Marketing Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility

Sofía López-Rodríguez
University of the Balearic Islands, INSEAD, sofia.lopez@insead.edu

N. Craig Smith
INSEAD, craig.smith@insead.edu

This chapter examines the multi-faceted and reciprocal influence of marketing on corporate social responsibility strategy and practice, especially in light of consumer concern about company social and environmental impacts. As well as potential harmful consequences of marketing to consumers, we highlight that society and the natural environment can also be significantly impacted negatively by consumers and their consumption practices. More positively, we illustrate how marketing, through consumer demand for responsible products and services, can also be a key driver for companies to create beneficial social and environmental impacts. We propose that the marketing function avoid marketing myopia by adopting a broad stakeholder orientation that acknowledges its role in engaging with multiple company stakeholders, as well as customers. We suggest that by using marketing methodologies and expertise (e.g., market research, market segmentation), it occupies a privileged organizational position in helping companies respond to the diverse social and environmental challenges they face.
Introduction

Marketing has many positive effects. Simply put, market society could not exist without it. However, harm also can result from marketing. As Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya (2010) indicate, marketing’s harmful consequences have long been examined in terms of harm to consumers by marketing, while more recently the harm by consumers – to other individuals or society in general as an indirect effect of marketing activities – is gaining growing attention.

In addition to righting the wrongs for which companies are more directly responsible, such as inadequate product safety or pollution, the private sector is increasingly called upon to address social problems and, accordingly, shoulder greater social responsibilities. The development of dramatically expanded global supply chains has led to intense discussion on the connection between upstream phenomena, such as working conditions in sweatshops, and downstream marketing and consumption decisions (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010). Certainly, this rise of global supply chains has resulted in social and environmental problems for which consumers hold companies responsible. At the same time, with the growing recognition of the failure of governments to solve many social problems, criticism of companies has become more far-reaching because more is expected of business today. Corporate leaders are asked to use the power of business to improve the world. Indeed, according to Cone (2017), 63% of Americans are hopeful, in the absence of government regulation, that businesses will take the lead in driving social and environmental change.

Moreover, from a business-case perspective, trust in companies can be severely undermined if they are found wanting on social or environmental responsibility issues, which can certainly damage their brands. Consumers are stakeholders in more ways than one. They are also members of society and thus potentially, as socially concerned citizens, they might well wish to limit their harmful consumption decisions, once they become aware of them.

This is not a new idea, but it has never been as prominent as it is today. Indeed, the increasing demand from consumers for companies to pay attention to social and environmental issues means that the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is

---

1 While there are many definitions of CSR, the EU has advanced a widely disseminated definition of CSR as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with stakeholders on a voluntary basis. It is about enterprises deciding to go beyond the minimum legal requirements and obligations stemming from collective agreements in order to address societal needs” (COM/2006/0136 final).
assuming strategic importance in a growing number of firms. However, there remains a
great deal of uncertainty about how to develop a business case for CSR.

Within today’s globalized business context, marketing in particular is moving
center stage in the debate on CSR (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010). There is a
growing consumer imperative for socially and environmentally sound products, while
well-designed marketing strategies can help to solve wider social and environmental
issues. In the latter case, marketing practitioners need to avoid the new form of marketing
myopia – which focuses only on customers as “consumers” – and ensure that a
stakeholder orientation becomes central to day-to-day decision making, rather than a one-
off response, perhaps to adverse publicity.

With these concerns in mind, we will now turn to illustrating how marketing can
cause harm, both to and by consumers. Harm inflicted by consumers is becoming
increasingly relevant for several reasons, including globalization, and this will underpin
discussion in the following sections. In the following section, we will discuss the concept
of (positive and negative) ethical consumerism and its implications for the idiosyncratic
business case for CSR. Then we will turn to discussing consumer perceptions of CSR
communications and the influence of these perceptions on the business case for CSR. In
the next section we will advance the case for a broader stakeholder orientation in
marketing. It is this stakeholder vision that informs our prescription for CSR-based
marketing strategy. We will conclude with observations on the interrelationship between
a stakeholder orientation, marketing, and CSR.

**Marketing Can Cause Harm: To and By Consumers**

The idea that marketing can do harm is hardly new. Harm to consumers may occur
as a result of the marketing of products that are harmful, such as tobacco, or that cause
harm if misused or abused or over-consumed, such as foods and drinks high in sugar.
Alternatively, some products may be marketed in ways that are harmful, such as the
advertising of cosmetics that promotes an idealized view of feminine beauty. The debate
on harm to consumers by marketing is long-standing (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya,
2010). There are responsibilities arising from what marketers do to their customers – and
there is a long history of questioning these impacts (e.g. Farmer, 1967; Packard, 1957).

