

The Festival Organiser's Guide To Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

DETAILING WHAT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS, HOW FESTIVALS ARE USING IT AND HOW YOU CAN IMPLEMENT A SUCCESSFUL CSR STRATEGY WHEN PLANNING A FESTIVAL



TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CSR STRATEGY

WHAT IS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

THE BENEFITS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE

HOW FESTIVALS AND SHOWS USE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is becoming an increasingly important factor for anyone organising a festival or show, particularly in terms of environmental protection and community/stakeholder engagement.

With rising concerns regarding the negative effects of various festivals and shows on the environment potentially casting the industry in a bad light, we are seeing a rise in the number of ‘green festivals’, with some of the biggest festivals taking a strong stance on corporate social responsibility.

Read on to discover exactly what corporate social responsibility is, how it is already being used within the festival industry, how it can be a benefit to your festival or show and how to create a successful CSR strategy going forward.





WHAT IS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

Corporate social responsibility is an initiative or strategy a company adopts in order to assess and positively improve their effect on the environment and social wellbeing of the wider community.

Companies or corporations adopting CSR strategies are seen to be making a conscious effort to go above and beyond what is required of them by regulators and environmental protection groups in order to take responsibility for their impact on the environment and community.

THE ISO 26000 CSR GUIDELINES

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) released corporate social responsibility guidelines, named 'ISO 26000', in 2010 which offers information on socially responsible behaviour and how it can be implemented within a company.

The ISO 26000 guidance on social responsibility is a voluntary guidance standard, meaning that there are no specific requirements detailed as there is no certification offered to those using the ISO 26000 standards.

It should be used to improve a company's social responsibility activities voluntarily and ISO suggests that those using these guidelines should promote the fact they have used the ISO 26000 guidelines to help validate their CSR activities.

CSR activities usually do not have a direct financial benefit, however they do promote the company's positive social and environmental standing, which in turn can encourage a loyal following and subsequent financial gain.

COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY-FOCUSED CSR ACTIVITIES

Common issues companies confront with CSR activities include:

- Protecting the environment
- Encouraging fair operating practices
- Community involvement

These three main areas can be categorised into ‘Community’, ‘Environment’ and ‘Economy’ CSR. Which activities a company chooses to focus could be due to the cause fitting their brand or values, or simply personal preference.



CSR AND THE COMMUNITY

Community engagement and development within the community is a particularly important area of corporate social responsibility in the festival industry. Festivals & shows draw masses of people to certain areas, such as the 135,000 people who experience Glastonbury each year.

This can cause a real disruption to the local community, with noise pollution, littering and gridlocked roads being just a handful of issues the local community have to face each summer. Festivals need to ensure they are keeping local residents happy and giving something back in return for their tolerance.

Glastonbury Festival works hard with the local community, particularly with the residents of Pilton, Pylle and Sticklynych who are offered free tickets to the festival as a sign of goodwill for their tolerance to the disruptions caused.

CARING FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

‘Helping the community’ is quite a broad term, and your festival needs to decide which area of the community it should focus on. Following in Glastonbury, Reading Festival and Radio 1’s Big Weekend’s footsteps, it is a great idea to offer free tickets to your festival for anyone living within a certain distance of your festival that may be negatively affected by it.

YOUR FESTIVAL MAY ALSO WANT TO CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING TO LOCAL PROJECTS, SUCH AS SUPPORTING YOUTH ACTIVITIES OR LOCAL COMMUNITY CLUBS. THESE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES SPREAD POSITIVE SENTIMENT THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY AND GIVE TANGIBLE AND VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE POSITIVE EFFECT YOUR FESTIVAL HAS WITHIN THE AREA.

However, it’s not just about the local community, but the wider community too, therefore charitable donations are often used in order to show support to specific causes.

