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**Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility
Performance of Organisations: A Key to Winning
Stakeholders' Goodwill**

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility is an approach whereby a company considers the interests of all stakeholders, both within the organisation and in society and applies those interests while developing its strategy and during execution; it offers organisations various opportunities not only to differentiate themselves from competitors, but also, for reducing costs. However, organisations must endeavour to communicate their corporate social responsibility initiatives to the stakeholders. Therefore, this study is an examination of the importance of communicating CSR initiatives of organisations to the stakeholders. The analysis shows that it is important for organisations to communicate their CSR initiatives to the different stakeholders so as to win their goodwill. A disconnect in communication between CSR initiatives and public awareness will impede any potential benefits to an organisation. Thus, it is important to intelligently and strategically communicate this to the public. Some of the channels for communicating CSR initiatives are: press releases, internal web portals, newsletters, emails, television commercials, print advertisements, billboard advertisements and Internet communications, which offer opportunities to engage and share information with vast audiences. The paper therefore recommends that it is imperative for every organisation to communicate its corporate social responsibility initiatives to the stakeholders through different channels of communication as it is one of the ways to win the goodwill of the stakeholders.

Key words: Communication, corporate social responsibility, initiatives, stakeholders and goodwill

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility has grown into a global phenomenon that encompasses businesses, consumers, governments and civil society and many organisations have adopted its discourse. Organisations now carry out corporate social responsibility activities with a view to winning the goodwill of both the internal and external

publics. This perhaps explains why Branco and Rodrigues (2007, p.1) observe that companies engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) mainly because they can reap some kind of benefits from such engagement. It is thus necessary to have a corporate social responsibility (CSR) notion which is able to address this important feature.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a business concept whereby a company seeks to behave in socially and environmentally responsible ways so that its business contributes to society in meaningful and lasting ways (Hopkins, 2007). Scarlett (2011, p. 3) avers that “companies are incentivised to engage in socially responsible programmes because of the potential benefits to business, which include brand enhancement, market differentiation and employee satisfaction”. This implies that organisations carry out corporate social responsibility activities with a view to reaping certain benefits; however these corporate social responsibility activities carried out by organisations need to be communicated to the internal and external publics who are the stakeholders. The stakeholders of an organisation go a long way in determining the success or failure of the organisation in the environment where it operates. A corporate stakeholder is that which can affect or be affected by the actions of the business as a whole. The stakeholder concept was first used in a 1963 internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute. It defined stakeholders as “those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist.” The theory was later developed and championed by R. Edward Freeman in the 1980s. Since then, it has gained wide acceptance in business practice and in theorising relating to strategic management, corporate governance, business purpose and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

However, organisations must not only pay attention to corporate social responsibility performance; there is the need to also communicate such activities so as to make them know that they are working. Communication, according to McShane & Von Glinow (2003) is the process by which information is transmitted and

understood between two or more parties. The communicational aspects of an organisation, as noted by Larsson (1997) have become an increasingly important strategic issue; emphasising that communication must be effectively adjusted for the intended target group. Communication is very important to successful running of organisations; thus, this study explores the communication of corporate social responsibility activities as a strategy for winning the goodwill of stakeholders.

Conceptualisation of Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families, as well as, the local community and society at large; it is one of the management strategies where companies try to create a positive impact on society, while doing business. Social responsibility is an ethical ideology or theory that an entity, be it an organisation or individual, has an obligation to act, to benefit society at large (Asemah, Edegoh and Anatsui, 2013). Organisations are expected to fulfil certain responsibilities, just as citizens are; these responsibilities can be classified into four; namely: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (Carroll, 1998). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is based on the idea that corporations are more than just profit-seeking entities and that they must be responsible for the societal and environmental effects of their business activities (Lantos, 2001). Corporate social responsibility is an attempt made by an organisation to provide certain social services to environments where they operate. Organisations may not be government, but they are supposed to take care of the environments where they carry out their operations. No wonder Dahan and Senol (2006) aver that corporate social responsibility is defined through the ethical relationship and transparency of the organisation with all its stakeholders that has a relationship as well as with the establishment of corporate goals that are compatible with the sustainable development of society, preserving environmental and cultural resources for future

