling in CSR funds for a project that can impact people. This pooling can easily be done on an ASSOCHAM or CII or for that matter FICCI platform and then invested in meaningful projects. If CREDAI can provide garbage bins in Bangalore city, why can't a bigger organisation with the ability to mobilise larger funds come up with energy producing projects?

I was pleasantly surprised to know that the Siddhi Vinayak temple in Mumbai uses temple waste to generate energy!

Ask yourself what you can do for the society and just do it! Take CSR as duty and not charity!

### “Sa Prathama Sanskrati Vishvavara!”



CSR is tremendous opportunity for corporates to strengthen their bonds with the communities they work with. This is the new sunrise of opportunities and corporate communication professionals should work with revitalised commitment and dedication.

*Dr Ajit Pathak is National President, Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) and General Manager I/C (Corporate Communication, Admn & Welfare), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.*

Today, with industrialisation, technological revolution and globalisation of economy, India is on the fast track of growth - riding on our IT strength, economic potential and the youth power. And as Mark Twain had noted, “India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, grandmother of legend, and great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only”.

Now, modern India is looking up in terms of its reputation, prestige and recognition. The leadership of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has revitalised the nation, thus presenting a new, vibrant India globally. Turning the wheels of perception, so to say.

The classic picture of India is a land rich in myths, legends and folklore, centred around revered deities, valiant heroes and fierce demons - an awe-inspiring legacy of tradition, vivacity and synthesis. Our country has led the world, showing the light ahead.

Public Relations and communication professionals, as social scientists have a great responsibility to strengthen bridges of trust between the various publics and interest groups by interpreting each other effectively. They also have a task chalked out for them, which is to showcase India to the world in the right perspective.

Reputation of any country, organisation or individual will always remain the most important asset; and communication professionals will have to do their job, not only by projecting the desired reputation but also helping the system to improve services, quality and value system, using the right mix of traditional and new media.

With the evolving dynamics in the communications business, the focus of the PR landscape is also transforming. And, focus on Corporate Social Responsibility has gained tremendous importance in recent years in the light of government's directive to spend 2% of profits on CSR; and once again, we have the Prime Minister's call for Swachh Bharat, Skill Development, Beti Bachao etc. So, CSR is tremendous opportunity for corporates to strengthen their bonds with the communities they work with. This actually is the new sunrise of opportunities and corporate communication professionals should work with revitalised commitment and dedication.

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## COMMUNICATOR SPEAK

**“Companies must promote a culture of societal responsibility.”**



“

*Ms. Roma Balwani, President, Group Communications & Sustainable Development is the force behind driving sustainability, corporate social responsibility and communications as a strategic function at Vedanta. She believes businesses are not “isolated entities” and that companies must promote a culture of societal responsibility, as it’s absolutely crucial that every enterprise must introspect on how its existence brings about a net positive impact to the society. She gets into a chat mode with Shree Lahiri, as she explains how one must have a holistic approach and a long term vision.*

”

**Q.** How do organisations need to embrace CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) as a business imperative? The emphasis mostly was on how there are business needs to adopt CSR, but it is high time they became socially conscious. Please comment.

Ans: Businesses are not isolated entities. They can thrive with the support of their host communities, whose growth is imperative to sustain the development of the businesses. It is absolutely crucial that every enterprise must introspect on how its existence brings about a net positive impact to the society.

Although nascent, businesses are increasingly getting exposed to the idea that community development initiatives are hardly about commercial transaction. Legislation, as we have witnessed in the case of the Companies Act (2013), is only a precursor for organisations to begin such initiatives.

There are a host of financial or material benefits that CSR generates for the businesses executing them. If one puts financial rewards against social rewards while judging or assessing a CSR strategy, I am afraid the outcome will be lopsided. What one can however argue for is the method of incentivisation. Also, adopting a CSR initiative that is in some way aligned to the core competency of the firm may add value to the company’s triple bottom-line, if they have the requisite products and services.