CARING FOR YOUR OWN INTERNAL TEAM

It's also important to care for your festival's internal community: employees, volunteers and helpers. Corporate social responsibility from an internal standpoint means considering the human rights of those under your employment and ensuring they have a safe and fair working environment. It's about resolving grievances, being culturally sensitive and avoiding discrimination whilst providing a good standard of living for everyone involved.



CSR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The environmental impact of festivals is an issue all organisers need to be aware of. Festivals in the UK are collectively responsible for 14 kilo-tonnes of carbon dioxide each year, therefore the responsibility to reduce this figure and give back to the environment lies with the festival organisers themselves.

CARBON EMISSIONS FROM FESTIVALS

However, with 70% of those carbon emissions coming from the attendees travelling to each festival, the success of any environmental campaign relies on the involvement of the attendees as well as the festival organisers.

ANY FESTIVAL'S CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTIVITIES SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON REDUCING THEIR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE PLANET AND SHOW A REAL COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY.

Camp Bestival and many other environmentally conscious and eco-friendly festivals are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint by signing up with 'Energy Revolution', a registered festival charity investing in clean energy and tackling climate change. Camp Bestival is working with Energy Revolution and their partner, The Converging World charity, in order to fund a 1-megawatt wind turbine in the Tamil Nadu area of India within the next 5 years. They also work with 'Big Green Coach' to try and reduce emissions from attendees travelling to the festival by lowering the number of vehicles being used, while Big Green Coach commit to protecting 5 square feet of Amazonian rainforest for every customer they transport to Camp Bestival.

LITTERING AT FESTIVALS

Carbon dioxide is not the only environmental threat caused by festivals; the amount of litter left behind by festival attendees can be substantial. It is the responsibility of festival organisers to encourage attendees to clean up after themselves and to deal with any waste issues after the festival is over.

One of the main issues is attendees leaving their tents behind, for example, around 20 tonnes worth of tents are left behind at Reading Festival each year. In 2015, Reading Festival introduced a new tent cleaning and packing service in an attempt to encourage attendees to take their tent with them and reduce the level of waste. This shows that Reading Festival are trying to tackle a big issue and are facing up to their environmental responsibility.

ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS FOR FESTIVALS

There are many options available to festivals looking to include environmental protection within their corporate social responsibility strategy. With emissions from attendees travelling to the festival having the most detrimental impact on the environment, implementing and encouraging greener ways to travel to and from the festival is a great place to start.

Strategies include signing up with Big Green Coach, encouraging car sharing networks and rewarding attendees who display environmentally friendly behaviours. Any festival can also sign up with Energy Revolution and commit to raising money for the charity through ticket sales and fundraisers, or follow Camp Bestival's lead and commit to a specific environmental project.



CSR AND THE ECONOMY

Depending on the size of the festival, the turnover can be breathtakingly high, however the cost of putting on the festival decreases profits substantially. For example, Glastonbury Festival 2015 reportedly sold £35 million worth of tickets, however only saw a profit of £764,000 after all costs were covered. This is in part due to the fact that Glastonbury takes its economic responsibilities very seriously, ensuring fair payment across all areas of the festival and giving back to the community financially.

ANNUAL FESTIVAL SPEND IN THE UK

Festivals are great for the wider economy, with music tourism reportedly generating £3.1 billion worth of direct and indirect spend in the UK in 2014 by 9.5 million music tourists. The Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) reports that AIF member festivals themselves added £1 billion to the UK economy between 2010 and 2014. While these figures prove festivals to be healthy for the economy, there are several economic factors which festivals may still want to consider within their corporate social responsibility activities. As previously mentioned, the costs involved with organising a festival can be staggeringly high, therefore the festival organiser has a responsibility to ensure the festival is profitable enough to support its employees financially

and provide them with a good standard of living. The festival organiser is also accountable for ensuring all costs are covered appropriately, such as paying for the rental of venue/land, any equipment used and entertainment hired.