generations, respecting diversity and promoting the reduction of social problems. This definition implies that organisations need to construct roads, provide pipe born water, construct school blocks and provide health facilities, etc, for the community members as this is one of the ways of building mutual understanding between themselves and the host communities. Similarly, Hopkins (2007) explains that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a business concept whereby a company seeks to behave in socially and environmentally responsible ways so that its business contributes to society in meaningful and lasting ways. Organisations, as noted by Hopkins (2007) are incentivised to engage in socially responsible programmes because of the potential benefits to business, which include brand enhancement, market differentiation and employee satisfaction. Thus, it can be said that corporate social responsibility has to do with the idea that business has a duty to serve society as well as the financial interest of stakeholders. It has to do with the company's aim to earn society's trust and to work to achieve sustainable corporate growth and increased value (National Open University of Nigeria, 2010). This perhaps explains why Asada (2010) describes corporate social responsibility as the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families, as well, as of the local community and society at large. Asada (2010) further observes that CSR is the duty of care which corporations exhibits not only with respect to their business operations such as profits, return on investment, dividend payment, but also with respect to social, environments, health, education and other consequences.

Asada's definition shows that corporate social responsibility is a continuous exercise as it is not what you do as an organisation today and ignore tomorrow; this is because the host community may be happy with you today because you are taking care of their environment, but when you stop taking care of their environment, they are likely to react in a negative way. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept of business that concerns the important

relationship between companies and society (Carroll, 1999). It is broadly defined as the role that a company takes to integrate responsible business practices and policies into its business model to promote higher standards of living in society, for employees and the environment while preserving profitability (Hopkins, 2007). Contributing to the numerous definitions of corporate social responsibility, the Green Paper of the European Commission (July 2001) defines it as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. CSR is one of an organisation's responsibilities to its stakeholder and also a voluntary contribution by corporation to sustainable development (Crane and Matten, 2007, cited in Mahbuba, 2013). The recent globalisation demand organisations to be more engaged in CSR activities (Chapple and Moon, 2005, cited in Mahbuba, 2013). As noted by Nweke (2001, p. 220):

Corporate social responsibility as it were, is geared towards an objective and intelligent application of wisdom by individuals or organisations or corporate entities in the provision of social welfare in such a way that the donor does not suffer so much loss in business yield that would negate the essence of the entire exercise. This therefore shows the nature and extent of organisational direct involvement in an area and how such activities impact positively on the relationship between the organisation and its host community.

The fact is that an organisation cannot shy away from the responsibility of providing certain amenities to the community where it operates. To this end, Nweke (2001, p. 220) avers that the organisation cannot shy away from the challenges and demands of the community where it operates, for obvious reasons. The community has some challenges; it has some needs, which the government may not have been able to provide and so, it is now left for the organisation

to take upon it itself such needs and challenges of the community and help the community to overcome them. This may be the reason why Asemah and Asogwa (2012) posit that it is social investment or involvement philosophy that helps any social institution or organisation (plus government), to avoid taking decisions or actions that may make it to be seen by its target publics as uncaring or insensitive to their needs and interests. Nwosu (1996) says that corporate social responsibility is the intelligent and objective concern for the welfare of people and society, which restrains individuals and corporate entities (government) from engaging in policies and activities, no matter how profitable or attractive that will portray them as callous and engaging in activities that will contribute to the betterment of men and society. Thus, even though organisations are not governments, they are also encouraged to provide some important infrastructures to the communities where they operate. They need to execute certain projects in the vicinity where they operate so that, they will be seen in good light and perceived as socially responsible. It is in line with this that Harrison in kitchen (1997, p. 128) notes that organisations are part of the society in which they exist and operate; hence, they need to consider their corporate behaviours as part of their roles in the society. Failure to carry out the social responsibilities will surely have negative impact on the organisation. Thus, Baumol (1970), cited in Nweke (2001, p. 220) avers that the consequences of such neglect are that the company pays a high price for operating in a region where education is poor, where living conditions are deplorable, where health is poorly protected, where property is unsafe and where cultural activity, is all, but dead.