Companies must promote a culture of societal responsibility, which will eventually build a sense of purpose and motivation among the employees. Instead of CSR & Sustainability personnel working in silos, entire organisations must be galvanised to enable development change.

**Q.** What is your impression of the CSR scenario in the country today? Do you see a difference in the Indian picture vis-à-vis internationally?

Ans: The idea of contributing to the society in India goes back a long way. What began as philanthropy with the first school of entrepreneurs in British India, evolved into the idea of trusteeship during the last years of British rule and subsequent years post the Independence. This idea of trusteeship eventually gave way to the socialist economy, wherein Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) dominated the area.

Post the liberalisation in 1990s we have seen a rapid transformation in the manner in which private enterprises engage with communities to leverage community initiatives. As global issues such as labour welfare, poverty eradication, environmental sustainability and climate change gain more traction in India, organisations are increasingly adopting their CSR strategies to address them.

One aspect which companies in India must begin to focus on more closely is that of adopting international benchmarks. Compliance with international standards will enable comparative measurement and enhance the credibility of companies globally. Vedanta for instance, has adopted a range of global benchmarks right across its environmental sustainability and CSR initiatives. We aim to maintain an ongoing, transparent dialogue with all of our stakeholders in order to build the strong relationships that will allow our business to succeed and to preserve our social license to operate.





**Q. What are the areas Vedanta is focusing on as far as CSR activities go?**

Ans: It is crucial that we, as an organisation maintain an ongoing, transparent dialogue with all of our stakeholders in order to build the strong relationships that will allow our business to maintain harmony and create new opportunities for the local population.

Most of our operations are in remote areas that are home to indigenous communities. Local communities have the right to participate in the decision making and we respect the principle of free, prior informed consent.

Human rights remain an important issue to us. Addressing poverty, inequality in all forms, women empowerment, child nutrition and skills development to increase employability remain some of our top focuses as far as our CSR activities are concerned. In 2015 we became a signatory of the 'CEO Statement of Support' for the United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP), 'Equality Means Business'.



**Q. Vedanta won Four Awards at IndiaCSR in April 2015. How was the feeling on this achievement? Have any more awards followed?**

Ans: While it is an honor and indeed humbling to have received this recognition, we at Vedanta strongly believe that this will be a continuous journey to make a positive impact on communities. The CSR teams at Vedanta work closely with their partners, be it the government, or the NGOs or the community members to achieve the outcomes which are desired for that particular community. We have always believed in our Chairman, Mr. Anil Agarwal's vision and passion to see the change in India in terms of poverty alleviation, job creation and women empowerment, which are the fundamentals which guide and motivate our teams to do good work on ground.

**Q. What else can organisations do in this area, which you feel have been neglected so far?**

Ans: There has to be a mindset change where we look at integrating the marginalised communities with the development of the society of which they should be a part of. They also have the right to basic amenities, good education for their children and given an opportunity to bring a positive change in their lives.

One of the areas where I believe companies in India must focus on is that of developing newer, frugal technologies that rely on non-conventional energy sources as well as self-regulatory mechanisms that help in creating intergenerational equity.

Companies should shift away from the current, exploitative economic model of growth, to one that recognises the need to protect all its stakeholders. This is a narrative of India as a developing nation which needs to be heard as well as addressed in a way that brings in the shared value proposition as propagated by Micheal Porter where in you bring in social change that ultimately benefits the society at large and creates new lifestyles and opportunities of growth that never existed before.

As we have progressed from the Millennium Development Goals and as we study the Sustainable Development Goals and bring them into our way of conducting business and implementing social measures, these will have long lasting impact and outcomes for society.