SUPPORTING FESTIVAL PERFORMERS

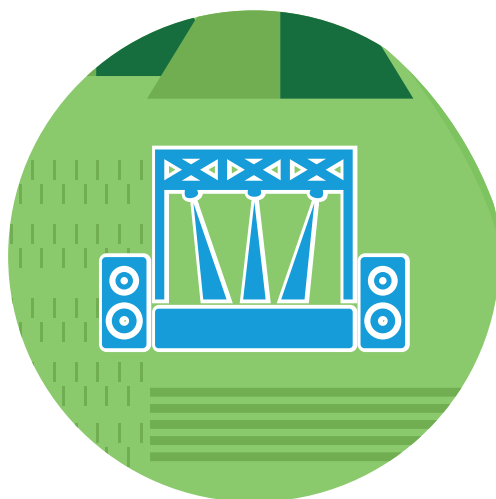
The Guardian recently reported on literary festivals refusing to pay authors appearing at their events and expecting them to appear for free. This has caused quite a stir in the industry, with Paul Pullman resigning as patron of the Oxford literary festival and a negative light being shone upon certain festivals which have refused to pay.

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Festivals also have a responsibility to support the economy of the wider community. According to AIF, over £80 million was spent in local UK businesses between 2010 and 2014 due to there being a festival in the area. This is a fantastic way for festivals to prove their economic worth and showcase their corporate social responsibility accomplishments.

AS PART OF THEIR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STRATEGY, ORGANISERS SHOULD ENSURE THAT LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE BENEFITTING FROM THE FESTIVAL AND THAT PROFITS ARE BEING USED TO SUPPORT CHARITIES. IT CAN BE OF HUGE BENEFIT TO THE FESTIVAL TO PARTNER UP WITH A CHARITY, PROMOTING THEIR ACTIVITY THROUGH SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS.

Glastonbury is a notable example of this, with festival organiser Michael Eavis donating the vast majority of the festivals profits to different charities and only taking home a modest salary himself. While this may not be realistic for all festivals, this a great example of economic CSR in action.



HOW FESTIVALS AND SHOWS USE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THEIR ADVANTAGE

There is no denying that the most successful festivals have incorporated corporate social responsibility into their activities and that it is having a positive effect on the environment, community and economy. We have spoken to some of the top festivals and shows in the UK and - along with our survey and secondary research - have discovered not only how and why festivals are incorporating CSR but what their views on the subject are too.



WHAT FESTIVAL ORGANISERS HAVE TO SAY

Throughout our research we have spoken to a number of festival organisers to get their opinions on the importance of CSR and to find out how they include CSR within their festival. We have conducted a survey, spoken directly to festival organisers and carried out research online to discover how CSR is being used and perceived within this industry.

66% OF FESTIVAL ORGANISERS SAY CSR IS OF HIGH PRIORITY TO THEIR FESTIVAL

We asked our survey respondents (all of whom are festival organisers) exactly how much of a priority corporate social responsibility is to their festival/show. With 66% of respondents indicating that CSR is of high priority to them, it is clear to see how engrained CSR is into the festival culture. Each festival has their own way of implementing CSR activities and all of them agree that these activities help to strengthen relationships with the audience and increases their audiences' loyalty to the festival itself.

83% OF FESTIVAL ORGANISERS FIND THAT CSR ACTIVITIES HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THEIR BOTTOM LINE

As we have already mentioned, CSR activities are not primarily a strategy for increasing profits, however they do have a knock on effect which can result in a financial gain (we will talk more about this later). With 83% of our survey respondents stating that CSR activities do have a positive effect on their bottom line, it is quite apparent that if you implement CSR effectively then it doesn't have to eat into your budget with no return on investment.

