

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN RUSSIA: TEAMWORK ASPECT

Svetlana Ermolaeva

Abstract

The variant of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) realization, when the employer knows and understands the necessity of their own responsible steps regarding the staff and other stakeholders, depends on teamwork of participants of communication. Many companies, understanding this, introduce an employee in the staff of the control subsystem, who would manage the realization of CSR in the organization. Such employee can be the HR manager or a team of workers. We conducted a pilot study of the state of corporate social responsibility, the goal of which was to research the ‘employee – organization’ relationships in the realization of CSR, the use of teamwork in the realization of CSR. The objectives of the research: to study the organization employees’ awareness of CSR in the organization, the employees’ satisfaction with the state of CSR, teamwork in CSR, prospects for the future development. Methods used for the study are questionnaires and interviewing. The study has shown that the organization’s work on CSR realization is oriented at the principles of both vertical and horizontal cooperation.

Key words: corporate social responsibility, social partnership, comparative analysis, stakeholders, team management

JEL Code: J28, M12, M54

Introduction

Numerous arguments of scientists, researchers, journalists, experts in favour of business corporate social responsibility (CSR) often appear in mass media and Internet. Publications feature arguments «for» and «against» corporate responsibility, others reveal experience of companies which implement CSR tasks. CSR materials of such famous authors as Tulchinsky (2009, 2016), Blagov (2004) and other Russian and foreign authors were studied. Teamwork is a widely discussed topic in scientific literature. Authors of publications speak about technologies of shaping CSR at companies by means of discussing CSR shaping steps, and

name the following as the first step: top management approval and complex CSR team forming (Danubianu, Teodorescu, 2016), trust issue in virtual teams (Milovanović, et al, 2016), other authors highlight the necessity for shaping a multidirectional CSR team (Polents, Fedorova, 2016, Zhukov et al, 2008).

CSR, social partnership, participative management reveal humanization of management. However, one shouldn't be deluded, as currently, moving hand from one's pocket to someone else's pocket hardly reaches the tenth of incomings. Hardships of business formation and development can be understood and explained, but the fact remains, dynamics of CSR development lags behind dynamics of technical progress. Concern for companies, being equipped with material resources, prevails over development of organization structure. Interdependent social actions of teamwork parties in CSR lead to employer's preferences in CSR implementation towards horizontal teamwork with more equal stakeholders, more significant for company survival; these are, probably, the representatives of the external environment of organization rather than the internal one. Horizontal communication in this case (in the external environment) has an advantage over horizontal communication in the internal environment (teamwork with staff members). Reports of the Association of Managers read that «at the majority of companies, process of stable teamwork mechanism creation with interested parties is at the starting stage, and teamwork itself, as a rule, demonstrates one-way relationship between the donor and the recipient».

Corporate social responsibility is a standard aimed at fulfilment of its normatives. Changing, amending, dynamic standards allow meeting the needs of the age and its challenges. The use of CSR standards in organization's activity formally and non-formally reflects the trend of humanization. Relationship with interested parties gains a civilized view of a street, where traffic rules apply, which means that road users comply with them and it lets them reach their goals safely for others and themselves. Voluntary participation is a conscious necessity. In this sense it means that, taking the road, a road user considers other users: he knows they exist, understands the traffic flow speed and passing rules, actions at traffic lights, at the pedestrian crossing. If there is a beginner, other road users are aware of it and drive more carefully. If a road hog appears, they try to get around him. Following the rules unites road users into «the good» and «trespassers».

It is known that in the area of corporate social responsibility Russian companies use the system of standards already existing abroad. The fact that CSR is elaborated to the level of indicators abroad, does not necessarily mean that this phenomenon has become all-inclusive;

that voluntary choice of business profiles in favour of CSR by large, middle-sized or small companies (head of companies) influences broadening, speeding up of CSR encompassing the larger number of companies, companies' management. However, progress in CSR development shows that CSR development rates generally refers to larger companies.