In addition, harm to society more generally may occur as a result of consumers’
choices. These range, for example, from the consumption of products that pollute the
environment, such as automobiles with high CO$_2$ emissions, to the consumption of alcohol associated with violence (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010).

The field of marketing ethics has dealt with the manifold ethical problems caused by marketers’ activities since the very beginning of this debate. Marketing ethics has been defined by Laczniak and Murphy (2006: 159) as having to do with the “right and fair practices that are expected of marketing managers.” However, the rightness and fairness of marketing are mainly examined in relation to the marketers’ impact on customers, as demonstrated by Schlegelmilch and Öberseder’s (2010) analysis of fifty years of marketing ethics.

However, as Smith, Drumwright and Gentile (2010) recently argued, many of the adverse effects that might accompany value creation in marketing have been largely ignored by most marketing scholars and practitioners. Instead, the academic discipline of marketing has focused on the overall positive effects of corporate activities on customers and other stakeholders (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010).

The harm inflicted by consumers is in certain key respects a newer topic, triggered in particular by the conditions under which products are made in globally expanded supply chains. Through the interest of consumers in the moral dimension of products and production conditions, consumer decisions and CSR management have become connected in a way that potentially moralizes consumption itself and shifts the attention from an analysis of the harm consumption does to consumers to a discussion on the harm done by consumers (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010). According to these authors, the consumers themselves become part of the CSR discourse: it is no longer the production machinery that is driving irrational consumption decisions; it is the rational decisions of the consumer that drive the production machinery. They also suggest that the global expansion of markets and the systematic outsourcing of production to countries with weak governance systems appear to have resulted in marketers doing harm in the name of consumers.

Thus marketing is positioned as the crucial link between problematic environmental and social conditions in the supply chain and consumer decisions, as it influences consumption decisions with profound social and environmental effects throughout global supply chains, including effects on producers who may be a long way removed from consumers geographically (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010). Technology plays two roles in this process. On the one hand, it facilitates the expansion
of global supply chains. On the other hand, the Internet makes knowledge of their harmful consequences readily available to consumers on the other side of the world.

**Ethical Consumerism and the Business Case for CSR**

Broadly speaking, “ethical consumerism” occurs where consumers are influenced significantly in their purchase and consumption decisions by ethical considerations (Smith, 2008). In the case of *negative* ethical consumerism, consumers might choose not to buy a product because it is perceived to be unethical in itself or as a result of the processes by which it was produced. Alternatively, the goods may originate in a company or country regarded as unethical in some way. This refusal to purchase can be an individual response or part of an organized consumer boycott. Boycotts are the most dramatic examples of consumer action. However, companies are more typically penalized for poor sustainability performance through indirect effects, such as damage to their brands or reputation. For example, Starbucks sales fell in the UK following the controversy over how little British tax the company was paying. By contrast, *positive* ethical consumerism occurs when consumers choose to give preference to products or companies perceived to be more ethical than the alternatives.

Negative and positive forms of ethical consumerism are often two sides of the same coin. Research suggests that 87% of Americans will purchase a product because a company advocated for an issue they cared about and 76% will refuse to purchase products or services on learning that the supplier supports an issue contrary to their beliefs (Cone, 2017). At the same time consumer responses – often contingent on factors pertaining to the company, consumption and competition – encompass much more than an immediate sales response. Factors such as consumer loyalty, resilience, positive word-of-mouth, consumer well being and support for an issue or cause may all come into play (Smith and Murphy, 2012).

Indeed, core business benefits can drive CSR, with consumer response as a major consideration alongside the response to CSR of other key stakeholders, such as employees. Today, only a small and diminishing minority of large corporations do not produce “corporate responsibility”, “sustainability” or “corporate citizenship” reports describing company social and environmental performance. This heightened attention to CSR is not due to business leaders “finding religion”; it is because the “business case” for CSR – based substantially on consumer perceptions and preferences (Barnett, 2007; Smith, 2003) – has become much more compelling. It has become difficult to avoid the abundance of sources on the business case for corporate social responsibility, an argument
that is also evident in the reports of individual companies justifying CSR activities to shareholders.