86% OF FESTIVAL ORGANISERS SAY THAT THE MAIN BENEFIT THEY SEE FROM CSR ACTIVITIES IS IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY

One of the main reasons the festival organisers we spoke to said that CSR benefitted them was by improving relationships within the community. One organiser said "We involve the community in as many activities as possible. We give generously to charity and provide free sessions for young people to get involved in sport for free. We also celebrate with a family fun day at the end of the sessions where we support local businesses through trade and by inviting them to attend." The local community are important to this festival and the organisers do what they can to maintain a positive relationship with them. Also stating that these types of activities are "Very effective in getting more people involved in a community activity" which is one of the main goals of the festival.

It is clear to see that even larger festivals, for example Boomtown Fair, which has a capacity of around 50,000 people, are committed to improving relationships with the local community, as they say on their website, "Since finding our home at the Matterley Estate in 2011 we have been working hard to give back to (the) local community as much as possible and have donated over £30,000 directly to charity projects and organisations around the Winchester area and to the parishes near the festival site.

"Each year we look to get more and more local people involved in the festival, from volunteering as stewards, working as part of the onsite team, trader, supplier or as external contractors." This level of investment into the local community demonstrates how important a good relationship with the local community is for a festival to succeed and to be accepted as a positive force in the area.

MAINTAINING AND PROMOTING ETHICAL STANDARDS

Another reoccurring theme that came up in our research was the importance of CSR activities when maintaining, promoting and encouraging high ethical standards. A representative of Vegfest UK, Europe's biggest vegan festival, told us that ethical issues were the most important aspect of CSR for their festival and that their main aim was to "Support veganism (and) the abolishment of using animals as food sources". They also stated that they are seeing "More and more attendees supporting the vegan philosophy" which indicates that their CSR activities are at the very core of their festival and that they are working in order to achieve their goals.

We also spoke to Farmfestival to get their view on ethical standards within their festival. They said, "We have turned down sponsorship from several large corporations that do not fit with our ethical values". This is a great example of a festival sticking to their core values and remaining socially responsible instead of sacrificing their beliefs for financial gain.

IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Most of the festivals we spoke to mentioned the importance of festivals improving their impact on the environment in some way. One organiser saying "I certainly believe all should be trying to minimise the negative environmental effects of events". This belief is repeated throughout the industry. Farmfestival also agreed and gave us an insight into how they are reducing their impact on the environment by "Increasing levels of recycling and trying to use local contractors to cut transport costs and environmental impacts". This is one of the most important areas of CSR when it comes to festivals and this has become increasingly apparent throughout our research.



HOW THE LEADING UK FESTIVAL IMPLEMENTS CSR

A STUDY BY 'A GREENER FESTIVAL' IN 2006 INDICATED THAT 74% OF FESTIVAL GOERS AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE THAT FESTIVALS SHOULD IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRACTICES, AND 91% AGREED THAT FESTIVAL ORGANISERS SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MINIMISING THE FESTIVALS EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

With such an environmentally conscious audience, it is wise for leading festivals to participate in CSR activities, especially CSR tactics regarding the environment. Find out how the leading UK festival, Glastonbury, implements CSR.



GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL

Glastonbury Festival is one of the best at implementing corporate social responsibility strategies. With the festival's organiser, Michael Eavis, being from a humble, farming background, his sense of social responsibility has come naturally to him and the festival is focused on pleasure over profit.

Glastonbury is particularly active when it comes to addressing their environmental responsibilities. In addition to their efforts to cut emissions for festival attendees travelling to the event, Glastonbury Festival is keen to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and therefore regulates what staff, contractors, sponsors and traders bring into the venue.

RECYCLING AT GLASTONBURY

Glastonbury is also active in its recycling efforts, with half of all waste generated at the 2014 festival being recycled (around 983 tonnes of waste). The total cost of cleaning up after the event is £780,000, which is money that could be better spent elsewhere, so Glastonbury try to encourage people to clean up after themselves with various campaigns, such as the Love Worthy Farm, Leave No Trace and Take It Don't Leave It.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AT GLASTONBURY

There is also a real effort to use sustainable energy sources in order to power the festival. Solar power and wind power are used for the Theatre and Circus and Shangri-La areas, as well as all the cafes, stalls showers and stages above the old railway line in the Green Fields.