One of important directions in CSR development is teamwork in CSR - from forming to stable existence, from effective interaction with the external environment to the team within an organization, both on one level and on the level of multi-tier and multidisciplinary teams. Team, teamwork are contemporary phenomena which can increase efficiency of activity of a group, department, organization. How teamwork in CSR is implemented? Is it constant work in teams or work temporarily arising as a response to emerging problems? Is it the way an organization follows principles of teamwork and its implementation in CSR as well? Principles of teamwork include work in teams, role-based task assignment in a group, and combination of individual and collective responsibility, reciprocal respect between parties. Teamwork contemplates equal professional level among team members, responsibility, aspiration to work in a team etc.

1 Research

The author conducted a pilot study of awareness of CSR, teamwork in CSR implementation among respondents. Sample frame (the number of respondents – 137) includes working men (41.2%) and women (58.8%); respondents' age is mostly under 45 years (73.5%), have a degree (70.6%) (secondary vocational education – 20.6%), work record from 2 to 10 years (50%) and over 10 years – 23.5%; professional spheres of respondents are trade (32.4%), school education (17.6%), foodservice industry (11.8%), production (5.9%).

To the question «Who organisation is socially responsible to?» majority of respondents replied that organization is socially responsible «to society» (61%), other respondents think that organization is socially responsible to «public authorities» (36.6%), next response according to choice frequency is organization's responsibility «to its employees» (34.1%). Thus, almost third of respondents considers that organization bears responsibility before employees, however, teamwork involves individual and collective responsibility, responsibility of management and employees to each other.

In response to the question «What is business led by while implementing corporate social responsibility?» (Table 1) plurality of votes was given to the option «responsibility before the society» (48.8%), based on respondents' preferences, next place was taken by

«necessity in the context of market relations» (29.3%), the third, based on choice frequency, was «management preferences» (22%). As it was mentioned above, forming of CSR happens in several stages, including the stage of top management approval and shaping of a complex team of corporate social responsibility, so hypothesis about importance of top management approval in CSR forming and development partially proved out.

Tab. 1: «In your opinion, in the process of CSR forming, business is led by»

Options	Choice frequency (%)
Responsibility before the society	48.8 (1)
Pressure from public authorities	9.8
Top management preferences	22 (3)
Necessity in the context of market relations	29.3 (2)
Understanding of gained advantages	9.8
Following corporate traditions	14.7

Source: Author's elaboration

It is commonly known that social responsibility can be implemented by means of market, state, corporate approach or from the point of interested parties (stakeholders). Results of the survey showed that, in spite of the fact that organizations often proclaim CSR as implementation of modern approach from the point of interested parties (stakeholders), currently corporate social responsibility is implemented from the point of several approaches, for example, market one and corporate conscience approach (Table 1). This probably happens due to the fact that inherent (corporate) morality and invisible hand of the market (consideration of competitors) remain significant for organizations, whereas public authorities pressure (the government) and «understanding of gained advantages» according to respondents' opinion are not relevant for organizations in CSR implementation. Thus, respondents recognize the meaning of CSR in organization as serving the society (moral choice, corporate conscience), understand the context of market relations and anticipate presence of management preferences in the matter of corporate social responsibility.

Main hindrances for CSR development in organization and external environment is seen by respondents in «absence of financial ability» (41.5%) and «absence (immaturity) of the legal base» (26.8%), «companies are not aware of social politics advantages», as well as in «management reluctance» (17.1%). Therefore, hypothesis of organization's understanding

of the necessity for personal initiative at the CSR forming and development did not prove out, at the same time «absence of financial ability» and «management reluctance» are internal reasons for organizations, small companies; for example, they are explained by difficulties of survival. Team works on commission from outside, this role of the external environment can be fulfilled by organization where team is formed, or alternatively by external commissioner for teamwork on creating and implementing a project. Choice of the «absence/ immaturity of the legal base» option indicates weak knowledge of regulatory framework, or presence of apparent declarativity in implementation of standards. In fact, regulatory framework for CSR is at the advanced stage – this includes international and Russian standards: GOST R ISO 26000-2012 standard «Guide on Social Responsibility» and enacting of «Social Charter of Russian business» (enacted by RUIE) in 2004.

