

Be the Change

Applying the social responsibility standard to your life

CORPORATE SOCIAL responsibility (CSR) is a significant issue that continues to gain traction among all demographics. As someone who tries to hold others to the same standards I hold myself, I take CSR personally. If we insist on organizations being accountable for CSR, shouldn't we do our part as well?

Recently, I began to wonder: If I were to issue my own CSR report, how would I measure up and appear to my stakeholders? With this in mind, I looked to the seven core subjects outlined in *ISO 26000:2010—Guidance on social responsibility* and audited myself. I've outlined my general observations of each of the core subjects and related them to my lifestyle.

Consumer issues. Our position as consumers holds significant power. It defines us and the marketplace. Socially responsible purchasing decisions and an eye toward the future support sustainability.

I prefer to use products and services from socially responsible organizations. However, my big-ticket purchases tend to get more CSR consideration than low-cost convenience items. Also, I am proactive when it comes to ensuring my 401(k) and other investments in my portfolio contribute to the greater good.

Environment. Our attention to resource use and pollution prevention requires careful examination. We must review our habits and make conscious decisions that positively affect the environment.

My family and I spend as much time outside as possible. It's important to me that my children have an appreciation and respect for nature so they understand the weight of lifestyle decisions. From turning off the lights in unused rooms to reducing our consumption of fossil fuel by walking and biking, as a family, we take deliberate actions to reduce our environmental impact.

Labor practices. We manage our households and the relationships within. By improving how we manage our lives at home, we make ourselves and those around us happier and healthier.

During a recent summer vacation, my family and I decided on four values that we agreed to hold each other accountable to. I've noticed that my kids are enjoying a more active role in family administration and a marked improvement in all of us when it comes to pitching in.

Community involvement and development. Community involvement gets people talking to each other and caring. Whether it's volunteering at a shelter, joining a book club, or even participating in a homeowners' association, there are plenty of opportunities to make a difference. We find time for things that matter.

Recently, I took on the role of education chair for my local ASQ section, and I've recognized a number of opportunities to raise the voice of quality in the community. I also try to stay active in activities offered by my kids' schools. I think parental involvement and support makes a big impact on academic success.

Human rights. Corporate culture boils down to how we treat one another. Actions must be consistent with communication. We must not discriminate—respectfully resolve grievances and practice due diligence.

If there is one permeating theme in my household, it is respect. I experienced a proud moment as a parent when my son came home from school recently and shared how he helped a peer being mistreated during a group activity.

Fair operating practices. Actions



that are dishonest or otherwise negative tend to bring short-term benefits that are followed by long-term consequences. Cooperation is often more powerful than competition.

My 4-year-old daughter cheats when she plays games and it drives my son crazy. He's talked with her about playing fair, but she insists on manipulating the rules to her advantage. Lately, he refuses to try when playing games, which upsets my daughter. She doesn't understand empathy yet and claims he doesn't try because she always wins. Sometimes, it's the little things that happen that best demonstrate an example. My daughter's priority is the short-term benefit of winning a game, but in the process, she does not realize her actions have resulted in no one wanting to play with her in the long-term.

Organizational governance. Considered by the International Organization

for Standardization as "the most crucial factor in enabling an organization to take responsibility for the impacts of its decisions and activities," organizational governance is a question of values. It asks: "At our core, are we consistent?" "Do we have a vision?"

I've found strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analyses to be a helpful way to gain perspective. It's an introspective way to prioritize activities and ensure continuous improvement. My last SWOT analysis identified a personal threat—a lack of certification—that I also identified as an opportunity.

Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (SMART) goals are useful because they encourage me to expand my thoughts into a more well-rounded and attainable objective in a format that also holds me accountable. In response to my SWOT analysis, I used SMART goals plan-

ning to work out the details. I made attaining ASQ certification a SMART goal: I selected the certified manager of quality/organizational excellence certification because it was the best fit, registered for the exam, studied and passed that year.

Engineer Henri Fayol's six functions of management—forecasting, planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling—are a logical way to approach the present and future.

When making a case for CSR, we mention the benefits of an improved reputation, competitive advantage and improved relationships. Of course, the same benefits of CSR apply to the individual as well. Social responsibility is win-win for all. **QP**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

International Organization for Standardization, ISO 26000:2010—Guidance on social responsibility.



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TAKE ACTION

To learn more about the connection between quality and social responsibility (SR) and how ASQ is involved, visit the new SR website, www.thesro.org. You'll find a rich library of research, case studies, videos and ways you and your organization can join the SR movement.

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