

THE UGANDAN CEO'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Good day to you,

Do you still recall the last time you made a contribution to a wedding or introduction ceremony? Chances are you were compelled to do this because the people concerned were either good friends or family members thus the overwhelming responsibility to support their cause.

In the same way, the need to make a valuable contribution to the community from which we derive our profits as an organization fuels in us a desire to use the wealth earned to help alleviate the problems of that community. Usually this is considered to be part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or at times it is just considered to be a marketing initiative or philanthropy and therefore there is a lot of focus on short term activities that do not require sustainability.

But what if we started looking at these initiatives critically and started asking ourselves how best to be socially responsible in our activities, wouldn't this yield more sustainable results than the short term initiatives we are currently engaging in.

If you are challenged by this proposition then read on.....

What is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)? What is Social Responsibility (SR)? What is the difference between CSR and SR?

CSR is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.

Social Responsibility is the obligation of an organization to take responsibility for the impact of its decisions and activities on society.

The difference between the two is that CSR is considered to be primarily economic and legal responsibility whereas social responsibility is broader in scope because it looks at how the organisation creates value and its impact on the financial, manufactured, social, human, intellectual and natural capital stocks. At the heart of it all are the various stakeholders on whom the activities of the organisation may have an impact.

Why is SR important to any organization?

Being socially responsible as an organisation builds a good company image, fosters customer loyalty which in turn translates into good will from the public.

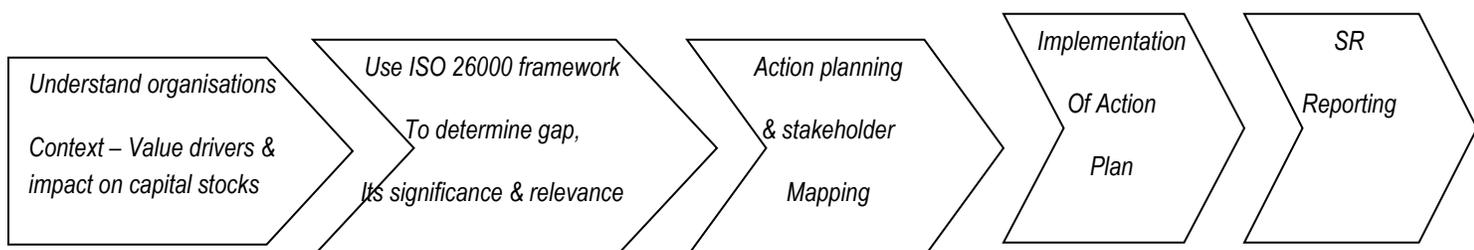
Rather than SR being an event, it becomes the day to day business of the organisation to ensure that their decisions and activities do not impact negatively on society. SR is integrated into the organisational strategy, decision making and execution processes.

SR enhances the value drivers of any business i.e.: value to customers / consumers; protection of the natural sources of raw materials by good environment management; builds competence of the work force; creates a good internal work environment and ensures that investment in the community addresses their priority areas. All this culminates in a more sustainable organisation.

How do you introduce SR in the organization?

A good starting point is looking at your organisation with the view of developing a sustainability strategy basing on the value drivers of the business. On deciding the value drivers of the business a more comprehensive analysis of the business could be done using the framework of ISO 26000 to understand how the business operations impact on societal issues. This would inform the sustainability strategy under which would come some key actions that need to be taken by the organisation.

How would you integrate SR in the activities of the organization?



What are the benefits of using ISO 26000 in implementing SR activities?

Using ISO 26000 in implementing SR activities;

- Gives a company competitive advantage;
- The reputation of the organization is enhanced.
- There's the ability to attract and retain workers or members, customers , clients or users;
- The morale, commitment and productivity of the employees is maintained ;
- The view of investors, owners, donors , sponsors, financial community is positively influenced and
- The relationship with companies, governments, the media, suppliers, peers, customers and the community in which an organization operates is strengthened.

Do I need a separate function to manage SR activities?

You don't need a separate function to manage SR activities. These activities can be integrated in existing processes.

Why do companies set up foundations?

Foundations are usually set up by Corporations to fund their social investment initiatives. The funds are usually derived from the profits made by the corporation.

SR activities do not require any additional funding if integrated in the daily business processes. They become part and parcel of the organisation's budget.

How do companies account for their SR activities to stakeholders?

Organisations usually provide a report to stakeholders giving an account on progress made in their response to societal issues.

The practice of SR reporting varies and ranges in each region and country within different

organizations. However, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines are a good starting point.

SR reporting focuses on the SR activities undertaken by an organization and how such activities were implemented. In some cases, this can extend to a review of the impact of such activities even touching on the return of such activities.

What are the benefits of SR reporting?

SR reporting creates organizational history which enables an organization to track progress and trends. With a turnover in staff and changes in community it is often difficult to remember or capture what an organization has done over the past years.

An SR report is used as a communication tool to new comers explaining the organisation's strategic response to the value drivers of their business. This gives SR focus. Furthermore, it is a valuable resource for communication with stake holders as well as potential investors.

Lastly an SR report serves the purpose of demonstrating the organization's commitment to its society and surrounding environment therefore reflecting a positive image.

Is this just a project with a definite life span / is it an on-going activity?

SR is a project with a definite life span however once successfully integrated in the operations of the business; it becomes the routine business of the organisation.

What are my next steps?

You are welcome to continue this discussion if you want to understand how ISO 26000 can be of benefit to your organization. Simply sign up our ISO 26000 Awareness training program.

For details contact:

Quality Assurance and Management Consultants

Room 2, 7, Susie Plaza,

Plot 1001 Nsambya - Ggaba Rd.

P.O Box 1367, Kampala,

Uganda.

Tel: +256-393-278-745/ +256-772856202

E-mail: info@qamconsultants.com

Website: www.qamconsultants.com