According to respondents' opinion, significant factors for CSR development are team problem-solving (39%), readiness to take personal responsibility (36.6%), presence of team spirit (26.8%), employees' personal initiative (26.8%) (Tab. 2). Highlighting of these factors, most preferred by respondents and crucial for CSR development, indicates the maximum of awareness of these specific factors and presence of «drawbacks» in their implementation. In terms of teambuilding, both factors are important for conclusions about necessity for emphasis on teambuilding for the sake of increasing efficiency of organization's goals (group goals) fulfillment.

Tab. 2: «Which areas defined below are in need of development in your organization?»

Options	Choice frequency (%)
Discipline	26.8
Following ethical principles	12.2
Readiness to take personal responsibility	36.6
Creative potential	9.8
Presence of team spirit	26.8
Team problem-solving	39
Personal initiative of employees	26.8

Source: Author's elaboration

«Is teamwork possible in the process of CSR implementation? The answer to this question got the following distribution: «necessary» – 54.5% of respondents' responses,

«probable» – 39.4%, «compulsory» – 6.1%. Is teamwork of management on implementation of corporate social responsibility possible? It is necessary. As it was already said, it has to be an interdisciplinary, heterogeneous team. Zhukov (2008) writes about this: «Groups with the most pronounced heterogeneity are still more productive, than groups with the possible maximum of homogeneity», and further authors make a conclusion: «Let's record the main contradiction in a team composition: people aspire to work with those who are similar to them, with kindred spirit, but cooperation will be more productive and people can come to agreement with those who are different from them, who complements them». Can the team consisting from managers and employees exist? Organization as a team? Extending the thought of Zhukov, this team is productive, only if horizontal communications with organization's employees, who stand at different managerial levels, are possible. Managers prefer to communicate with people similar to them (meaning also managers or higher management), but communication is more productive with those, who are different from them (managers), employees, for example.

To the question «evaluate efficiency of task fulfilment by your group» respondents more often chose «average» – 46.3%, then according to choice frequency: «high» – 41.5%, «very high» – 7.3%, «low» – 4.9%. Thus, a significant part of respondents (around 50%) suppose that efficiency of task fulfilment in a group is average, which is not typical of a team. Consequently, it is possible to speak about working groups rather than teams, where respondents work.

Answers to the question «do all employees suit for the roles, which they occupy in the organization, within the team?» got the following distribution: 61% respondents said that «the majority suits», «all» employees suit for the roles in a team was the answer of 22% of respondents, 17.1% – «the majority does not fit». Contradiction, found in the average efficiency of a group and presence of solidarity between respondents, displayed in answers to the question about majority that suits for their roles, lies in the fact that group thinking may become reference point for a group, unity for the sake of unity, at the same time team activity efficiency can be low or average, as shown in our case.

Distribution of responses to the question «are employees capable of spotting and supporting the new?» is as follows: «sometimes» – 52.4%, «always» – 26.2%, «seldom» – 16.7%, «never» – 4.8%. Teamwork means that team members are ready to support the new, because «these days experts in the sphere of human resources management often speak about necessity for prompt response to happening changes», volatility of the organization's external

environment is highlighted, and western top managers describe environment conditions using abbreviation VUCA which means volatility, uncertainty, complexity и ambiguity.

The most often selected response to the question «can employees cultivate communications, concerning relations within the team, with clients?» was «satisfactory» – 61%, «good» – 34.1%, «excellent» - 2.4%, «unsatisfactory» – 2.4%. Communication skills of employees are in a state that needs development and improvement. At the same time, according to respondents' opinion, career growth and advanced training in organizations is in a state when it «partially exists » – 50%, «exists» – 35.3%, «does not exist» – 14.7%.

Corporate social responsibility assumes development of employees' potential, its fulfillment and use for pursuing organization's objectives.

Respondents note that they see the following managerial capacities as «crucial»: ability to work with large amounts of information (45.2%), effective interaction with clients (consumers) (45.2%), creative thinking (28.6%), «important» – «essential role fulfillment» (54.8%), «level of education» (52.4%), «work productivity» (47.6%), ability to work in a team (32.4%). Among «crucial» personal characteristics for team members respondents named: «communicability» (45.2%), «ambition» (40.5%), important – «disciplined approach» и «initiative» (50%), «can-do attitude» (45.2%) «prompt response» and «honesty» (42.9%). The least desirable traits were «propensity towards conflict» (54.8%), «greed» (52.4%), «impudence» (45.2%). Responses of organization's employees showed that communicative skills seem important for employees, as there is a necessity to conduct team-forming events, necessity for the right choice and team members selection, employees' development, necessity for staff management. Respondents highlighted importance of «essential role fulfillment», as in terms of role approach to team forming, it is the basis of team forming.