Combine that with the use of hybrid generators and Glastonbury is certainly looking more and more like a 'green festival'. Worthy Farm (Glastonbury's location) also has the largest privately owned solar PV array in the UK, with 1,500 square metres of solar panels generating around 250KW of power on a sunny day which is used to power the farm, with any remaining energy being redirected to the National Grid.

REDUCING WATER USAGE AT GLASTONBURY

Glastonbury Festival also concentrates efforts on preserving water and reducing its usage at the festival. Their 'Don't Waste A Drop' campaign encourages attendees to conserve water and cut down on their usage for non-essential tasks such as cleaning mud off boots. They have even built their own reservoir that holds 1 million litres of water with plans to build another one and have introduced a reusable water bottle which is available on site to reduce plastic bottle wastage.

GLASTONBURY'S SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

The list of environmental protection methods used by Glastonbury is vast, from reducing road deliveries and CO2 emissions to planting trees and providing compost toilets. Social and community responsibilities are also a priority for the festival: for starters, all tea, coffee, sugar and hot chocolate sold on site is Fairtrade, with stallholders being actively encouraged to stock Fairtrade products. This shows Glastonbury's commitment to the social wellbeing of those providing these goods.

GLASTONBURY AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

In terms of the local community, Glastonbury Festival contributes a substantial amount of time and money into the renovation and rejuvenation of the area. For example, since the year 2000, Glastonbury Festival has built the new Pilton Working Men's club, a football pitch, tennis courts and pavilion in Pilton Playing Field and has completed a housing project which provides affordable homes for the offspring of villagers who cannot afford Pilton prices.

They have also renovated and repaired numerous buildings, including the Glastonbury Abbey Tythe Barn, Pilton Paris Church, Pilton Methodist Chapel, Glastonbury Library and several footpaths and children's play areas. The festival's organiser, Michael Eaves also employs people all year round to keep the area clean and tidy by litter picking, clearing streams and ditches and removing graffiti, amongst other jobs.

The local community benefits economically from the festival too. Records show that Glastonbury Festival spent over £6 million with local companies in 2007, with the net value of the festival, including spend from attendees in the local area, being valued at over £35 million in the Mendip area.

The local community aren't the only ones to benefit financially though, as the festival donates a generous sum to several different charities, including Oxfam, WaterAid and Greenpeace. These charities are given the opportunity to take part in the festival itself, enabling them to recruit like-minded people and spread the word of their message further.

Glastonbury Festival is a shining example of how festivals and shows can take part in corporate social responsibility activities which benefit the environment, community, economy and social wellbeing of all those involved. Depending on the size of your festival, it may be unrealistic to try and cover as many areas as Glastonbury does, however it is advisable to find at least one area, for example the environment, and concentrate your efforts there.



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE

THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN YOUR FESTIVAL'S ACTIVITIES IS NOT SPECIFICALLY FOR INCREASING PROFIT, HOWEVER THE RESULTS OF YOUR ACTIVITIES CAN LEAD TO IMPROVED EFFICIENCY AND AN INCREASED AUDIENCE, THEREFORE IMPROVING YOUR REVENUE STREAM.

Here are just a few advantages CSR offers which can have positive results to your bottom line.



ENHANCED REPUTATION

One of the main benefits to any festival or show participating in socially responsible activities is that it enhances their reputation. This is especially true when the festival makes a contribution to the local community which leaves the local people singing the festival's praises.

For example, Bestival has an onsite shop which sources all of its produce from local traders, essentially acting as a wholesaler for them. This keeps local people happy as the festival is contributing to the local economy. This also increases the festival's bottom line as socially conscious attendees are happier to purchase products from the on-site shop knowing that it results in a positive contribution to the local community.

Each type of activity, from the environmentally friendly to the socially responsible, enhances the festival's reputation in the eyes of potential attendees and may be the tipping point to convince people to buy a ticket.