**“In essence, CSR is not for public consumption.”**



“

*N Madhavan, Senior Associate Editor, Hindustan Times is someone who is active on social media today. He features among the Top 100 in India in Twitter following. Writing mainly on business and economics, his focus also traces a weekly technology column - Tech IT Easy and a weekly blog in verse - Madversity. We track here, his strong views on the role of media in promoting CSR, which he feels has not been a favourite topic. Shree Lahiri talks to him as he waxes eloquent on what is the attitude of media, building a case for a CSR wire, 'green washing' and more...*

”

**Q. How did media deal with the issue of CSR, before it was made mandatory?**

Ans: CSR has never been a favourite issue with the media, as it is seen as plugging the company without much news value. Only inspired ideas that went beyond simple social work usually attract attention. I do not know if some of them actually come under CSR. I can think of examples like Mahindra Theatre Awards and Tata Crucible Quiz for students and Reliance doing work during Gujarat's earthquake as newsworthy examples.

**Q. What is the role of media in championing CSR, if at all?**

Ans: Not much in an official sense. As it is the space for public interest, media has shrunk and media entities focus more on what makes sense for their audiences. The media has to be talked into considering inspired initiatives that make their audiences sit up. In essence, CSR is not for public consumption and I think it is not a wise idea to force brand-building into it.

**Q. The media has a huge role to play in how CSR is broadcast to the world at large. It is simply not enough for organisations to do their bit for social causes. Do you agree?**

Ans: I don't necessarily agree. Media's role is often a mythical fantasy. Media entities tend to play watchdogs than carriers of

good messages, when not addressing the specific interests of their audiences. Meaningful partnerships are possible with an eye on the media. What matters in these are the power of the ideas and the way they are implemented.

**Q. In April, 2014, it became mandatory for Indian companies with a net-worth of over 500 crores to contribute 2% of their earnings towards CSR activities. Now two years down the line, do you think this is working?**

Ans: I see very little evidence indicating that this is working. But, I must say this is because the media per-se does not cover these issues anecdotally. Perhaps there is a case for a CSR wire that highlights such issues.

**Q. At PRAXIS 2014, you had observed that many companies in India, who are eligible under the Companies Act 2013, do not often have strong corporate governance programs – let alone workable CSR programs. Has this view undergone any changes?**

Ans: Good question! Most companies are crawling up but not moving up on the scene. A case in point is the appointment of women directors on boards, under SEBI rules. Many companies simply put family members on board and many still haven't done anything. Corporate governance in India is practised systematically only by a handful of companies.

**Q.** ‘Green washing’ refers to the practice of the corporate spin employed by a company in declaring itself to promoting environmentally friendly policies whereas in reality, the company does not live up to the rhetoric. Please comment.

Ans: I have been cynical about this issue ever since I came across a prominent hotel group that issued press releases on laser-driven washrooms to conserve water AFTER facing a case on water wastage. The more the ‘green washing’, the less the impact.

**Q.** You are active on the social media and have been included among the Top 100 in India, as far as Twitter following is concerned. You have also been writing about social media like your article on “Why Twitter’s gambles to turn cool are worth the risk” two months ago.

How do you feel companies can try leveraging CSR in the social media world, so that they can strengthen consumer trust and loyalty, encourage followers (and their friends) to take action and participate?

Ans: Companies need to partner with NGOs and join the conversation on running issues. For example, the current drought in Marathwada is horrible, and I have not seen a single corporate

rising to the occasion. I was proactive in spotting Give India and running tweets to people asking them to contribute. Pro-active corporates would have jumped on it early.

**Q.** The media can act as a conscience keeper by constantly reminding organisations about the need to give back to society and to look beyond profits. Is this happening today?

Ans: Not at all. More than media, I think there is a need for civil society initiatives that involve the media. Media in itself likes to stay neutral but can be roped in as platforms. Often, issues matter more than labels. Think issues and media involvement will happen.

**Q.** Media can also take a critical view of the CSR programs that an organisation claims to run and ensure that it is not indulging in ‘green washing’. Is this happening today?

Ans: I wish. I wish. I wish. This is a great idea. Somebody should start a CSR rating service to make people sit up!

