

# Corporate Social Responsibility As A Tool To Increase Happiness Among Workers In An Organization

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## ABSTRACT

Organizations today devote a great deal of resources to applying a 'positive psychology' approach in the workplace. Many studies point out that it is possible to increase employee motivation and make work in the company more efficient, and it has been demonstrated that the principles of positive psychology reinforce this approach. CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is an important factor in strengthening an employee's positive outlook, as it requires him to involve himself in giving and contributing to the community, provides personal fulfillment and can increase his satisfaction at work. Today more than ever, the positive influence of organizations and business on the community is emphasized. The phenomenon of CSR is well-known and has expanded activities across the entire world. Organizations and companies today increasingly understand that the act of giving to another also has a personal and business value for the contributing workers within the organization as well as for the community, just as the positive psychology approach posits. Therefore, positive psychology reinforces action in the framework of CSR, which is so highly recommended in organizations and companies today.

Keywords: Happiness, Corporate Social Responsibility, Organization, Workplace, Employee/Employer, Positive Psychology

JEL Classification : I31, M21, M50, O15

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizations today devote a great deal of resources to applying a 'positive psychology' approach in the workplace. Many studies point out that it is possible to increase employee motivation and make working in an organization more efficient, and the principles of positive psychology reinforce this approach (Baker & Schaffli, 2008; Wright, 2003; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Wolf, 2008; Spence, 2011; Bondy et al., 2012).

Conduct according to the principles of positive psychology has been found to enrich a person's positive outlook and happiness (Buchanan & Bardi, 2010; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005; Seligman, 2000, 2002, 2008), and should be integrated by managers into the workplace. It should be noted that a person spends a considerable part of his life at work. By filling this time with acts that enrich the employee's life in the framework of his job – by recognizing his strength, showing gratitude for what he did well and taking stock of his contribution to others – managers can strengthen the employee's relationship with others and increase his satisfaction (Ulrich, 1997; Wolf, 2008).

'I-Other' relationships can be broken down when a person feels good about himself, and when 'I-I' relationships are richer and more practical. Personal integration and harmony also lead to social harmony, and it is of utmost importance that a person feels that there is deep significance attached to his life. This includes a sense of satisfaction, increased self-worth and appreciation of those around him. One of the factors crucial to a person's happiness is his ability to act not only for himself and be constantly preoccupied with fulfilling his own desires, but rather to look out for others and demonstrate compassion. Satisfaction is an emotional measurement and is achieved through emotional considerations. Viktor Frankl (1959), the well-known psychiatrist, has already noted that ascribing meaning to life relies on doing things for others and not only for oneself. His logotherapy approach emphasizes the importance of activities that provide a contribution to mankind. Such activities serve to give the employee a greater sense of his own meaning. Helping others will enhance one's understanding of the meaning and substance of life. One can find meaning not only by focusing on one's own personal needs, but also by helping others.

Today, theorists emphasize that a person expects to find meaning in his work and not only to meet challenges related to fulfilling material needs. A person wants to be given challenges having to do with other values as well, which are emphasized in organizations' CSR activities for the good of the community. Indeed, the psychologist Shalom Schwartz (1997) demonstrated a wide array of human values through his studies. Indeed, research has shown that

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material values do not always provide a person with the happiness he longs for. Rather, social values that are tied to interpersonal relationships, such as 'I-You' relationships, are likely to enrich a person and provide him with satisfaction and happiness (Brissette, Scheier & Carver, 2002; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Kauffman, 2006; Wolf, 2008; Buchanan & Baradi, 2010).

Research has shown that people tend to change their place of work not only because of salary conditions (a material value), but because of damaged relationships, social pressures and factors related to social values or personal satisfaction (Wolf, 2008; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Wright, 2003; Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

## **THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CSR AND 'POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY'**

Many companies today set community assistance as a goal due to the premise that an organization or company cannot function outside of the public and that the company will return part of the "payment" that it received from the public, either financially or with another form of aid (Wolf, 2008).

Today, more than ever, the positive influence of organizations and business on the community is emphasized. The phenomenon of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is well-known and has expanded activities across the entire world. Organizations and companies today increasingly understand that the act of giving to another also has a personal and business value for contributing to the workers in the organization. The basic idea behind CSR is that the business and community sectors are interconnected and share social, economic, and cultural reciprocity. Cooperation between these sectors is expressed in different ways, such that each side contributes to the other. For example, the business sector may take care of environmental quality in a certain location, and the community will reward it with publicity and a positive reputation. Coca-Cola, for instance, took care to maintain and develop public parks in certain areas, and the people in these locations rewarded the company by publicizing the company's good ideas and promoting its reputation. Indeed, the field of positive psychology focuses on giving as one of the central factors that leads to individual happiness. There is no doubt that a company that contributes to the community also gains an advantage through publicity about its good deeds, and both sides reap benefits. Companies today are very aware of the advantage of contributing to the community. They have internalized the fact that they will begin to benefit as soon as they allocate resources to social responsibility. As the saying of Samuel Johnson says: "Getting money is not all a man's business: To cultivate kindness is a valuable part of the business of life."