Conceptualisation of Stakeholder

The concept “stakeholder” was first used in 1963 in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute. The concept, according to its first usage refers to groups whose support, the organisation needs, so as to remain in existence. The concept was developed to a theory and championed by Edward Freeman in the 1980s (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 89, cited in Amodu, 2012, p.52).

Stakeholder theory is a theory of organisational management and business ethics that addresses morals and values in managing an organisation. Freeman (1983) identifies and models the groups which are stakeholders of a corporation and both describes and recommends methods by which management can give due regard to the interests of those groups. In short, it attempts to address the "Principle of Who or What Really Counts. Hahn (2005) notes that a newer approach to the consideration of objectives is the 'stakeholder' theory which suggests that a company has responsibility to maintain an equitable and working balance among the claims of the interested groups, i.e. stockholders, employees, customers, suppliers, vendors, and the public.

Stakeholders are government bodies, political groups, trade associations, trade unions, communities, financiers, suppliers, employees and customers. Sometimes even competitors are counted as stakeholders - their status being derived from their capacity to affect the firm and its other morally legitimate stakeholders. The nature of what is a stakeholder is highly contested with hundreds of definitions existing in the academic literature (Miles, 2011; Miles, 2012). Freeman argued that business relationships should include all those who may "affect or be affected by" a corporation (Clarkson 1995, Freeman 1984, Freeman and Reed 1983). Much of the research in stakeholder theory has sought to systematically address the question of which stakeholders deserve or require management attention (Mitchell, Agle and Wood 1997). Approaches to this question have focused on relationships between organisations and stakeholders based on exchange transactions, power dependencies, legitimacy claims or other claims (Cummings and Doh 2000; Donaldson and Preston 1995; Mitchell, Agle and Wood 1997). Researchers have attempted to integrate stakeholder theory with other managerial perspectives, particularly theories of governance and agency (Hill and Jones 1992, Jones 1995). Thus, Webster (n.d) avers that a corporation's stakeholders consist of all those entities that are affected by the corporation and how it does business. This includes

shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and the community in which it exists. The stakeholder value perspective places emphasis on operating the business in a manner that benefits all stakeholders involved. However, the bottom line is that none of a corporation's stakeholders benefit when organisational stability is threatened. Employees rely on the stability of the business to maintain their jobs and the community relies on tax revenue generated by working citizens to maintain infrastructure. None of these needs can be met without maintaining profitable businesses in the community.

The stakeholder's concept as noted by Freeman and Reed (1983) identifies the groups and individuals relative to a corporation. It also describes, as well as, recommends methods by which the interest of each party can be catered for by the management of an organisation. The question of or the issue of who and who should be or are the stakeholders of an organisation has been a subject of debate over the years. This explains why Philips (2004) avers that the question of who is and who is not a stakeholder has been discussed for years. Some of the questions that appear relevant to a proper conceptualisation are: should stakeholder's status be a reserved right for constituencies having close relationship with organisations? Should the status be seen to apply broadly to all groups that can affect or be affected by the organisation? Should activists, competitors, natural environment or even the media be classified as stakeholders? Freeman and Reed (1983) however made attempt to answer the question; they explain that the narrow definition only includes the groups that are vital to the survival and success of the organisation, while the wider or broad definition accommodates all groups that can affect or be affected by the actions of the corporation.

Theoretical Underpinning

The paper is anchored on interactional view theory. The theory was formulated by Paul Watzlawick. The theory is based on four axioms. First, that one cannot not communicate; second, that communication = content + relationship; third, that the nature of relationship depends on

how both parties punctuate the communication sequence and fourth, that all communication is either symmetrical or complimentary (Griffin, 2000). The theory therefore lays emphasis on the relevance of communication in our society. Although, this theory was designed for relationship maintenance in family relationship, it has application in corporate social responsibility, particularly in the communication of corporate social responsibility initiatives or activities of organisations. Going by the first axiom, an organisation that fails to communicate its corporate social responsibility activities to the stakeholders will lose the goodwill of the stakeholders. Secondly, organisations must constantly communicate with the stakeholders. On the third axiom, if the organisation does not use the right language to communicate, the message will not be effective. Therefore, all communication must be constructed within the context of the stakeholders. The fourth axiom implies that for organisations to maintain close relationship with their stakeholder, they must always listen to them and at the same time talk with them.