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**Dimple Kapur**, Brand Communication Consultant  
**Gayatri Rath**, Microsoft India  
**Meena Vaidyanathan**, NIITI Consulting  
**Meenu Handa**, Google India  
**Paarul Chand**, PRmoment India  
**Rakhee Lalvani**, Taj Hotels, Resorts & Palaces  
**Rashmi Naik**, Omidyar Network  
**Roma Balwani**, Vedanta Resources  
**Sabiana Anandraj**, Trilegal  
**Sanjiv Kataria**, Communication Consultant  
**Suvodeep Das**, Sodexo India  
**Varghese M. Thomas**, TVS Motor Company  
**Veena Gidwani**, Communication Consultant

### TECHNIQUE AWARDS

1	Best Use of Content
2	Best Use of Creativity
3	Best PR Event
4	Best Use of Digital and Social Media
5	Best Integrated Communications Campaign of the year
6	Best Use of Evaluation and Measurement
7	Best Public Affairs Campaign
8	Issue and Crisis Management
9	Internal Communications & Employee Engagement
10	Best New Product Brand Built Through PR
11	Most Impactful Media Campaign
12	Community Engagement of the year

## Awards Night

# 24

September 2016

Aamby Valley

### SPECIAL AWARDS

1	Lifetime Achievement Award (Decided by the Jury, no entry to be submitted)
2	In-House Team of the Year
3	In-House Innovation of the year
4	Boutique Consultancy of the year (Has maximum 30 people / less than Rs. 5 Cr revenue)
5	Mid-Size Consultancy of the year (Has maximum 100 people / less than Rs. 15 Cr in revenue)
6	Large-Size Consultancy

### CONSULTANCY & IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

1	Hospitality & Travel
2	Auto
3	Lifestyle & Luxury & Sports
4	Tech & Telecom
5	Healthcare & Pharma
6	Consumer FMCG & Retail
7	Government Affairs, Advocacy & Environment
8	Start-ups
9	Entertainment, Media and Celebrities
10	BFSI & Corporate

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## Employee Engagement and CSR



*Shubesh heads the creative division at BLAQ, a communications firm that specialises in Internal Communications, Brand and Employee Engagement.*

*Connect with him:  
shubeshravindran@blaq.in*

The Indian business world is just waking up to this formal aspect of corporate philanthropy called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It has been in India in many ways and forms but not in a formal manner. As the world comes closer and practices become global, this domain is expanding and new dimensions are getting added to it – be it internal or external. One of them and amongst very crucial is Employee Engagement.

Before I move further into the article I would like to clarify that I won't be quoting any surveys, research. There are following reasons for that –

- a. There are hardly any in depth research and surveys in Indian context that can produce any worthwhile discussion beyond the superficial
- b. Employee participation and volunteering in CSR is very subjective and very personal and numbers don't tell you the subjective part
- c. CSR as a formal domain is very young in India – thus as of now more than numbers, sharing experiences and experimenting will help the domain to evolve.

Thus I share what I, as part of BLAQ, have experienced while assisting our clients in sorting out this conundrum.

A majority of the companies, not only in India but globally, find employee volunteering challenging. The line between volunteering and participation through push is a very thin one and one will never ever be able to know which side you are on. Thus, a culture of volunteering will only develop over years where employees choose to be ambassadors of their company CSR or do-gooders a step at a time. This is the journey that the company has to be with the employee while they cover it and provide full support to it.

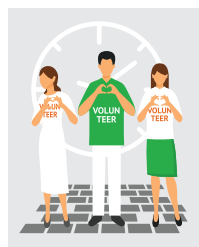
Employee volunteering has two sides to it –

- a. The nature of CSR projects
- b. The parameters that help the employee take up the cause for volunteering.

CSR strategy is governed primarily by the natural fit between CSR domain and initiatives and the business that the company is in. Like, a soft drink company being associated with water conservation. Once the approach and initiatives are finalised it is recommended that the company be in it for a long haul so that visible results are obtained to justify the strategy and the effort is beneficial to the community they are present in.