From the company perspective, this creates an opportunity to look at its budget and examine how it can serve other purposes. Sometimes, CSR comes to fruition through an open act rather than a secret gift and in the choice of unique fields in which the company chooses to contribute to the community. Both the community and the company will benefit from this act (Wolf, 2008).

Companies that develop a program or project to help the community can increase the loyalty of their employees towards the company and also influence employee satisfaction. Such contributions to the community increases the value and productivity of employees. They strengthen the connections and relations between the consumers and the company, which can ultimately lead to an increase in sales, on the one hand, and to the distancing of competitors on the other.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY ALSO CONSTITUTES CONTRIBUTION TO THE EMPLOYEES**

Contributing to the community brings about a change in the organizational image of a company. Volunteer activities and contributions to the community generally have a positive influence on the company's business reputation (Bakker & Schanfli, 2008; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Wolf, 2008). Moreover, the involvement of employees in assisting the community may increase their own sense of personal satisfaction. Therefore, contributions to the community are often regarded as contributions to the employees as well. The contribution may develop the employee's qualifications and skills, or broaden the role of his job role in a different direction. Such activities involve giving the employees certain responsibilities that will benefit the work environment. Indeed, activities related to contributions to the community also help unify the team of employees and strengthen the "team spirit" within the company (Wolf, 2008; Zang et al., 2012).

Corporations seek to increase employee motivation by meeting both material and spiritual needs. Organizational

activities and collective contributions can help solidify an employee's sense of belonging and raise his level of responsibility towards the organization. These activities are also likely to sharpen the employee's sense of justice and morality, and advance his ethical outlook.

It is important to say that the planning and implementation of projects for the community in organizations and companies is likely to develop a channel of communication between the employees and the management to examine ethical goals and unify the team. Such volunteer activities provide individuals with the opportunity to reveal their abilities and strengths to others. An employee who actively volunteers for the sake of the community will stand out in the company and present a side of himself that may have been unknown to others before. He can use his volunteer work to bring about a change in his standing in the company, as well as to present his abilities in other social and organizational contexts. Such volunteer activities will reveal the positive side of the employee that may well then be carried over to other roles within the company.

Work that is directed at helping the community can become an agent of change for employees and strengthen their work in the company. Assistance activities and community aid are usually successful in instilling the employees with a sense of professional responsibility, a sense of belonging that goes beyond financial benefits or other material bonuses. It brings a sense of partnership and belonging for the sake of working towards a common goal. Such activities can also highlight an employee's skills beyond his job, draw attention to his sense of altruism, and promote unified teamwork to help the community.

## **THE NATURE OF CSR ACTIVITIES**

Projects aimed to help the community reflect the essence of compassion – to help those who are less fortunate. Helping is intended to promote the weak members of the community. The concept of compassion promotes understanding and identifying with the situation of weak and needy individuals and encourages the desire to provide help. This desire is expressed in the provision of assistance to others.

Contributions towards weaker individuals in the company help create a more equitable company. Ideally, it would be preferable if the state could take care of creating a favorable environment for everyone and everything and satisfying the needs of all its citizens. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the state can solve all social and economic problems of the population. Therefore, successful companies also make contributions to such causes. In some cases, such contributions by companies may also motivate governments to provide additional assistance. Indeed, in the United States, detailed reports by public companies regarding their contributions to the community are not meant only as suggestions. Based on current SEC regulations, every company that is traded on the stock market today is required to detail its contributions to the community. There is no doubt that such reports are immensely valuable for both the organization and its employees. Countries today seek to introduce the requirement to report on corporate responsibility as an essential and integral part of public companies' financial reports. The information should be made available to the public and revealed to the media. Perhaps in this way, they will be of greater benefit to the environment and the community, as well as to the firms themselves, which will win public sympathy and gain happiness for its own workers.

It should be noted that such reports about company social accountability are now commonplace. Over time, this has become an accepted practice extending not only to public companies. Companies are expected to be accountable not only for their economic and financial standing, but also for a range of social and environmental activities. By publicizing such activities, the company is seen in a positive light, thus increasing interest among the public and potential investors.

These activities also extend to the field of public health. Companies often publish their policies regarding employee and public safety. In addition, they publicize the safety of their products. When it comes to the environment, companies sometimes display their progress in conserving natural resources, preventing air, water and land pollution, caring for the quality of the environment, and preventing damage to natural resources.

