



# The **'New Normal'** For Business

Value driven organisations  
**ensure sustainable profitability.**



Proud to recognise and endorse the **CSR-Accreditation** scheme delivered by CSR-A

# The 'New Normal' For Business

It is now clear that the old 'normal' was not working. As lock-down eases and we start to mend the damage done to the economy and as we hopefully enter a post pandemic world in the coming months, we must create something better than 'normal'.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can clearly see that many aspects of day to day life we experienced before the pandemic were not working. The unrelenting pace and transition to an online work and social environment has distanced us from reality. We are social creatures who function best when we interact with each other. We are at our best when we support and tolerate others. With the deliberate confusion caused by 'fake' news, the polarising effect of social media echo chambers and the blurring of the workplace into our social time via phones and tablets, we barely have time to think and reflect on the world around us.

Since February 2020 the world has changed dramatically and awareness of our social responsibilities toward each other have become significant. We have witnessed some incredible acts of kindness and support for those in need, such as rough sleepers, struggling small businesses, charities and individuals. These actions beg the question, 'why did it take a global pandemic to show us what was wrong?' At CSR-A, we very much hope that this social awareness will become the 'new normal' as society increasingly expects social value from the organisations we work for, the supply chains we employ and the brands with which we are engaged.

Has the pandemic actually re-introduced us to a more authentic normal, one in which we have a stronger sense of community and social responsibility? It feels like we lost sight of some of our values and we are now beginning to see them again. We do need something far better than the 'old normal', going forward and we are in no doubt that moral and social responsibility shown by companies, large and small, will play an essential role in forging this. The COVID-19 lock-down has permanently changed the way we as businesses interact with stakeholders, each other and the communities in which they exist.

## How has your business been operating since the advent of the pandemic?

- Have operations involved the use of technology?
- Has the time you saved on travel increased focus/productivity?
- Is the reduction of your carbon footprint, due to lock-down, sustainable?
- Have you or your business been more engaged with the local community?
- Are you aware of the positive/negative impact on your staff?

If the answer to any of those questions is yes, you have already made the first steps to developing a social responsibility strategy during the lock-down.

## What is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

Including CSR strategy into a business plan encourages organisations to be aware of the impacts of their operation on the rest of society, including their own stakeholders and the environment. It is a strategy that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders. It is a concept that addresses many and various topics such as human rights, corporate governance, health and safety, environmental effects, working conditions and contribution to economic development. The purpose of CSR strategy is to drive change towards sustainability.

So much has already changed, and we are seeing positive effects in the world around us. Not just a significant improvement in the environment, air quality and biodiversity, but in our own lives. Time to reflect, time to spend with families, a new connection with neighbours. A respect and appreciation for others, especially key workers and the charities who care for those in need.

All stakeholders from consumers, investors, employees and new recruits do not just expect to deal with responsible companies they now insist on it.

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## Defining CSR - Social responsibility is for every organisation

CSR-Accreditation (CSR-A) has introduced a standard system that provides a simple and straight forward process where you can record your organisations activity against the CSR Four Pillars of Environment, Workplace, Community and Philanthropy. The Four Pillars are designed to help you audit, benchmark, improve, and impact report on areas such as energy and waste, health and well-being, community engagement and supporting charities. This CSR policy can then be developed into an ongoing CSR strategy.

Social responsibility is now a normal strategic business practice for organisations, ensuring long term sustainable profitability. A 'new normal' for business will include a change in to operations that have impacts against the CSR Four Pillars such as:

### Environment:

Travel to work, flexible commute times, working from home, waste management and reduced use of energy. To reduce environmental impacts, organisations should adopt an integrated approach that takes into consideration the direct and indirect economic, social, health and environmental implications of their decisions and activities.

### Workplace:

Flexible working hours, hot desking, conferencing technology, mental health and well-being, skills training, emotional investment. The relationship between a company and its employees has a big impact on the relationship between a company and its customers. Organisations should embrace their workplace CSR as a natural part of their business model. Existing and potential employee values are rapidly changing, along with business models and the need to strive for sustainability.

### Community:

It is widely accepted that organisations have a relationship with the communities in which they operate. This relationship should be based on involvement to promote and contribute to community development. Community involvement - either individually or through associations seeking to enhance the public good - helps to strengthen civil society. The common good is our good.

### Philanthropy:

Consumers want to do business with companies that are socially minded. In fact, most people would rather patronise a business that is also serving the community in some way, in addition to making a profit. Therefore, it makes business sense and can positively impact your bottom line to think about how to become philanthropically engaged in your community, if you haven't done so already.