Another, indirect way CSR initiatives help the society is by playing its part in fostering the spirit of volunteering through employee engagement. Through their CSR based employee volunteering initiatives, companies seed and nurture the habit of volunteering amongst employees over time. Indians can do really better in fostering the spirit of volunteering is what I understand. This will be a slow change but a solid one. And this is the prism from which employee volunteering needs to be looked at.

The other part – parameters that help the employee decide the time he/she is going to devote as volunteering. I have tried to put down some of the most important ones.



**1. Volunteering time** - A lot of companies – Foreign or Indian – give volunteering leave that mandatorily needs to be utilised. Thus the choice not to volunteer is not there.

**2. Leadership participation** – volunteering is about giving. Believe it or not, employees gauge the organisations' commitment towards community development and volunteering through the acts of leadership. This doesn't indicate that employees wait for the leadership to do good. It only means that employees who want to volunteer / do good in the community, might shift their focus in doing good in their personal lives. These proactive employees affect and motivate others if the leadership is seen to be committed and doing more than a mere lip service. One of the best cases I know is the blood donation drive carried out at one of the major financial organisations we work with. Blood donation sounds a simple initiative. But to better the record year on year for the same thing takes commitment and ownership in many ways round the year (understand that in employees companies are dealing with one of the most cynical and discerning audience).



In the previous year around than 1000 units were collected in a half day. Thus the challenge thrown at us was to better the number by 5% when the number of employees in the region had reduced. We were confident of the leadership credibility and combined it with a creative campaign to motivate people to act. We used simplicity and pride of doing by taking collective ownership as the message. And yes we were able to increase the collection by 11.5%.



## EXPERT TAKE

3. **Doable, short, closed loop community initiatives** – Employees come from different socio economic backgrounds, beliefs and expectations. Organisations will have to understand that company CSR is not the only way to do good or volunteer and will also find that many do it in some or the other way personally. Hence, the idea should be to design CSR initiatives in such a manner where actions on a day to day basis can make the environment better. Also, as far as employee volunteering is concerned, the organisation should be flexible to include initiatives that don't fit into their CSR strategy. These initiatives should be short, time bound, preferably a day, a week or max a month. Like a blood donation drive, cleanliness drive, etc.



A very good example comes to my mind is of major Indian conglomerate that is actively trying to reduce food wastage in their cafeteria. A simple message where the company provides a daily statistics on the number of people that could have been fed had that food been distributed amongst hungry people.

This is not an initiative that will require employees to devote time specifically but is truly voluntary in nature. If you ask me, it is more impactful and has higher chances of getting adopted in their day to day life and bringing change – basically supporting mindfulness in all aspects in life, water conservation, tree plantation and environment care etc. Similar initiatives that enhance mindfulness can show better results.

From here arrives another crucial point – Employee volunteering and strategy are inherently different.

4. **Employee volunteering (EV) and CSR are two sides of the same coin but different** – CSR aims at balancing company's area of operations and its role as a responsible entity. An employee on the other hand might have same or different ideas on community good. Thus, if an organisation wants to promote EV, it will have to be very



flexible in defining. The vision to develop the habit of volunteering in every employee should be the guiding factor instead of deciding on EV rather than thinking of it as a subset of CSR. The practice is very common in western world and many Indian companies

also promote it. EV week, the 'Joy of Giving' week, etc. are the examples. However, a long way still needs to be covered before we can claim that we are a volunteering rich culture.

5. **CSR ambassadors** - Creating and nurturing CSR ambassadors will go a long way in supporting the EV agenda of a company. This is an opportunity to showcase that not only a company is committed, EV is supported and led by employees of the company. From here I reach my final point.



**Make EV insightful for every individual.**

How? Read on.

6. **Volunteering as a tool** - I have never heard of using it as a tool to nurture employees. This can be a major tool to groom employees, become more self-aware, feel connected to society and most importantly reduce stress.