However, attention to the business case for corporate social responsibility can be misguided in two respects. First, there is no one business case other than at the most basic level (i.e., corporate responsibility can provide an enduring economic advantage for the firm). Second, because the business case is idiosyncratic, it varies markedly in both form and strength across firms, industries and other contexts. Without doubt, there are a growing number of circumstances in which CSR is in the best economic interests of a particular company (Margolis and Elfenbein, 2008). Indeed, this win-win combination of society and business benefiting is the holy grail of corporate social responsibility advocates. However, because the business case is so contingent on circumstances, it is difficult to find a justification for many of the generalizations made – beyond wishful thinking (Mishra and Modi, 2016; Sadovnikova and Pujari, 2017). It is important that today’s business leaders neither simply accept the “generic business case” nor dismiss it as flawed. Instead, they should be aware of when, where and how greater attention to CSR is demanded and can contribute to the economic performance of their particular companies.

**Consumer Perceptions of CSR Communications**

The well-documented consumer skepticism about CSR (e.g. Skarmeas and Leonidou, 2013) and the limits on customers’ willingness to pay more for a socially better choice (Trudel and Cotte, 2009), help to explain why so many CSR efforts fail to have a significant positive impact on customers, with the result that the business case for CSR often remains elusive (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Smith, 2008).

It has been suggested that a “one-size-fits-all” CSR strategy does not seem to be the right approach for making the business case (e.g. Smith, 2003), as there are many contingencies when it comes to influencing how consumers perceive corporate responsibility. For example, consumers might consider that there are CSR-performance trade-offs for certain categories of products (e.g. Luchs et al., 2010), or their perceptions of a company’s social and environmental responsibility may be affected by a ceiling effect (Trudel and Cotte, 2009).

Research into consumer psychology and CSR suggests that there are important contingency factors – at the product and the company level – which could influence reactions to information about CSR. In relation to product characteristics, common misunderstandings about CSR-related claims can work against the company – such as the
stigma of CSR being associated with lower product quality (Newman, Gorlin and Dhar, 2014) – and, in some cases, can work against the interests of the consumer – such as the “organic-healthy” association (Peloza, Ye and Montford, 2015; Schuldt and Schwarz, 2010). As regards company characteristics, both the specificities of the organization itself – such as its domain of activity (e.g. Cook, Smith and Jin, 2012) and its CSR history (e.g. Wagner, Lutz and Weitz, 2009) as well as its motivations (e.g. Menon and Kahn, 2003; Yoon, Gürhan-Canly and Schwarz, 2006) – play a crucial role in the impact of CSR communications on consumers. We propose that in advancing a business case for CSR, companies should pay close attention to the relationship between these diverse contingencies when communicating about their CSR initiatives.

Moreover, central to the argument of increased consumer individuation is the idea of greater authenticity. However, marketers have not necessarily responded to this idea with regard to CSR (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010). As these authors suggest, today’s marketers seem to be more interested in whether the growing relevance of CSR to consumers might be harnessed for use in marketing communications in general and branding strategies in particular. What for marketers might be yet one more form of “spin,” might for some consumers be something more fundamental. As Curras-Perez, Bigne-Alcaniz and Alvarado-Herrera (2009: 547) point out, “CSR is one of the most commonly used arguments for constructing brands with a differentiated personality which satisfy consumers’ self-definitional needs.” Therefore, the strategy of loading CSR into the brand might result in a backlash, if the brand narration is perceived as insincere (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010).

How should companies handle CSR in their marketing? From a company’s point of view, there is a question about the extent to which it shouts about what it is doing. If it sticks its head above the parapet, there is a risk that it will face charges of green-washing or even hypocrisy. Consumers are aware that companies are not perfect in terms of CSR, but they expect firms to set high goals (i.e. perform beyond mere compliance), keep improving and report on progress – with the most committed companies even required to practice “radical transparency” (Ottman, 2011: 138). One example of good practice is provided by Innocent, the fruit drinks company, which has a sustainability policy that reflects the values of its founders. This works well because Innocent openly accepts that it is not perfect and needs to do more, while nevertheless suggesting that it is still focused on the issues.
To sum up, caution should be the watchword when making claims about CSR: it is best to be understated. To counter potential skepticism, companies can also seek labeling and certification for their CSR commitments as a way of winning trust and credibility (Gruber, Kaliauer and Schlegelmilch, 2017). High levels of transparency can also lead to more positive consumer evaluations of CSR-related messages (Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire, 2017).

**CSR and a Broad Stakeholder Orientation in Marketing**

The increasing interest among marketers in the interface between marketing and CSR reflects their belief that society in general and consumers in particular have a growing interest in social and environmental issues. However, as Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya (2010) have argued, corporations often react by attempting to manage impressions, not by changing their overall marketing and procurement policies.