The relevance of the theory to the study cannot be over-emphasised; according to the theory, communication is very important in our society; thus Watzlawick avers that man cannot not communicate. Organisations must communicate their activities to their stakeholders so that the stakeholders will understand their operations, thereby bringing about mutual understanding.

Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility

Communication is defined as the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more parties (McShane and Glinow, 2003). As averred by Morsing and Schultz (2006), “CSR information is a double-edged sword”. Lawrence 2002, Windsor 2002, Lingaard 2006 and Smith 2003), cited in Morsing and Schultz, (2006) in their theoretical debate averred that their reputation survey suggests that CSR initiatives are important to the general public. Bethel Law Corporation (n.d) avers that corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting has become a popular method for companies to

integrate CSR and sustainability into their decision-making processes. This tool helps the company to identify material issues, risks and opportunities. By reporting on its environmental, economic and social impact on the community, a company is able to engage with stakeholders and maintain a meaningful dialogue on the direction of the business. In an age of negative public perception of corporations, CSR reports can help to build a company's positive image. Regular CSR reports which are relevant, honest, and correctly targeted will strengthen credibility with stakeholders and the general public and in turn, aid the company in gaining a competitive advantage. Reports also improve employee morale and motivation, as they gain confidence in their employer and their own roles within the company (Bethel Law Corporation, n.d). Maignan, Ferrell and Hult (1999) aver that messages about corporate ethical and socially responsible initiatives are likely to evoke strong and often positive reactions among stakeholders. Research has even pointed to the potential business benefits of the internal and external communication of corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. As noted by Maignan and Ferrell (2004):

CSR is all about business conduct. The stakeholders' various experiences, of degree of met expectations, will determine the "territory", and thus the communication platform. A lack of transparency or awareness of needs to communicate sustainability issues may damage the territory and thus the brand. Building a brand is a long term effort, but destroying it, by a CSR scandal, can happen overnight.

Channels of Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility Activities

There are various channels that can be used to communicate corporate social responsibility performance of an organisation; one of the channels as noted by Scarlet (2011) is press releases. Others are through internal web portals, newsletters, emails, television

commercials, print advertisements, billboard advertisements and Internet communications, which offer opportunities to engage and share information with vast audiences. More so, a section of the company's website can be dedicated to CSR to inform visitors of its initiatives and incorporating social networking sites into the communication plan invites consumers to join the company in support of the cause (Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen, 2010). Advocacy advertising and cause promotion are two approaches for communicating CSR (Menon and Kahn, 2003).

Through advocacy advertising, an organisation as noted by Menon and Kahn (2003) "provides a resource to a cause or philanthropic organisation and its involvement is communicated through channels that focus on the cause or philanthropic organisation, rather than on the company". Cause promotion encourages audiences to purchase a product that will benefit the cause; this is also called cause marketing. Menon and Kahn (2003) argue that when a company does not advertise in a way that shows how the company itself benefits, it triggers more elaborate processing by the message receiver to understand the actual motives of the company. Instead, cause promotion shows an obvious company motive to sell their product. Menon and Khan (2003) found that cause promotions yielded higher ratings of CSR than advocacy advertising. They attributed these results to the idea that it was easier to understand a company's support for a cause when they saw the business benefit from selling the product; however, advocacy advertising focusing solely on the cause led to more elaborate cognition on the company's motives for promotion.

Source Credibility and the Communication of Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes

Source credibility is the believability of a communicator, as perceived by the recipient of the message (Asemah, 2011, cited in Asemah and Ogwu, 2013). Credibility is the ability to inspire belief and trust. Flanagan and Metzger, cited in Guo, Yu, Ming and Chan (2010), cited

in Olumuji, Asemah and Edegoh (2013) propose that the consistent definition for credibility is believability, accuracy, trustworthiness and completeness of information. Accuracy, believability and factualness are the three commonly identified items oriented toward the content of information. There are a number of other indicators, such as how the media treat certain groups, media treatment of the average person, if the media act as a watchdog over government officials, if there are too much coverage of “bad news” and so on.

