



Look in the Mirror and Ask These Questions

Your Corporate Social Responsibility Can Impact the Answers

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No business today operates in a vacuum.

If there's one thing that's truer today than ever before, it's that every industry and business has a growing list of stakeholders interested and engaged in how they operate.

Quite simply, people want to know how you positively or negatively impact society, and in many cases, how you impact the world. And what's the common theme of that growing interest?

One word: Responsibility

From your consumers, business partners and suppliers to the government and its formulation of laws and regulations, there demand for Corporate Social Responsibility.

"Responsibility" or the lack thereof (and sometimes it is the lack of letting others know you are responsible) can impact your business and ability to operate in the future. Take an honest look in your business mirror and ask yourself some tough questions like the ones offered here. They should stimulate some of your own questions. More importantly, you need to know the answers.

It's this kind of healthy reflection that will help you take stock and improve the direction and depth of your current Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts. It will also help you wade in if you're starting from scratch.

Questions for your business:

Does the federal government regulate your product or service? State governments? Local? And why is it regulated? Is it likely to be regulated in the future? Is your industry subsidized or punitively taxed to discourage use or demand?

At OTM Partners, we specialize in the development and management of nationally branded communications programs with a focus on corporate social responsibility campaigns.

Blending creativity with craft, we transform challenges into opportunities and objectives into outcomes.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is our business. Our award-winning team of CSR strategists has more than two decades of experience in the communications arena, and we understand that effective CSR programs are an essential element for succeeding in the business world today.

Whether you are looking to assess your current CSR efforts or to create a national program from the ground up, OTM Partners is the right team to help you achieve your goals.

Does the logistics train (parts, supplies, labor, transportation, etc.) of your product or service involve regulated products?

Is there a "green" aspect to your business? What about sustainable harvesting of natural resources domestically and/or internationally? Should there be?

Is there a fair trade element to your international logistics supply chain? Or will there be in the future?

What about the labor force? Is it onshore or offshore? White collar? Blue Collar? Will robotics, software or an app displace human labor in the future? Who thinks that's good? Who thinks that's bad?

Has your industry and/or company transitioned from doing business one way historically to a different, and perhaps, better way today?

Are there current or historical negative consumer perceptions of your industry, company or products and services that overshadow your current operating environment? What about media coverage? Does the media fairly present today's information about your business or does it feed a historical negative storyline?

Are the perceptions of elected officials and regulators about your industry or company where you want them to be? Who has their ear? Is it you?

Is there organized opposition to your industry, company, your products or services? Is the opposition altruistically motivated or politically charged?

How are school children or college students informed about your industry by their teachers and professors? Objectively? Subjectively? Highly informed or ill-informed?

What's the legal environment for your industry and your company? Are consumer protection laws applicable? Are there occasional or frequent product recalls? Is your product age-restricted? Can your product be misused or overused with negative consequences?

How would (or does) Hollywood portray your industry?

How is your "responsibility" story told and to whom? By you? Your industry? A coalition of stakeholders? Is it told effectively? Why or why not?

The desire to "do good," such as being green, or fairly compensating those who may have been unfairly compensated in the past (fair trade), or conserving natural resources play an important role in many business mindsets. Increasingly, it's top-of-mind for consumers.

But business pragmatism also requires business leaders to understand the broader questions and motivations of all the other interested stakeholders. The questions offered here will help you think holistically about your business, your needs and the demand for corporate social responsibility.

Go ahead: Look in the mirror.