



Not just for Christmas...

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) may have a lower profile at the moment due to the recession, but how a business takes account of its economic, social and environmental impacts can still have a strong influence on its success. When a customer is looking for at brand values, CSR may just make the difference.

Implementing a CSR policy is often perceived as an expensive and bureaucratic process, but if it is viewed instead as the beliefs that underpin a business, it becomes more of a natural process. For example, re-using and recycling waste or implementing energy saving procedures have benefits for your bottom line, as well as helping to protect the environment.

Choosing to work with local suppliers, enabling flexible working and archiving data using digital media rather than hardcopy files, all have sound business benefits in addition to social and environmental ones. Actually putting together a CSR policy may be easier than you think. Once you've started, be more creative about how your business can make a more positive impact on the wider community. For instance, staff participation in local charities or events can be very rewarding as well as building team morale.

Another important aspect of CSR is how you communicate your policies and activities to your target audiences. This can be an important way of demonstrating the more 'human' side of your business as well as differentiating it from your competitors. It is part of the values that make up your brand.

Budgets are always tight, but this is a good way to make a wider impact.