These actions can also result in specific awards, such as the internationally renowned 'A Greener Festival Award', which Shambala Festival has won four times, successfully cementing its reputation as a 'green' festival.

DIFFERENTIATING FROM COMPETITORS

Each festival attracts a certain audience demographic, from lovers of folk music or cheese and wine enthusiasts. There are still many options for festival go-ers to choose from and any factor which differentiates your festival from the competition is going to put you at an advantage.

If your audience is environmentally conscious and wants to attend the most environmentally friendly festival, they may be more willing to attend Wood Festival over the competitors, as Wood Festival is 100% powered by renewable energy and has been described as “a beacon of environmental sustainability” by Julie’s Bicycle, a leading global charity bridging the gap between environmental sustainability and the creative industry.

PROMOTING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ACTIONS

It’s important for each festival to promote their socially responsible activities in order to let their audience make a fully informed decision when choosing which festival to attend. Any awards won for environmentally or socially friendly behaviour might just be the differentiator that encourages your audience to attend your festival over the competitors.

ATTRACT HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF & POPULAR ACTS

Improving your bottom line doesn’t just come from the financial contributions of attendees; it also comes from the efficiency of your team and the attractiveness of the acts performing at your festival.

Festivals that treat their staff well, pay a fair wage and offer something extra are more likely to attract experienced, hardworking team members whose efficiency will ensure that tickets sell out, the event runs smoothly and the post-event clean up is performed efficiently. This contributes to the overall bottom line of the festival as money is not wasted through unsold tickets, mishaps during the festival and inefficient processes.

It is also key to the success of each festival to attract the right entertainment and a good CSR strategy can make this happen. Glastonbury is a great example of attracting talent with the right CSR strategy, as Paul McCartney

reportedly accepted a fee of just £200,000 instead of his usual asking price of £4 million. This is because Paul McCartney knew that Glastonbury wasn't trying to profit from him as all proceeds generated go to charity.



CHARGE A PREMIUM

Festival go-ers realise that it costs more for a festival to adhere to environmentally friendly practices and for the most part they will be willing to pay a little extra for their ticket in order to support renewable energy, reduced waste and a cleaner festival. A 2015 survey by Nielson revealed that 72% of respondents aged between 15 and 20 are willing to pay more for products and services from companies who are committed to positive social and environmental activities. An increase in awareness and education of these topics has resulted in a generation of people who want to make a conscious effort to preserve the planet.



THE BENEFITS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Besides the aforementioned benefits to your bottom line, corporate social responsibility can have a positive effect on various other aspects of your business. A well thought out corporate social responsibility strategy can springboard your festival into the mainstream and engage your audience in a truly meaningful way.

HAPPIER WORKFORCE

When you implement CSR strategies that ensure your staff are treated fairly and offered a working environment that suits their personal needs, you end up with a happier workforce which offers a real benefit to your festival. A study by the University of Warwick found that happy employees were 12% more productive, while unhappy workers were 10% less productive. Encouraging positive working relationships, a healthy work-life balance and offering added incentives to your staff will make them advocates of your festival, which will increase your audience and improve your reputation.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

CSR is a great tool to help your festival build relationships with other organisations and communities. Supporting charities gives you access to their audience and marketing channels whilst portraying your festival in an empathetic and socially responsible light.

You may also want to connect with other businesses in order to implement a joint CSR strategy and any involvement with the local community builds stronger relationships with local businesses which can result in discounted goods and a more tolerant community.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

CSR activities are something to shout about, therefore they make fantastic PR. Consumers are tired of companies and festivals shoving sales messages under their noses all the time. Taking part in CSR activities gives your festival a positive message to send out to the world that isn't sales-focused, but simply promotes the good work you have been doing, which people will be much more interested in.