The study of credibility in media was a major focus since the early days of mass communication scholarship. Media credibility is defined as perceptions of a news channel's believability, as distinct from individual sources, media organisations or the content of the news itself (Bucy in Murphy and Auter, 2012, cited in Olumuji, Asemah and Edegoh, 2013). Guo, Yu, Ming and Chan (2010), cited in Olumuji, Asemah and Edegoh (2013) add that credibility is an essential asset that a news medium gains in a long period of time. It reflects the reputation, authority and the influence that the medium may cause among the public. There is a common belief that credibility is related to utilisation and circulation. People tend to consider the media types they use the most to be the most credible. Others consider news medium with diversified sources as most credible.

The source from which a person receives information can affect how that information is interpreted and valued (Yoon, Gurhan-Canli and Schwarz, 2006; Simmons and Becker-Olson, 2006). A company's corporate social responsibility can be communicated by the company itself or by a third party. Information from the organisation can be made available through advertising, press releases or the company's website. Third party sources represent reporting on the corporate social responsibility activities by individuals not associated with the organisation, like journalists and opinion leaders. Information source can also affect the perceived sincerity of an organisation's motives to participate in corporate social responsibility activities (Yoon, Gurhan-Canli and Schwarz, 2006).

Learning about corporate social responsibility activity through company advertising lowers the perceived sincerity of the company's motives for engaging in the corporate social responsibility activity. Advertisements are also potentially dangerous because they bring attention to funds that the company could be spending on the cause. However, if a company's contribution to the corporate social responsibility cause far exceeds its spending on advertising, the negative consequences for the company's self-promotion can be overcome. Simmons and Becker-Olson (2006, p. 162) in their study on the relationship between communication and corporate social responsibility found out that attitudes were more favourable of sponsorships.

Myths, Risks and Roles for Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes

Illia, Zyglidopoulos, Romenti, Canovas, and Brena (2013) identify the myths, risks and lessons for communicating corporate social responsibility thus:

- a. **Do not be Afraid of the Media:** Some managers believed that media outlets are "out to get" companies and are more interested in bad news than good. However, most managers felt this fear of the media is exaggerated and believed that while some media outlets are more critical than others, overall, the media are willing to report fairly on corporate social responsibility activities. Managers, therefore, should not be afraid to engage with the media and explain their companies' positions and activities. If an organisation's managers shy away from engaging with the media, the organisation's story will never come out or someone else will tell it and possibly distort it (Illia, et al, 2013).
- b. **Do not Under-estimate the Public:** Given the complexities that often surround corporate social responsibility activities, some managers were skeptical about whether corporations can

effectively communicate corporate social responsibility policies and activities (Illia, et al, 2013).

- c. **Address Big Issues Head-on:** When an organisation fails to address major problems head-on, it can compound the damage to the organisation's reputation. Be honest and balanced in your communications, not just the good news stories. Respond to what your stakeholders are asking for; if you communicate what people are interested in, it is more difficult to be accused of greenwashing and public relations (Illia, et al, 2013).
- d. **Do not Present a Picture of a Perfect Company:** It is only natural for managers to want to share the good things about their company with the world, but stakeholders can be skeptical if everything seems too good to be true and interpret that as a sign that the company is hiding something. Corporate social responsibility activities should not be portrayed as the organisation's sole purpose. Corporate communications should present corporate social responsibility activities as integrated into the company's business and demonstrate that profit is not pursued without consideration for society (Illia, et al, 2013).
- e. **Control the Conditions:** Sometimes comments can be taken out of context because there is no opportunity to explain them or because a company chose the wrong media outlet for a story. For example, a radio or television show that does not allow time for participants to elaborate or put their actions in context might not be a good forum for communicating complex corporate social responsibility issues (Illia, et al, 2013).
- f. **Use the whole Organisation:** The idea that communicating a corporate social responsibility agenda is the responsibility of only the communication or corporate social responsibility department is a mistake. Stakeholders do not interact only

with those departments, but with many different individuals and parts of the organisation. It only takes a few people giving the wrong impression to undo the work of communication or corporate social responsibility managers (Illia, et al, 2013). Communicating corporate social responsibility should be the job of the whole organisation; not in the sense that managers from other departments should communicate with the media, but in the sense that the rest of the organisation should set a visible example of what is being communicated. While the communication department tells the world about a corporation's corporate social responsibility activities, the rest of the organisation must show the world it believes this same message (Illia, et al, 2013).