Historically, and still sometimes today, the response by business to social and environmental challenges is to say that they are not its problem and, even where corporations are to blame, it is the job of government to address the issues via regulation. However, this response often carries far less weight in the global context. Globalization continues apace, but global regulation has fallen well behind. For example, consider child workers and other manifestations of sweatshop labor found in developing countries that supply clothing to the developed world. Nike’s failure in the 1990s to respond to workplace abuses in the factories of its suppliers is a clear illustration. As Nike found, it is difficult to argue that this is not the problem of the firms sourcing the clothing (Zadek, 2004). Government action to prevent abuse of factory workers is often nonexistent in many textile-exporting countries. Nike initially argued that it could not be responsible for the actions of independent contractors supplying its sneakers, despite documented evidence of abuse of factory workers (Zadek, 2004). Extensive criticism followed, including a consumer boycott. Nike’s response, in the face of the threat to its brand and corporate reputation, was to accept that, in the words of its then CEO Phil Knight, “good shoes come from good factories and good factories have good labor relations” (Smith, 2009).

The misperception of the links between CSR and marketing may be due to the fact that traditional marketing strategy tends to be predominantly customer-focused and firm-centric, with profit maximization as the primary objective; scant attention is paid to the myriad social actors who (intentionally or otherwise) affect and are affected by
companies’ actions (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010) – which can be considered a form of “marketing myopia”.

Avoiding Marketing Myopia through Stakeholder Marketing

Sixty years ago, Ted Levitt (1960) exhorted marketers to correct their “marketing myopia.” In his view, the shortsightedness that distorted their strategic vision caused them to define their businesses narrowly in terms of products rather than broadly in terms of customer needs. No doubt, today’s marketers do a much better job of focusing on customer needs. However, Smith, Drumwright and Gentile (2010) argue that marketing specialists have learned the lesson of customer orientation so thoroughly that they might fall prey to a new form of marketing myopia.

These authors suggest that, the “new marketing myopia” occurs when marketers view the customer only as a “consumer” – a commercial entity seeking to satisfy short-term, material needs through consumption behaviors. The customer is not viewed as a citizen, a parent, an employee, a community member, or a member of a global village with a long-term stake in the future of the planet. As Smith, Drumwright and Gentile (2010) advance, when marketers give insufficient attention to stakeholders, they do so at great peril; their customers, their companies, and society at large will probably be adversely affected.

Smith, Drumwright and Gentile (2010) propose that, the “new marketing myopia” stems from three related phenomena: (1) a single-minded focus on the customer to the exclusion of other stakeholders; (2) an overly narrow definition of the customer and his or her needs; and (3) a failure to recognize the changed societal context of business. These authors argue for a more sophisticated understanding of consumption, taking into consideration a wider set of stakeholders who are concerned about a company’s social and environmental impacts and recognizing that customers also wear other stakeholder hats. Marketers must understand the deeply embedded position of business in society and shift from a narrow focus on customers to a stakeholder orientation if they and their firms are to prosper and grow in today’s complex and unpredictable economic environment.

We agree with Smith, Drumwright and Gentile’s (2010) vision of marketing as a practice that involves proactively incorporating stakeholders beyond the customer in creating value for the firm and for society. This does not mean that customers are unimportant. Indeed they remain a central consideration, but it is necessary to recognize that there are other stakeholders who also require marketers’ attention
Broadly speaking, stakeholder marketing involves the design, implementation and evaluation of marketing initiatives so as to maximally benefit all stakeholders – customers, employees and shareholders (i.e. actors that operate in the business domain), as well as nonprofits, their beneficiaries, the environment and society in general (Smith, Palazzo and Bhattacharya, 2010).\(^2\) As these authors suggest, marketing more than any other business discipline is uniquely poised to help both companies and a broad spectrum of stakeholders to benefit from the movement towards a more harmonious relationship between business and society. It is this vision that informs our subsequent prescriptions on stakeholder marketing and CSR strategy.

**Marketing and CSR: A Mutualistic Symbiosis**

There can be considerable uncertainty about a firm’s obligations to its stakeholders. However, if CSR is fundamentally about obligations to stakeholders, their engagement by the firm is certainly more likely to lead to informed management thinking and decision making (Smith, 2003).

As Smith (2003) suggests, the essence of corporate social responsibility is to recognize the value of external stakeholder dialogue, to inform corporate CSR activity and not just to promulgate a company’s own values and principles. Stakeholder engagement should therefore be at the center of CSR activity, which depends on understanding the values and principles of those who have a stake in the organization’s operations. Clearly, a firm’s social responsibility strategy, if genuinely and carefully conceived, should be unique, despite the sameness of the growing number of corporate reports on CSR.

