

Career Opportunities in **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Description of the field

"Corporate Social Responsibility" is an evolving and maturing field. It emerged in the 1990s as the new big idea in the business world and since then has developed into a field with substantial and diverse career opportunities. The term "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) has been coined to define how companies behave in social, environmental, and ethical contexts. CSR involves integrating the issues of the workplace, the community, and the marketplace into core business strategies. A recent development is the concept of "creating shared value," which more deeply incorporates CSR into corporate policies and operating practices to enhance competitiveness while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates. Driving this emerging field are the customers who choose products with good reputations, investors who put money into companies with exemplary records, firms that invest in the future or training of their employees, and employers interested in mutually beneficial relationships with local communities.

Career opportunities in CSR reflect the diversity of the field and incorporate the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

Private Sector

The first place to find CSR-related positions is within companies. CSR departments are often located in places such as the public affairs/relations, compliance, or legal divisions and known alternatively as "human rights programs," "reputation management," or "environmental risk." Opportunities are also appearing in the large accounting and consulting firms, many of which are trying to compete with the niche CSR consulting firms and offering their own CSR client services. The growth of interest in socially responsible investing (SRI) has also led to opportunities working for companies which screen firms on CSR issues and produce stock indices and socially-conscious mutual funds. As with strategic CSR consultancies, SRI jobs can be found either within larger investment houses or in independent boutique firms. Strategic CSR consulting firms provide an opportunity to work with public, private and nonprofit sectors on a range of issues. Firms often concentrate on specific areas including strategy, management, environment, rating and foundations.

QUALIFICATIONS TO ENTER THE FIELD

- + There are no prerequisite qualifications to enter this field. Since the field itself is relatively new, direct experience in the sector is less important than it might be in other professions. Rather, transferable skills and knowledge are valued instead. For example, a law degree might be necessary for certain human rights positions, or a scientific degree or background required to work in environmental CSR.
- + Many corporations move staff into CSR positions as a staff retention strategy. This makes joining a corporate CSR office more challenging but not impossible.
- + In addition to content knowledge, it is important to demonstrate a long-term interest in the subject and to be conversant on the current CSR debates. Interest can be shown through extra-curricular involvement in CSR societies and conferences (such as Net Impact), coursework, internships, or a variety of other activities.
- + The CSR community is still relatively small; therefore, it can be much easier to network and become familiar with current issues than in more established fields.

Public Sector

The public sector CSR career options can be found mainly in national government agencies and international organizations. There are now CSR positions in international organizations such as the UN's International Labor Organization and the World Bank via the Business Partners for Development program. National governments have also started building CSR departments, often in their international development branches such as USAID in the US and the DFID and Foreign Office in the UK. The British government has even gone as far as instituting a Minister for Corporate Social Responsibility. Internationally, both the UN and the World Bank have become very involved in promoting CSR. Through the UN there is the International Labor Organization, the Global Compact, and some initiatives within the UNDP. Both the World Bank and World Bank Institute have their own initiatives in CSR, corporate governance, and private sector development. Like nonprofits, many UN organizations have a fundraising/partnership office for the purpose of building partnerships with the private sector.

Nonprofit Sector

There are a wide variety of NGOs, industry associations, think tanks, and academic institutions engaging in learning and/or advocacy within the CSR arena. These include groups such as the Business for Social Responsibility, Climate Counts, and Ceres. These groups promote and examine the use of CSR concepts within the private and public spheres. NGOs and nonprofits often have positions related to corporate partnership development for programs. While these roles are primarily focused on fundraising, they may also include program development components.

Career Paths

Career opportunities in CSR reflect the diversity of the field and incorporate the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. Skills and knowledge required in this field may include an appreciation and understanding of societal needs, a greater understanding of the true bases of company productivity, and the ability to collaborate across for-profit/nonprofit boundaries. Opportunities tend to overlap with the sustainability and environmental management fields.

Career paths may vary. It is not unheard of to begin in the compliance department of a large enterprise such as Levi Strauss, move into the public sector designing government policy, and end up working for a niche consulting company providing CSR client services.