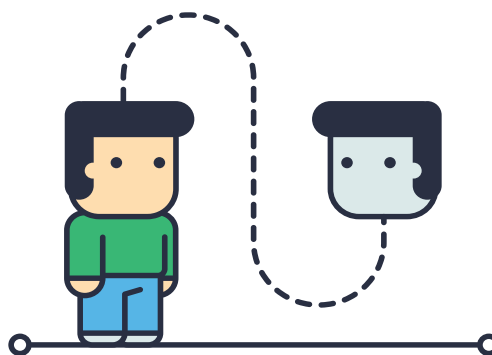
We live in the world of give and take. It is very hard to put in efforts where there are no measurable and tangible results. A quest into giving and choosing to be a giver can unlock bundles of insights into self-awareness. History will tell you that the road to top suits only those who are self-aware.

Volunteering is that small window, which can help us to understand the real meaning of giving. And only leaders give more. Rest, you can connect.

There is much more to the discussion. In my view these are the six major factors that can prove crucial to take the EV part forward for any organisation. I invite you to add to the list. This way we all will benefit.

I just reiterate – EV is highly qualitative in nature. Taking a quantitative approach only is going to defeat the very purpose of volunteering.

I look forward to hearing from you. You can reach me at [shubeshravindran@blaq.in](mailto:shubeshravindran@blaq.in)







### Reputation is an 'engaging affair; and CSR directly strikes organisational reputation.



**Shree Lahiri**

*Applying engaging strokes throughout her career canvas is Shree Lahiri, who has been by and large, involved in reputation management. Having worked in Corporate Communications teams, she has experience of advertising, public relations, investor and employee communications, after which she moved to the other side – journalism. She enjoys writing and believes the power of the pen is indeed mighty.*

*She is Senior Editor at Reputation Today and hopes to move from one focus area to another in the editions that will be released this year.*

*She can be reached at: @shree\_la on twitter*

After having made history with the launch edition of Reputation Today, the first issue of India's only independent print magazine for communicators, we are happy to release the second edition.

Reputation is an 'engaging' affair and is indeed top-of-mind for companies. And when their brand takes a beating, that's when they pull out all stops to swing into action. In the last week of April, we had the headline staring at us: "Apple's stock dips to lowest since 2013". After concluding its worst week on the stock market since 2013, worries smoldered about a slowdown in iPhone sales and after the prominent shareholder Carl Icahn revealed he sold his entire stake, shares of Apple, the shining leader on Wall Street dropped, which crushed the technology giant's market capitalisation by \$65 billion! At this point many pertinent questions came up in my mind. Was it only the shareholders and financial community that was affected? What would be the impact on the leadership position it enjoyed? How will it impact the engagement levels that it sparred with all its stakeholders?

This issue has the central theme - Corporate Social Responsibility: CSR. Evolution of CSR in India has undergone many changes today. The cultural norms of companies' CSR engagement has a rub-off on the way businesses are managed to bring about an overall positive impact on the communities, cultures, employees and more.

After the 2% mandatory move in April 2014, many companies moved into this arena, but if we go by what the CSR leaders featured in this issue feel, the growth has been slow. However, one thing is clear – there has been headway. CSR initiatives are gaining traction. Some progressive companies are going beyond volunteerism, linking profitability with social responsibility and even lining these goals in their core mission statements. And, when organisations include social responsibility programs within their leadership development efforts, it delivers results, as revealed in a comprehensive global study released in March 2016.

We see all around us that the existence of companies depend on the consent of widely diverse stakeholders ranging from customers to shareholders to investors to social, political and civic groups - in

fact, to the entire society that surrounds them. When the company chooses to take these relationships seriously and implements strategies to accommodate the interests of those who live along its orbit, it maximises its chances of surviving crises. It also achieves long-term sustainability as a healthy and productive enterprise. See what happened to brands Maggi and Volkswagen recently.

Ultimately, it's all about your values.