It is clear that organisations who understand their social responsibilities and explore ways in which CSR can be built into long term strategy are more likely to reap the rewards of enhanced competitive positions in the future, benefiting not only their shareholders but all stakeholders involved and society at large.

### How will this change affect your business?

Demonstrating your commitment to society will;

- Reassure customers you are the right business to work with.
- Make you more attractive to potential employees.
- Help you retain and engage your staff.
- Attract new clients and customers to you.

Social responsibility is a key driver for the long term sustainable success of business going forward. Good strategy will have an impact on all aspects of your business. In order to maximise potential, it is essential for organisation's to smartly communicate their CSR efforts to ensure that consumers view them as driven by intrinsic (genuine) rather than extrinsic (profit led) motivations.

It is now more important than ever to show that we are doing everything we can to improve the world we live in for future generations, not only by reducing the negative impact we have on the environment, but by building a better and cohesive society.

Social Responsibility is not a cost, it is an investment. Get CSR-Accredited now and not later to show expert, independent and impartial recognition of your social commitment.



# Doing Good is Good Business

It is now more important than ever to show that we are doing everything we can to improve the world we live in for future generations, not only by reducing the negative impact we have on the environment, but by building a better and cohesive society. It's amazing what we are already doing that we don't talk about. CSR-A provides the perfect opportunity to tell your positive story.

Driven by the heightened consumer awareness about environmental issues, coupled with tightening government regulations and reduced funds available for community projects, companies are now looking for innovative ways to meet their social responsibilities. It is clear that firms who understand their social responsibilities and explore ways in which CSR can be built into strategy are more likely to reap the rewards of enhanced competitive positions in the future, benefiting not only their shareholders but all stakeholders involved and the society at large.

There is now increasing recognition of the fact that CSR can be used as source of competitive advantage through good corporate governance, effective execution of innovative social projects and ethical management. In order to maximise this potential, it is essential for firms to smartly communicate their CSR efforts to ensure that consumers view them as driven by intrinsic (genuine) rather than extrinsic (profit led) motivations. The importance of integrating CSR into the culture, governance and strategy development initiatives of the company along with its current management and incentive structure is clear. This requires considerable corporate commitment, with senior management leading the implementation of strategic CSR efforts to ensure organisational 'buy-in'.

## Why become Accredited?

CSR Accreditation encourages a culture of **sustainable and social purpose with profit**. It has many advantages that can apply to any business, regardless of its size or sector. Positive CSR improves a company's public image and relationship with stakeholder, clients and consumers.

**It is all about reputation - a good reputation improves:**

- Stakeholder/Client/Consumer loyalty
- End user loyalty
- Staff loyalty

Customers want to trust organisations they engage with. Employees want to work for values-driven employers and investors want to know that a company is addressing its ethical responsibility.

## How do I get Accreditation?

Accreditation is a great way to pull together what you are already doing in regard to CSR. This helps you easily report on your sustainability, workplace and community engagement. The Accreditation application process provides a simple and straight forward template against which you can record your organisations activity using our CSR Four Pillars system - environment, workplace, community and philanthropy.

Each CSR Pillar is designed to help you audit and impact report on areas such as energy performance, recycling, staff engagement, health and well-being, community engagement and supporting local and national charities. This audit then becomes an invaluable CSR, CR, ESG policy which you can use to show all your audiences that you are a caring and responsible organisation.

## The CSR-A Mark of Excellence

The CSR Accreditation Mark should be displayed on your website, in your reception and throughout your marketing materials, proudly showing that your organisation has been independently recognised for its CSR endeavours.

All successful applications will receive a Gold, Silver or Bronze Accreditation pack. Any applicants that are unsuccessful will receive a gap analysis report on their application and a chance to re-apply within three months.



Demonstrate your commitment now and **become a CSR Leader.**

Call **01494 444494** to find out more about costs and application or visit [www.csr-accreditation.co.uk](http://www.csr-accreditation.co.uk)

Take our free **CSR Accreditation assessment survey** online visit [www.csr-accreditation.co.uk/csr-assessment-survey/](http://www.csr-accreditation.co.uk/csr-assessment-survey/)

CSR-Accreditation, 97 Cock Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 7DZ

Email - [info@csr-accreditation.co.uk](mailto:info@csr-accreditation.co.uk) Call - 01494 444494 or 07831 857332

