

Book Review

The Executive's Guide to 21st Century Corporate Citizenship *By Dave Stangis & Katherine Valvoda* **Smith Wiley USA 2018, Pages: 296, Price: \$ 32.00**

The book titled 'The Executive's Guide to 21st Century Corporate Citizenship' is about winning the battle for reputation and impact. With the passage of time, practices have evolved and ways of defining corporate citizenship have changed. During the 1970s, it was believed that the main focus of business is to increase profit. However, currently, corporate citizenship is believed to be a company's ability to use its resources for the betterment of society in which it is operating and projecting itself as a responsible organization. The scope of corporate citizenship touches all the aspects of business and takes into account business priorities that must be aligned with the business strategy. According to the authors, corporate citizenship programs have many advantages, such as reinforcing brand image, enhancing engagement with customers and employees, improving social and environmental visibility, and adding to the credibility of the organization. However, the major obstacle to corporate citizenship programs are notions held by corporates and society. A few of the wrong notions mentioned in the book are as follows: organizations must not draw benefit from the initiative, organizations should follow the present strat-

egy without looking into the future, and mixing of public relations with corporate citizenship must be avoided.

The book has been divided into three sections. Sections 1, 2, and 3 have five, three, and two chapters, respectively. Chapter one begins with the explanation of the difference among 'mission', 'vision', and 'purpose'. To design a corporate citizenship strategy and program, looking back at the origin of an organization is required. This can be easily achieved by asking a simple question: 'Why was the organization created'? However, many years after the origin, answering this question may be difficult. The answer to this question can reveal the core purpose. The purpose and competencies together make up the value proposition of an organization. Connecting the elements of the corporate citizenship strategy with the value proposition of the organization can result into the development of an impeccable program. In chapter two of the book, authors categorically mention that corporate citizenship focuses on building relationships with stakeholders. For this, understanding the need and ways to engage with customers, activists, employees, and investors is

required. Stakeholders can be engaged through products and services; for instance, how costumers relate to what an organization produces or provides. The needs of stakeholders can be known by understanding issues that are important to them. Authors recommend engaging with the most difficult shareholder because it can help in creating a competitive advantage; that is, if the bull doesn't kill you, then take it by the horn at the end of the bout and you will emerge stronger. In chapter three of the book, the word 'stakeholders' has been further broadened by discussing the environment and service ecosystem. The effect of the corporate citizenship program on stakeholders has very well been explained using an example of the Disney Channel. The chapter concludes with the final note that a vital stakeholder is the employee of the organization; thus, the HR department has to be involved in the corporate citizenship program.

Chapter four focuses on linking corporate citizenship with the business strategy. Corporate citizenship is about creating value for the business by aligning it with the purpose, culture, and strategy of the business. To obtain the maximum business and social value, the following aspects are crucial for organizations: fit with the culture, participation of leaders, and resource utilization. Taking along all stakeholders, the corporate citizenship strategy must also exploit key resources and capabilities at its discretion. The fifth chapter is about setting up and organizing the corporate citizenship program. Teams that differentiate the company from its competitors should be formed.

Interconnectedness of all the areas of business is key to implementing and experiencing corporate citizenship. Interconnectedness builds a network, and this, in turn, results into success because each part derives strength from the other. This networked thinking is also called system thinking. For example, the success of Dave Strangis at Campbell is cited to drive home the point that for corporate citizenship to succeed, an organization must have the right structure in place. The plan that he rolled for the company revolved around four theatres of operations and leveraging cultural norms.

The section two of the book has been titled 'Getting Results Across Your Business'. This section is dedicated to operations and strategic philanthropy. In the first chapter of this section, the importance of procurement to corporate citizenship has been highlighted. A company's mistake in the procurement function can affect their reputation and also divert their attention from the focus area. Thus, companies need to pay attention to ethical issues arising out of procurement. Authors recommend the use of persisting code of conduct, which can help in adopting the ethical supply chain approach for the business. In the second chapter of this section, authors focus on the internal business by choosing the most productive areas of business and the outcome of which will be a model envied by both suppliers and competitors. It should begin by an internal assessment of performance in the environmental realm with the big three, namely energy, water, and waste. Once baseline data on the big three have been collected, it will put the

measurement system in place, and thereafter, it will provide numerous opportunities to work upon. After having baseline measures, the task is to create goals and performance targets. The recommended areas for goals and performance are employee health and wellbeing; building and facilities; and travel, transportation, and sustainable packaging. The last chapter of this section focuses on giving. Society must be benefited by gifts given by corporates. The gifts add value when causes and issues that matter to companies' stakeholders and the environment are given priority. Giving also encourages employee engagement, and this happens when companies invest in charities that are not related to business needs but are dear to employees' hearts.

Third section focuses on communicating the corporate citizenship program and building of systems and processes to support the strategy. The essence of chapter nine is that while communicating, the message should be kept simple, limited, and truthful, and it should also motivate action. Apart from this, the same message has to be consistently repeated many times to drive home the point. Using simple language for communication is advisable if technical jargons are used because stakeholders may not understand them. Furthermore, in this chapter, authors recommend TRAVELS (i.e. time sensitive, rational, action-oriented, validation, emotional, limited, and simple) for building communication. The final chapter of the book focuses on methods for executing the strategy and plans to improve grey areas. Demand for information regarding corporate citizenship

performance by stakeholders has resulted in organizations adopting reporting standards and guidelines. Reporting standards offer many advantages to organizations adopting them. Integrated reporting has been discussed in detail.

This is a good book to read because it deals with a vital but neglected aspect of business; that is, corporate citizenship. Through this work, authors have attempted to provide clarity on an often confused word. The authors suggest that corporate citizenship programs can provide a strategic edge to an organization over the others. It can also help in employee engagement when a company invests in charities that are not related to business needs but are close to employees' hearts. This book provides new insights into corporate citizenship and can change the way we see things around us. The book contains examples and case studies of organizations where corporate citizenship programs have been successfully implemented by leaders.

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