



CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)

ESADE is a university institution committed to its mission and its *raison d'être*: The institution's commitment is to train individuals and ensure they acquire the highest possible level of professional competencies, with a clear international focus, and who are aware of their responsibilities as citizens and professionals.

To date, we have made a significant contribution to both the promotion and adoption of social responsibility within many companies and organisations, and this has been recognised in the form of several different accreditations and rankings. Moreover, ESADE was one of the first Spanish institutions to sign the Global Compact and the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), promoted by the United Nations.



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All this forces us to progress and to consolidate a coherent institutional praxis, in which not only will the development of training and research relevant to the field of CSR continue to be key, but also in which our visibility as an organisation with best (even model) practices will become increasingly important. This applies above all to those practices that affect people in the academic community, the rational and sustainable use of resources, the approach we adopt when undertaking social actions and initiatives – in short, our governance, transparency and accountability. In this respect, advancing and consolidating our internal CSR policy represents a real challenge for the future.

Another permanent challenge is the approach we should adopt with regards teaching and developing corporate social

responsibility, combining the perspective of professional competence with a vision of leadership as a service and commitment to society. Although ESADE has been internationally acclaimed as a pioneering school in the incorporation of CSR training programmes, we must continue to consolidate a management approach that progressively adapts to the needs and realities of the changing times we live in.

We are fully committed to CSR and to ensuring that increasing numbers of managers choose to integrate it into their company values and strategies. We believe that, by doing this, they will be promoting a type of company better suited to the future demands of their different interest groups. This will be the kind of company that will



triumph in the 21st century, because consumers' and regulatory bodies' growing interest in learning about and improving companies' social and environmental impact is indisputable. The relocation processes within the framework of globalisation, climate change, the rise in food prices, the access to medicine by poor countries, etc., are some of the social and political issues which require action by governments and international organisations in order to find solutions. Companies must also become more aware and change the ways they operate.

The growing prominence of CSR over the course of this first decade of the 21st century is proving to be even more important in the context of the intense – and predictably prolonged – economic crisis. New demands put more pressure on companies in areas such as transparency, risk management and good governance. And it is in this new climate that, in a manner that some find rather surprising, CSR is becoming relevant and meaningful, because the best practices that it promotes are beginning to be considered part of the solution and not simply a collateral issue or one of secondary importance.

And all this because companies have noticed that CSR is profitable in terms of their competitiveness. On the one hand, it helps improve their reputation, level of recognition and loyalty among their main interest groups. On the other hand, it significantly reinforces the employees' level of involvement and strengthens the companies' capacity to attract and keep talent, aspects that are crucial in human resources policies. Finally, CSR becomes a company's ally in the development of its strategic competencies. It is starting to be considered a catalyst for innovation, whether this be because it promotes the generation of new forms of action and new business models, or because it fosters the development of products or markets that respond to new social and environmental ideas and demands.



In short, ESADE's permanent challenge will continue to be to carry out rigorous research in order to create relevant knowledge in the field of CSR, so as to enrich the social debate on these issues and contribute to training that helps people to create and run companies capable of generating more economic value in a manner compatible with the creation of more social and environmental value. And it is using this perspective that we must focus our efforts on promoting knowledge that fosters well-informed solidarity, which guides action towards a commitment both to justice and the humane development of society.

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