- g. Do what you Say:** No matter how effective or well-articulated a company's communication strategy is, it cannot make up for a lack of corporate social responsibility; saying that your company engages in more corporate social responsibility than it really does can backfire and delegitimise existing corporate social responsibility initiatives (Illia, et al, 2013).

Discussion

Communication has to do with the exchange of ideas between two or more people. There is the need for an organisation to relate with the community members. Communication, according to Sambe, in Nwosu (2007, p. 23) occupies a very important space in human existence. Sambe further notes that communication is the core of all human actions and activities, since humans are no longer islands into themselves, the necessity to interact continuously requires involvement in one form of communication or the other. That is why communication understanding is imperative for effective public relations practice.

The foregoing implies that communication occupies a strategic position in organisational management. Thus, every organisation

needs to communicate its activities. An organisation must communicate its activities; it is not enough to provide social amenities to the community; it is one thing to provide the amenities and it is another thing to communicate such activities. The members of the community need to understand the activities of the organisation and it is through constant communication that an organisation will be able to make the community members understand its problems. No wonder, Goldhaber, (1992, p. 5), cited in Asemah, Ekhareafu, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013) avers that communication is the lifeblood of an organisation; it is the glue that binds the organisation; the oil that smoothens the organisation's functions; the thread that ties the system together; the force that pervades the organisation and the binding agent that cement all relationships. This tallies with Sambe (2007, p. 17), cited in Asemah, Ekhareafu, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013) who avers that it is because of the centrality of communication in all society's endeavours that our world is known today as information society. This also explains why Ojo (2005), cited by Sambe in Nwosu (2007, p. 24) notes that our information society is one in which economic and cultural life is critically dependent on information. No wonder Asemah (2011), citing MacBride (1980) notes that:

Communication maintains and animates life. It is also the motor and expression of social activity and civilisation; it leads people and peoples from instinct to inspiration, through variegated processes and systems of enquiry, command and control; it creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feelings of togetherness, through exchange of messages and translates thoughts into action, reflecting every emotion and need from the humblest tasks of human survival, to supreme manifestations of creativity or destruction. Communication integrates knowledge, organisation and power and runs as a thread linking the earliest memory of man to his noblest aspirations, through constant striving for a better life. As the

world has advanced, the task of communication has become ever more complex and subtle to contribute to the liberation of mankind from want, oppression and fear and to unite it in communion and communication, solidarity and understanding. However, unless some basic structural changes are introduced, the potential benefits of technological and communication development will hardly be put at the disposal of the majority of mankind.

Benson (1999,p.55) cited in Asemah, Ekhareafo, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013) notes that communication as a means of passing information has most often been described as news or features from one person to another person or organisation to the other. No wonder Benson (1999, p. 56), cited in Asemah, Ekhareafo, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013) avers that open channel of communication demands the establishment of symbolic relationship to create awareness and promote survival strategies. An organisation may have initiated certain projects in a community, but if it is not well communicated, the community members could misunderstand it and it may lead to conflict and conflicts lead to disruption of activities of the organisation and in most cases, it may lead to the death of the organisation. Illia, et al (2013, p.11) espoused the relationship between corporate social responsibility and communication when they noted that:

Corporate social responsibility has gone mainstream, but unless corporations communicate their CSR achievements wisely, they risk being accused of greenwashing. Corporate social responsibility, once seen as peripheral to companies' main businesses, has been becoming standard practice, with an increasing number of businesses engaging in CSR activities. For example, in a 2007 global survey of corporate managers, the Economist Intelligence Unit found that the majority of respondents (55.2%) considered CSR a high or very high priority for their company, a

significant increase from three years previously (33.9%). An even greater majority (68.9%) expected the importance of CSR to increase in the future. Given that corporations are increasingly engaging in CSR activities, it makes sense to communicate those achievements to stakeholders.

