

Leadership

9/11 boosts CSR awareness

Chief executives claim they are thinking more about corporate social responsibility but not many are devoting more money or resources to it, according to research in the US.

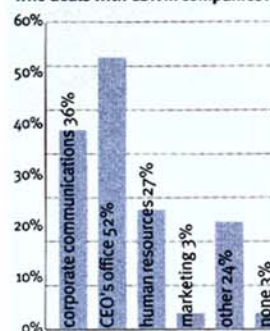
A poll of 264 heads of Fortune 1000 companies found that a third of respondents (36 per cent) said their company was more conscious of CSR since the events of 11 September 2001. But only one in five (21 per cent) said they were allocating more time or money to CSR.

Eric Yaverbaum, president of Jericho Communications, the public relations agency that carried out the poll, said there were 'mixed messages' in the research, with chief executives acknowledging the growing importance of CSR but not yet committing extra resources.

'On the one hand, chief executives are in agreement that big business can have an impact on helping the world's communities, yet despite that, very few are devoting more resources to CSR,' he said.

However, the poll did find that CSR came third on the list of spending priorities for the next five years, behind general 'company expansion' and expenditure on technology

who deals with CSR in companies?



note: more than one answer was possible (eg both corp comms and human resources could be responsible)

source: Jericho Communications

improvements. One in eight respondents claimed CSR would be their top priority.

Asked how they would spend a hypothetical \$100million (£64m) on CSR, the largest proportion (24 per cent) said they would direct the money towards work/life balance programmes, while 15 per cent would spend it on improving environmental performance, nine per cent on education overseas and six per cent on combating child labour.

The poll also found that:

- 76 per cent of respondents were more likely to invest their personal finances in a

company that practises CSR

- 52 per cent of the chief executives who responded said they were the person responsible for CSR in the company.

Chief executives also revealed a global dimension to their view of CSR, with 42 per cent saying their company should be equally responsible for communities around the world as for communities in the US.

Sixty-four per cent of them felt that the media had been fair in their coverage of company responsibilities, while 21 per cent said the media had been too harsh and nine per cent said they had been too lenient.

Only three per cent said their company's commitment to CSR policies had come about from either media or consumer group attention.

Asked to name companies they felt had been maligned by the media over CSR, 30 per cent singled out McDonald's and Starbucks.

- Almost three-quarters (70 per cent) of UK company directors are 'actively involved' with a charity, according to an Institute of Directors survey which covered firms of all sizes.

Further information:

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