If the requirement for a good reputation is to align with the social norms of the community around you, that community will question your values. And, developing a precious set of values may be tough in building a strong reputation. Here, the moral tone is important which comes from the top, from the leadership. The leader leads but he does not create the company's values on his own. Values must come from everywhere within an organisation. A strong set of values provides a foundation for all important relationships. Values are the language of association, and therefore of survival.

Corporate and Brand Reputation are probably a company's most invaluable assets. It has different implications for each of its various stakeholders: reputation can be the brand that the TG (and potential customers) consider when shopping, the future employer job seekers angle during career changes and what the financial ecosystem follows when deciding the stock price.

However, in the social media era, corporate and brand reputations have evolved to be multi-dimensional. Today, anyone with an opinion, can play a part in denting a brand's reputation by a simple post or tweet. So, these changes in the media and communications landscape make it imperative for companies to have a dynamic and holistic mechanism for tracking reputation.

Engaging strokes, indeed, for companies zeroing in on impacting their universe....

We look forward to your response both to the print edition and the portal too.

You may mail to: shree@reputationtoday.in



### Why are Public Relations firms not capitalising on the need for great CSR ideas?



**Amith Prabhu** takes pride in calling himself a Public Reputation Professional. With nearly 15 years of work experience, Prabhu is currently a semi-entrepreneur, a passionate fundraiser and a PR educator.

He is the Founding Dean of the Indian School of COMMunicators & REputation (SCoRe), India's first independent school of Public Relations. He is also the Founder of The PRomise Foundation, the only organisation from India which is a member of the Global Alliance and which organises the largest annual communications conference in South Asia.

Amith can be reached at @amithpr on Twitter.

Public Relations companies, at least in India are missing out on the great CSR train which is chugging along. There maybe a couple of PR consultancies that have invested in building a CSR practice. I say this because when you think of crisis experts or consumer marketing experts there are several names that come to mind. But when one talks of CSR experts there are hardly two or three names that come to mind.

Let us not get confused with Cause Marketing here, which is a different ball game entirely. CSR, as you have or will read in the magazine is about corporate organisations supporting causes that need attention. These include the environment, disadvantaged groups, including women in need of rehabilitation, destitute in need of clothing, children in need of education, animals in need of shelter and so on. The easy way out is to infuse cash into existing not-for-profits. But there are several companies who have created trusts and foundations to look after this growing challenge of backing causes that the company believes in.



More often than not there is a dearth of able executors for some great CSR campaigns. I am of the firm belief that CSR is a part of the larger umbrella of Public Relations. While within most corporate organisations the function rests within the mandate of the Chief Communications Officer in some cases there is a separate senior person leading CSR initiatives and reporting to the CEO. In the last couple of years the central government has launched several schemes that are great opportunities for companies to collaborate on. While many companies are hitting the ground running, I'm not

sure how many PR firms are getting involved in these mandates as there is immense scope to contribute to them. And if they do, why have we not seen these campaigns being entered in Indian and global awards. The CSR category always has very few submissions from PR firms and that is the basis of this thought process.

In my opinion the next four to five years will be truly exciting for CSR campaigners as a plethora of opportunities develop and emerge. It will be interesting to see how PR consultancies develop people and practice groups to offer these services like it is done in the west. Most global companies have global practice leads for CSR and earn millions of dollars advising clients on CSR campaigns. If there is one market which is in dire need of creative ideas it is India. If it is one set of people who can develop and execute these ideas it is Public Relations professionals. While PR missed the digital bus in 2005 and had a lot of catching up to do, it seems to be missing the CSR train too and will regret before it is too late.

More often than not there is a dearth of able executors for some great CSR campaigns. I am of the firm belief that CSR is a part of the larger umbrella of Public Relations.

For younger professionals trying to find their sweet spot to specialise in, I would highly recommend Corporate Social Responsibility as an area to become an expert in. While Public Relations in India has truly come of age it is time for CSR as a strong offering within PR firms to come of age.

Send your thoughts to

[amith@promisefoundation.com](mailto:amith@promisefoundation.com)



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