## **CSR ACTIVITIES AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING HAPPINESS AT WORK**

The way in which management relates to the idea of contribution and charity in the organizational framework is important because it elevates contributions to a company's value. Certainly, the goal of such an approach is not only to

give to the community, but also to contribute to the corporation. It creates a sense of belonging among employees and motivates them to strive for common goals. The fact that the manager often allows the employees to manage the projects on their own attests to the manager's ability to transfer authority, an approach that promotes the company externally and unifies it internally.

It seems that companies that act in the framework of CSR not only enjoy the advantage of having their contributions and reputations publicized, but they also gain the essential and practical advantage of instilling their employees with a sense of accomplishment and pride. This comprises the sense of happiness that is sorely lacking in today's modern, materialistic world. One can easily understand the motivations to improve the company's image that underlie large companies' involvement in CSR. But what else explains CSR participation? It has been found that such participation can bring prosperity and increased customer recognition (Wright, 2003; Udayasankan, 2007). For instance, Coca-Cola chose to engage in CSR for AIDS awareness. Its campaign emphasized Coca-Cola's reputation and power as a huge conglomerate to be concerned about public health.

In some corporations, volunteer projects are managed and organized by the employees themselves, thus giving them a sense of importance in policy-making and increasing their interest in the organization. Some managers may pass along this responsibility of CSR to selected employees. They budget a set amount of money for such projects and assign the employees with the task of determining what types of contributions the company will provide to the community. Wolf (2008) already noted that a worker can "discover" additional talents in the organizational framework through such CSR activities.

Indeed, there are organizations that leave volunteer work in the framework of CSR activities to their employees. They set a budget or other resources to advance the project. There are managers who hand off the project to a group of employees and ask them to organize it. There is no doubt that such an approach can empower workers who find interest and deep personal meaning in such activities. Many well-known companies around the world, such as The Body Shop, Shell, Nike, Levi's, Ford, and others have all adopted a transparent approach with respect to their community and environmental activities, and their CSR activities are openly published for the general public.

It is important to note that there are ways to help the community aside from financial contributions. Of course, financial contributions need not be ruled out. Assistance can be provided through housing, education, training, and so on. As an example, Microsoft developed the idea of training and directing adolescents on the margins of society about how to use computers. One can assume that the youths recruited for this program are able to improve their abilities and skills. In addition, the company offers home maintenance assistance to the elderly. In both situations, the contributions consist of workforce time, not money. Thus, the main principle is giving, rather than money or material support.

## CONCLUSION

Positive psychology emphasizes that it is up to a person to focus on positive issues, while many workplaces today tend to focus on uncovering mistakes and criticism instead. Nevertheless, the positive psychology approach tries to send a different message - that it is better for managers to focus more on an optimistic and positive approach in order to advocate things that provide employees with happiness and satisfaction. This does not refer to the improvement of physical conditions in the framework of the job, like enhancing the workplace itself or investing in a lunchroom, gym, etc. Rather, it refers to the strengthening of positive messages and the appreciation of employees' contributions in the framework of the job, which seem to guarantee a work environment that provides more happiness for its employees.

Positive psychology has been found to enrich a person's positive outlook and happiness (Buchanan & Bardi, 2010; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005; Seligman, 2000, 2002, 2008). An important point that can strengthen an employee's positive outlook has to do with CSR, the employee's ability to involve himself in giving and contributing to the community, as it can increase his satisfaction at work. For individuals, this kind of activity can provide personal fulfillment, and research indicates that the act of giving fills a person with happiness (Wolf, 2004, 2006, 2008).

It should be noted that CSR activities have the potential to unite workers together and enable team spirit. It seems that joint activities for the sake of a noble cause are likely to spread a message of optimism among employees. Seeing the institution that they work for contribute to the community can change their approach towards it. An organization that supports activities based on compassion and giving to others adds an element of "team pride" among its employees.



Therefore, employees can draw a great deal of inspiration and encouragement from acts of giving to the community, and not only from things that are directly related to their place of work. The act of doing good is what provides those who carry it out with a longed-for sense of happiness. As Seneca noted, “Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.”

Therefore, it was found that attention should be paid to increase the employee's happiness in the workplace through CSR, both as an individual and as part of the general organizational system. Attention can definitely be paid to establishing a system that guarantees greater happiness among employees and consideration of employees' feelings on the part of the manager. There is no doubt that the challenge of leadership is complex and complicated. It includes strict supervision over production or service lines, an audit system, and proper ethical conduct. Nevertheless, good leadership is supposed to include a softer side as well, having to do with consideration of the employee's emotions. There is no doubt that a happy employee is one who feels more positive, efficient and productive.

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