

# Williams Savvy & Associates

...using shades of grey to make your case in black and white.

## Communicating CSR Workshop

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# “Spin is to PR as pornography is to art”

Robert Dilenschneider  
of the New York-based  
public relations firm  
Dilenschneider Group

For information, contact  
WS&A at 416-596-1707

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“Respect” • “Integrity”  
“Communication” • “Excellence”

...four words that were emblazened on  
everything from T-shirts to buildings  
...at Enron.

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# Something to keep in mind:

Be wary of rationalizations...  
they're more important than great sex.

“Don't knock rationalization. Where would we be without it? I don't know anyone who'd get through the day without two or three juicy rationalizations. They're more important than sex. Have you ever gone a week without a rationalization?”

Jeff Goldblum's character in *The Big Chill*

# Unfortunately...

There is no single template for a CSR communications plan.

There is no single CSR standard for accepted corporate behaviour.

There are no iron-clad quick-fix/quick-hit CSR strategies.

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# The foundation of your CSR Communication Plan

- Make sure that everyone concerned is speaking the same language
- determine the level of support for CSR that exists within your organization—effectiveness often depend on marshalling the highest levels of commitment
- Credibility

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## There are many variables.

Here are some basic questions that you need to ask and answer...avoid rationalizations:

- What does CSR mean to you? to your co-workers?
- What does it mean to your organization?
- What does it mean to your other stakeholders—customers, suppliers, NGOs, community, the media...?
- Who is asking for the communications plan? And what does CSR mean to them?

Are you speaking the same language?

# Some more questions that need answers

- Why are you creating a CSR communications plan?
- What are your short term CSR objectives? Long term CSR objectives? Are they
  - an extension of corporate culture?
  - an extension of CEO's personal interests?
  - a stand-alone self-contained project?
- What resources do you need to achieve your objectives? What resources are available?

Do you have enough support?

The most fundamental difficulties with developing a CSR communications plan are caused by not having enough information or support.

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# Your Scenario – Part I

Are you speaking the same language?

- What does CSR mean to you? to your co-workers?
- What does it mean to your organization?
- What does it mean to your other stakeholders—  
customers, suppliers, NGOs, community, the media...?
- Who is asking for the communications plan? And what  
does CSR mean to them?

CSR can have different means for different groups and organizations  
— e.g. for Nike, it was about employee morale and retention.

"The way it hurt our business was that it hurt our people. Individual employees at Nike started to wonder what kind of company they were working for and what message was being sent about the people who worked there."

-- Maria Eitel, Nike Inc. Vice President for Corporate Social Responsibility, at the Toronto Business Ethics Summit, 2001

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# Your Scenario – Part II

## Defining objectives and resources

- Why are you creating a CSR communications plan?
- What are the short term CSR objectives? Long term CSR objectives?
- Are they
  - an extension of corporate culture?
  - an extension of CEO's personal interests?
  - a stand-alone self-contained project?
- What resources do you need to achieve your objectives? And what resources are available for you to carry out your plan?

# Your Scenario – Part III

## Credibility

- How do your key internal and external stakeholders perceive your organization?
- How does this perception factor into the image you want/need to project with your communications plan?
- How do you begin to get key stakeholder buy-in?
- How do you keep that buy-in?

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# Credibility

- Make sure that everyone concerned is speaking the same language
- determine the level of support for CSR that exists within your organization—effectiveness often depend on marshalling the highest levels of commitment
- engage in internal and external dialogue on a continual basis and enable your key stakeholders to make informed decisions about your organization
- publicly stated commitments must be tested for their ambitiousness against what informed stakeholders believe to be achievable
- demonstrate how stakeholders' views have affected what the company actually does
- credible and effective public reporting needs to be underpinned by demonstrable, proactive, transparent assurance

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If you would like more information, you can visit

[www.SavvyPR.com](http://www.SavvyPR.com)

or contact us at 416-496-1707

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