Principles of CSR in organizations, according to majority of respondents (71.4%), are implemented partially. Implementation of principles to a full extent is an ideal scenario in the CSR sphere, partial implementation means that only limited number of principles is implemented or they are implemented fractionally. For example, principles of teamwork highlight necessity for respect, understanding of balance of powers by interacting parties, that is not always fulfilled, research revealed, that hypothesis about declarativity of CSR principles was confirmed, as over 50% of respondents notice «partial» fulfillment of principles. This hypothesis is also confirmed by responses to the question about role distribution in an organization, respondents think that from all members of the group «the majority suits for the roles», they occupy (61%), whereas efficiency of the group is evaluated

by respondents as average (46.3% of responses). As it is known, team is characterized by high work efficiency and right role distribution. Detailed analysis of responses to these questions was given above.

Majority of respondents replied to the question «in your opinion, if your direct manager shows inappropriate behavior, an employee...», «will fulfill only formal work instructions» (62.5%), «will pretend to work as usual but will work with «indifference» (50%), «will pretend to work as usual» (37.5%)

There are different employees, this brings a need for individual approach, essentially changes management, creates challenges for modern management, corporate social responsibility is an alternative of conscious approach to human potential. Perspectives of CSR to organizations are mainly neutral (59.5%), though some respondents see these perspectives positively (35.7%). Hypothesis about predominant respondents' opinion about possible positive perspectives of CSR development for organisations did not prove out.

Conclusion

Respondents are not entirely satisfied by the state of teamwork in an organization, they are not satisfied with other results significant for positive CSR dynamics. Presence of informal leaders in a group or organization, spontaneous organization structure, formal fulfilment of duties may become factors of corporate reasons for CSR development necessity, advertency to employees, enhancement of human resources management. Relations between organization and staff may be characterized by satisfaction with working practice in separate aspects, but can be characterized by presence of toxic pollution. Authors of publications about toxic employees and managers write about negative influence of toxic pollution, when the situation in an organization lowers work productivity, emphasis in activities is made on competition and strengthening of power by any means, rather than efficiency of organisation's activity, business (Padilla, et al, 2007, Fedorova, Dvorakova, 2015, Dolzhenko, Ginieva, 2015, Tokareva, Tokarev, 2016).

Consequently, absence of teamwork, actions on teambuilding in an organization, absence of transparency deteriorate results of teamwork, relations, diminish trust to each other, introducing changes into efficiency of the whole organization. Human resources, management as a type of attitude towards an employee, emerged due to objective conditions, which exist in the society development, computerisation, automation, increase of education level, human potential development index (HPDI). Transition to different types of

humanization in organization is important. Thus, transition to teamwork in CSR implementation is possible in case of equality of opportunities, abilities, referentiality of participants, respect towards each other. Solving of social problems, arising in the society and organization, provokes the need for joined efforts, participation in various projects on social issues solving, and systematic work, in general.

Corporate social responsibility is not only humanization, not only economic, legal approach – it is also a universal psychological and cultural state of the society, as a united organism, in a state of growing-up. Adult developed society makes a responsible choice, this choice is real rather than declarative: actions confirm promises, facts speak for themselves. Published organizations' reports are both the formal side of business and first steps on the way towards CSR establishment within an organization. Results of the current research may be useful in terms of obtaining feedback from respondents, as part of stakeholders, for companies practicing CSR or planning to introduce CSR in the future. They can also be used for further research, bigger differentiation of reasons for CSR development slowdown and means of supporting CSR on the part of the whole organization.

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Contact

Svetlana Ermolaeva

Ural Federal University

Russia, 620102, Yekaterinburg, ul. Mira, 19

svetla-ermolaeva@yandex.ru