Entry salaries vary as much as career paths and could range from the lower end of working for a CSR nonprofit to better remunerated positions working in the legal department of a corporation. Between these extremes are corporate positions and those within international institutions such as the World Bank and the UN.

DEMAND

- + Consumers are demanding more information on everything from where and how their goods are produced to the environmental record of the companies they invest in. Both the Dow Jones and FTSE produce specialist indices to provide investors with information on which companies score highly on CSR-related concerns. The governments of some countries require companies to assess and monitor their wider social, environmental, and ethical performances. There is some debate, however, among CSR experts on the extent of customers' CSR demands, both in socially responsible niche markets and in mainstream markets.
- + The demand for people with an interest or experience in the CSR field is growing quickly as communications improve and demand for increased transparency and accountability in the corporate sector increases. In addition, recognition of the important positive role that the corporate sector can play in the communities it touches has encouraged companies themselves to become involved, spurred on by governments and nonprofit organizations.
- + It should also be noted that the commitment to CSR and hence supply of related jobs is, at present, more developed in Europe than it is in the US, although the American market is growing rapidly.

Sample Employers

Academia and Research

- Boston College, Center for Corporate Citizenship – bcccc.net
- Harvard Business School, Social Enterprise Initiative – hbs.edu/socialenterprise
- Kennedy School of Government, Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative – hks.harvard.edu/centers/mrcbg/programs/csri
- MSCI ESG Research – msci.com
- Stanford University's Center for Social Innovation – gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/centers-initiatives/csi/
- University of California, Berkeley's Center for Responsible Business – responsiblebusiness.haas.berkeley.edu/

Associations

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education – aashe.org/about/aashe-awards
- US Chamber of Commerce Corporate Citizenship Center – uschamberfoundation.org/corporate-citizenship-center
- Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) – www.bsr.org
- Ceres – ceres.org
- CSR Europe – csreurope.org
- Human Rights Business Institute (Denmark) – humanrights.dk/business-human-rights
- International Business Leaders' Forum (IBLF) Global – iblfglobal.org
- Net Impact – netimpact.org
- Publish What You Pay – publishwhatyoupay.org
- Public Relations Society of America: Silver Anvil Awards – prsa.org/Awards/SilverAnvil
- Social Accountability International – sa-intl.org
- The Women's Network for a Sustainable Future (WNSF) – wnsf.net
- Transparency International – transparency.org
- UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association – uksif.org
- US Department of Energy Sustainability Awards – <http://energy.gov/management/spo/sustainability-awards>
- Verite Inc. – verite.org/

Consultancies: Management

- Alt.Consulting – altconsulting.net
- Corporate Citizenship – corporate-citizenship.com/
- FTI Consulting – fticonsulting.com
- ICF Consulting – icfi.com
- PricewaterhouseCoopers – pwc.com
- SSG Advisors – ssg-advisors.com

Consultancies: Strategic

- Article 13 – article13.com
- DAI – dai.com
- Cleantech Group – cleantech.com
- Natural Logic – natlogic.com
- SustainAbility – sustainability.com

FUTURE CHALLENGES OF THE PROFESSION

- + Along with the increasing interest in and development of the field of CSR, there are some challenges as well. Like every emerging field, some people have tried to downplay its importance and labeled it a trend which may go out of fashion. There is certainly a backlash in some quarters: Nestlé withdrew some of its commitments and Nike has fought to defend some statements it made back in 1996 about its working conditions. And like Human Resources and Marketing departments, during an economic downturn, honoring CSR commitments are more difficult for some firms.
- + Additionally, there is also much work to be done to make the CSR field itself more rigorous, to find ways to gather qualitative and quantitative information more efficiently and easily, and to make standards more uniform and accepted in specific sectors.
- + Despite these challenges, the CSR movement has gained enough momentum such that it would be hard to reverse; therefore, people with CSR-related skills and experience are therefore likely to be increasingly sought after.