POSITIVE IMPACT

Despite all the benefits CSR has in a business sense, it shouldn't be forgotten that the purpose of these activities is to have a positive impact on the environment and the community as a whole. Reducing emissions, increasing recycling efforts and using renewable energy sources all have a positive impact on the health of our planet, which is something all businesses should be working towards in the modern world. Supporting local communities ensures that the social wellbeing of those most impacted by the festival is looked after.



TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

While corporate social responsibility is not a new concept, many businesses, shows and festivals alike struggle to get a CSR strategy off the ground. This is sometimes due to a lack of direction or information available regarding CSR strategies. Here are five top tips for implementing CSR within your festival or business and how you can make it a success.

1. ASSIGN A BUDGET FOR CSR ACTIVITIES

You will struggle to have a successful CSR campaign without spending any money, so when planning your budgets you should always set something aside specifically for CSR activities.

Try to have an idea of what it is you want to achieve through your CSR activities and this will help you decide how much of a budget you need to assign.

Remember that CSR can be investment if implemented correctly and while it is not used to generate profit, it has many benefits that can improve your bottom line.

2. ALIGN YOUR CSR STRATEGY WITH YOUR COMPANY VALUES

Most businesses have a clear set of values which they live by. These values help to define the personality of the brand and give everyone involved an idea of the way the business likes to operate.

When creating a CSR strategy, it's important to take these values into consideration and ensure that your approach to CSR aligns well with your

values. For example, if one of your core values is to be respectful, your CSR strategy may include a clean-up of the local community after your festival in order to show respect to the community.

3. CHOOSE A KEY AREA TO FOCUS ON

Depending on the nature of your festival, be it a music festival, beer festival, food festival or any other, there may be a specific area of CSR you feel it would be most appropriate to concentrate on.

For example, if your music festival directly impacts the local community through noise pollution and traffic congestion, you may want to consider concentrating your CSR efforts on improving relationships with the local community.

If you run a beer festival which uses a large amount of plastic cups, you may want to concentrate your efforts on an environmentally friendly recycling campaign. Decide what is most important to you and your audience and concentrate on that instead of trying to cover every angle.

4. ENCOURAGE INVOLVEMENT FROM ALL STAFF

The only way to ensure your CSR strategy is a true success is to educate all staff members, from the top to the bottom, and to encourage their involvement with CSR activities.

Your staff members represent the festival's brand and if they are not on board with your CSR activities, your chances of success are much lower. Training staff on the reasons why you are using CSR and getting them to partake in activities will help to get them on board and will encourage positive growth of your CSR strategy.

5. PROMOTE YOUR CSR ACTIVITIES

Although CSR is not implemented purely for public approval, it is certainly something to shout about. Let your audience and critics know what you are doing to improve your impact on the planet and use those activities to draw attention to your festival.

Festival go-ers are traditionally eco-friendly and community minded, therefore releasing details of your CSR activities will ensure your brand resonates with the audience well. Your festival's website is the ideal place to promote these activities, as well as on partner sites.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Taking influence from the most successful festivals will help take your festival to the next level.

Appealing to all stakeholders and their needs, wants and values ensures that their interest in your festival continues to grow, which in turn encourages growth and development of the festival itself. If your festival isn't already participating in social responsible behaviour, it might be time to start considering it.

A great starting point is to do in-depth research, particularly when it comes to your audience. There is no point in blindly attempting to take action in order to impress your audience; you need to know what matters to them and where the most negative impacts of your festival are perceived, and rectify them.

You also need to know what your objectives are. Setting KPIs will keep your strategy on track. Perhaps you want to recycle 50% of all waste at your festival, or you aim to get a local building rebuilt or renovated in a certain time period.

These objectives will give your strategy direction. Whatever you decide, your festival does have a responsibility to rectify any negative impact and maximise the positive impacts it has on the world. Corporate social responsibility is something all festivals should concentrate on going forward in order for us to continue enjoying these fantastic events in beautiful locations across the world.



TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CSR STRATEGY

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HOW FESTIVALS AND SHOWS USE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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