
Executive Summary

The following research outlines the challenges that corporations face when communicating about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), focusing on current strategies used, and the skeptical environment they operate in. The outcome of the research was the creation of a set of recommendations for Booking regarding their CSR communication.

Booking does not currently communicate or report on their CSR achievements to external stakeholders. As Booking grows and stakeholders, NGOs, Governments and customers become increasingly interested in their operations, Booking is in need of communication strategies to engage and inform their stakeholders about their CSR program 'Booking Cares', while at the same time navigate an increasingly skeptical environment. These strategies are of particular relevance and importance for Booking, but also other corporations in general, as the success of a corporation's Corporate Social Responsibility goals are often negated if not communicated effectively; or in many cases if stakeholders aren't engaged or interested in the information presented. Effective or ineffective CSR communication can have lasting effects on the corporate image and brand of corporations and therefore must be taken seriously by Booking and corporations in general.

The research showed that Booking's competitors, in the same e-commerce industry, did not have extensive external communication around their CSR activities, and although they used different channels and mediums to communicate about their CSR activities, in general their communication was low frequency and followed a one-way informational communication strategy that was very reactive. This was surprising considering how large and global the corporations analysed are, and considering the fact that many large corporations today make a real effort to publish and produce reports on sustainability and engage stakeholders in their CSR activities. It was also surprising that there were a lack of feedback mechanisms and a lack of stakeholder dialogue in the CSR communication of the corporations analysed.

A survey was used in the research to investigate and analyse consumer and customer perspectives on CSR, CSR communication and current communication practices. Results from the survey showed that the majority of consumers and customers think that corporations should act responsibility through non-economic activities and should report on these non-economic activities. Results also showed that consumers and customers would trust the CSR intentions of corporations more if they partnered with well known NGOs, experts and organisations. In a cultural context, this study also demonstrated that respondents' answers differ according to their culture, as defined by Hofstede's cultural dimensions and that CSR perspectives differ between cultures.

For corporations to successfully communicate about their CSR initiatives externally, it's important that all the above factors are carefully considered when strategising a communication plan; such as culture, channels, fit, frequency and stakeholder involvement. At the current moment, it would be advantageous for a corporation's reputation,