- Synergos Consulting Services – synergosconsulting.org
- TCC – tccgrp.com

Consultancies: Foundation

- Foundation Strategy Group – FSG.org
- Wellspring Advisor – wellspringadvisors.com

Consultancies: Environment

- AccountAbility – accountability.org
- Anthesis – anthesisgroup.com
- Blue Sky Consulting – www.bluskye.com
- Cameron Cole – cameron-cole.com
- The Cadmus Group, Inc. – cadmusgroup.com
- Junxion Strategy – junxion.com
- Kuhn Associates – kuhnassociatesllc.com
- Paladino & Company – paladinoandco.com
- Strategic Sustainability Consulting – sustainabilityconsulting.com
- Volans – volans.com
- WSP Environmental – wsp-pb.com
- YR & G – yrgxyz.com

Consultancies: Communications

- APCO Worldwide – apcoworldwide.com
- Fenton – fenton.com
- Fresh Consulting – freshconsulting.com
- LUCITÀ – lucita.net

Corporations

- Citi Foundation – citigroup.com/citi/foundation/
- Exxon Mobil – exxonmobil.com/corporate
- Hewlett Packard Global Citizenship – hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/society/social.html
- GE Citizenship – ge.com/ca/en/about-us/citizenship
- Nike Foundation – news.nike.com/nike-foundation
- Home Depot Foundation – homedepotfoundation.org
- Patagonia – patagonia.com/corporate-responsibility.html
- Polo Ralph Lauren Foundation – global.ralphlauren.com/en-us/About/Philanthropy
- Starbucks Corporation – starbucks.com/responsibility
- Procter & Gamble (P&G) – us.pg.com/sustainability/social_responsibility
- Cisco Systems – csr.cisco.com
- GAP Inc. – gapinc.com/content/csr
- Timberland – responsibility.timberland.com/

International Organizations

- International Organization for Employers – ioe-emp.org
- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – oecd.org
- The United Nations Global Compact – unglobalcompact.org/
- The World Bank – worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do/crinfo

Law Firms

- Bakermckenzie.com – bakermckenzie.com

Nonprofits

- Amnesty International – [amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org)
- American Red Cross – [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)
- American Wildlife Foundation – [awf.org](https://www.awf.org)
- CARE International – [care.org](https://www.care.org)
- Climate Counts – [climatecounts.org](https://www.climatecounts.org)
- Food Bank for New York City – [foodbanknyc.org](https://www.foodbanknyc.org)
- Plan International – [plan-international.org](https://www.plan-international.org)

Rating / Certification

- B Lab – [bcorporation.net](https://www.bcorporation.net)
- CSR Hub – [csrhub.com](https://www.csrhub.com)
- Dow Jones Sustainability Index – [sustainability-index.com/](https://www.sustainability-index.com/)
- Equitable Origin – [equitableorigin.org](https://www.equitableorigin.org)
- FLO-Cert – [flocert.net](https://www.flocert.net)
- Global Reporting Initiative – [globalreporting.org](https://www.globalreporting.org)
- The Green Organisation – [thegreenorganisation.info/](https://www.thegreenorganisation.info/)
- Plan International – [plan-international.org](https://www.plan-international.org)
- UL – [ul.com](https://www.ul.com)

Socially Responsible Investing

- AccountAbility – [accountability.org/uk](https://www.accountability.org/uk)
- Acumen Fund – [acumen.org](https://www.acumen.org)
- Calvert Group – [calvert.com](https://www.calvert.com)
- Ethical Investment Research Services (EIRIS) – [eiris.org](https://www.eiris.org)
- Pax World Funds – [paxworld.com](https://www.paxworld.com)
- SocialFunds.com – [socialfunds.com](https://www.socialfunds.com)
- The Conservation Company – [tccgrp.com](https://www.tccgrp.com)

CSR Job Search Tools

- Green Jobs Network – [greenjobsearch.org](https://www.greenjobsearch.org)
- Acre – [acre.com](https://www.acre.com)

Resources for Additional Information

LinkedIn Groups

- Corporate Social Responsibility CSR and Sustainable Development – [linkedin.com/groups/82951/profile](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/82951/profile)
- CSR – [linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=59299](https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=59299)