The above assertion goes to show how relevant it is for organisations to communicate their corporate social responsibility activities; this is because in most cases, when such activities are not communicated to the people (stakeholders), they may not be aware of the projects that have been executed by the organisation; to this end, it follows that organisations need to communicate any project that they execute in their host communities. Poor internal communication of corporate social responsibility programmes can have many impacts. If key staff and departments do not understand how the programme impacts their organisational functions, they may not effectively support the programme goals (Ethical Corporation 2005). Corporate reputations are no longer judged by financial performance alone. Today's investors, employees, customers and other stakeholders want to know a company's social and environmental impacts before doing business. Standing Partnership understands that a strong corporate reputation depends on an effective and holistic corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy (Scarlet, 2011).

As noted by Scarlet (2011), "a disconnect in communication between CSR initiatives and public awareness will impede any potential benefits to an organisation" It is important to intelligently and strategically communicate this to the public (Maignan and Ferrell, 2004; Morsing and Schultz, 2006). The news media are available to report business scandals to the public, but it is the company's responsibility to inform the public about the good things that it does. As with any public communication campaign, it is first important to identify the objectives and consider all of the aspects that contribute to a successful message. The desired outcome for communicating CSR initiatives is to ensure all of the possible benefits to the company are

achieved. In order to generate favourable attribution for a company's CSR programmes, it is necessary to communicate the company's motivation behind its involvement, explain the reason for choosing that particular cause and its commitment to the cause (Du, et al, 2010). As noted by Ogilvy Public Relations (n.d):

The basic duty of PR is to give back to the community (Corporate Social Responsibility). They also try to establish a good relationship with the investors and consumers. This could be affected and affect the organisation's investors, consumers, government, media, employees, suppliers, community, shareholders etc. Good rapport between public and company is possible only when there is a constant flow of information via various tools of communication. Newsletters, newspapers, presence online (virtual press office), websites, telephones etc. Communication within a company is possible through meetings or internal newsletters. Feedback is a very essential part of constant communication. Media is important because it connects the public to the media and is agenda setters, how much when where and why the people need to know what. PR approach is a three-fold pattern: what to do, why we do it and how to evaluate.

Mompreneur (n.d) avers that when you communicate your CSR practices to your customers and prospects, you earn credibility. You also earn liking and you strengthen your brand. In fact, more and more customers are responding to the CSR theme; they are actively seeking businesses that give back. In addition to appealing to your customers through your actions, you also broaden your awareness. As noted by Barone, Norman and Miyazaki (2007, p. 444) "companies engage in CSR activities to influence and improve stakeholders' perception of the company's image. Company or brand image is important because it ultimately provides the company a competitive advantage for their

business". When the stakeholders do not have adequate information about the corporate social responsibility, it may lead to negative impression. Thus, the public relations department of every organisation must ensure that there is constant communication of the activities of the organisation, so as to win the goodwill of the both the internal and external publics of the organisation.

Conclusion

Corporate social responsibility is about the integrity with which an organisation governs itself, fulfils its mission, lives by its values, engages with its stakeholders and measures its impacts and publicly reports on its activities; it is seen as the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time. The concept of corporate social responsibility means that organisations have moral, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities in addition to their responsibilities to earn a fair return for investors and comply with the law. This therefore implies that organisations must be socially responsible to the environments where they operate. Corporate social responsibility activities of organisations need to be communicated to the stakeholders. Thus, it is one for an organisation to initiate CSR activities and it is another thing for such activities to be communicated to the stakeholders; it is only when the activities are communicated to the stakeholders that the organisation can win the goodwill of the stakeholders. It is therefore imperative for every organisation to communicate its corporate social responsibility initiatives to the stakeholders through different channels of communication as it is one of the ways to win the goodwill of the stakeholders.

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