Internet Resources

- Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals – [strategic-alliances.org](https://www.strategic-alliances.org) – ASAP serves those who manage strategic alliances in the modern enterprise.
- Boston College's Center for Corporate Citizenship – [ccc.bc.edu](https://www.ccc.bc.edu) – Features job postings in CSR.
- Business Ethics Magazine – [business-ethics.com](https://www.business-ethics.com)
- Business Social Responsibility – www.bsr.org – Helps companies achieve success and demonstrate respect for ethical values; its job listings are from organizations' member companies in the private, nonprofit, and public sectors.
- [Corporateregister.com](https://www.corporateregister.com) – Provides CSR reports and awards
- CSR Hub – [csrhub.com](https://www.csrhub.com)
- CSR Europe – [csreurope.org/](https://www.csreurope.org/) – A nonprofit organization that helps companies combine corporate social responsibility and business practice. It provides job listings in the US and Europe at private and nonprofit firms.

- CSR International: An Incubator for CSR 2.0 Solutions – csrinternational.org/
- CSRwire – csrwire.com – A corporate responsibility newswire service.
- Weinreb Group – weinrebgroup.com/category/searches – A useful list of links for CSR jobs.
- Empowering Responsible Investing EIRIS – eiris.org – Provides environmental, social, governance research for responsible investors.
- Ethical Corporation – www.ethicalcorp.com – Provides business information about corporate social, financial, and environmental responsibility, as well as links to CSR job and internship listings at private and nonprofit firms worldwide.
- Ethical Performance – ethicalperformance.com/ – Monthly business newsletter on corporate social responsibility and socially responsible investment.
- Forum for the Future – forumforthefuture.org – Offers a course: Masters in Leadership for Sustainable Development, publishes Green Futures magazine.
- Good Money – goodmoney.com – Provides investment handbooks on companies with socially responsible records; the firm posts private-sector corporate responsibility job announcements on its website.
- Institute of Business Ethics IBE – ibe.org.uk – Works to raise public awareness of the importance of doing business ethically.
- Net Impact – netimpact.org
- Oxford HR – oxfordhr.co.uk – A consultancy that helps agencies recruit for management and specialist posts in the areas of development aid, emergency relief, environmental conservation, and ethical business.
- Starting Bloc – startingbloc.org
- Sustainability Practice Network – sustainabilitypractice.net – A NYC- based forum for professionals working with corporate responsibility and sustainability issues to build a community based on learning, discussion, information and idea exchange.
- 3BL Media – 3blmedia.com

Publications

- *Common Interest, Common Good: Creating Value through Business and Social Sector Partnerships*, Shirley Sagawa, et al, Harvard Business School Press, 2000.
- *Compassionate Capitalism: How Corporations Can Make Doing Good an Integral Part of Doing Well*, Marc Benioff and Karen Southwick, Career Press, 2004.
- *Corporate Social Responsibility as an International Strategy*, by Christina Keinert, Physica-Verlag, 2008.
- *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause*, Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee, Wiley Press, 2004.
- *Harvard Business Review on Corporate Social Responsibility*, Harvard Business School Press, 2003.
- *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, David Bornstein, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, et al, Back Bay Books, 2008.
- *Profits with Principles: Seven Strategies for Delivering Value with Values*, Ira A. Jackson and Jane Nelson, Currency Publishers, 2004.
- *Raising the Bar: Integrity and Passion in Life and Business: The Story of Clif Bar Inc.*, Gary Erickson, Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- *Saving the Corporate Soul and (Who Knows?) Maybe Your Own: Eight Principles for Creating and Preserving Wealth and Well-Being for You and Your Company Without Selling Out*, David Batstone, Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- *In Pursuit of the Common Good*, Paul Newman and A.E. Hotchner, Nan A. Talese, 2008.
- *The Age of Responsibility: CSR 2.0 and the New DNA of Business* Wayne Visser, Wiley Press, 2011.
- *The Cathedral Within: Transforming Your Life by Giving Something Back*, William H. Shore, Random House, 2002.