While there is no such thing as a generic CSR strategy, there are common elements. There will be substantial overlap among the stakeholders identified by any firm: all companies will at minimum identify obligations to customers, employees, suppliers and the wider community. However, the characteristics of these stakeholders and the form of the obligations of any specific firm to that stakeholder group are likely to vary considerably (Smith, 2003).

Based on Smith, Drumwright and Gentile’s (2010) propositions, we suggest a series of initiatives that companies need to undertake in order to adopt a sound CSR strategy.

---

\(^2\) It is noteworthy that, in August 2019, the highly influential U.S. Business Roundtable announced a restatement of corporate purpose that acknowledged explicitly the importance of serving all stakeholders, effectively declaring a shift away from a focus primarily on shareholders. See: [https://www.businessroundtable.org/business-roundtable-redefines-the-purpose-of-a-corporation-to-promote-an-economy-that-serves-all-americans](https://www.businessroundtable.org/business-roundtable-redefines-the-purpose-of-a-corporation-to-promote-an-economy-that-serves-all-americans) (Accessed: 10 October 2019).
strategy. The starting point is to map the company’s stakeholders (Freeman, Harrison and Wicks, 2007; Krick et al., 2005). There may be specific departments in the organization with primary responsibility for certain stakeholder groups (e.g. investor relations, human resources). However at a minimum, the marketing function needs to be strategically cognizant of all the firm’s primary stakeholders (customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders and local communities) and its key secondary stakeholders (typically, the media, government, consumer advocacy groups, competitors and certain nongovernmental organizations), as well as the interactions between them (Smith, Drumwright and Gentile, 2010)

In addition it is important to determine stakeholder salience – who really counts – and the issues that matter to them. We suggest that businesses need to focus on their own particular issues, not some vague notion of corporate social responsibility. CSR becomes concrete and possible for business managers to implement only at this issue-specific level. Marketing managers will inevitably pay attention to stakeholders who include (or are especially influential on or relevant to) customers. However, as previously discussed, there is a risk that this focus will lead to new forms of marketing myopia.

As Smith, Drumwright and Gentile (2010) suggest, having mapped and prioritized the salient stakeholders, companies must identify their expectations and issues of concern – a process that only serves to underline the particular relevance of marketing to stakeholder management. Expertise in market research can be easily transferred from research that primarily considers customers to research on a full array of stakeholders, using both primary and secondary data and both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Marketing researchers’ methodological skills in investigating sensitive or emotionally charged topics can be especially useful.

The next step should be to engage with stakeholders. Because the efficiency and legitimacy of activities intended to solve social and environmental problems depend on the ability of corporations to cooperate with other interested parties (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006), the expertise of marketers is again particularly relevant. The skills usually deployed in identifying how to listen to customers and how to collaborate with consumers in strategic initiatives can be used to foster improved two-way communications and collaboration with other primary and secondary stakeholders. Indeed, issues may have different implications in different communities and marketing expertise can lend itself to better understanding of stakeholder needs. Take, for example, the social and environmental impacts of a petroleum refinery. An oil company may use the same process
of stakeholder engagement throughout the world, but the demands of a local community in a developed country will be different from those of a local community in a developing economy. The actions taken by local residents might also justifiably differ, subject to minimum acceptable performance standards (on safety, emissions, etc.).

Finally, it is necessary to embed a stakeholder orientation internally. As Smith, Drumwright and Gentile (2010) indicate, marketing managers need to ensure that a stakeholder orientation becomes central to day-to-day decision making, rather than a one-off response, perhaps to adverse publicity. This means “mainstreaming” CSR, so that it “is clearly seen to be on the company’s agenda in a legitimate, credible, and ongoing manner, and it is incorporated into day-to-day activities in appropriate and relevant ways” (Berger, Cunningham and Drumwright, 2007: 133).

Conclusions

Despite continued consumer skepticism about CSR, there is today little doubt about its strategic importance for many companies – particularly the world’s best-known corporations. Although, historically, there have been periods of heightened interest in CSR in the past, such as the late 1960s and early 1970s (e.g. Sethi, 1974; Vogel, 1978), the current urgency stems from a realization that, with globalization, business itself is more pervasive and more powerful. The recent development of global supply chains has resulted in social and environmental problems upstream that are attributable at least in part to downstream marketers and consumers. Business and society are now far more interconnected. Globalization has substantially increased both the pressure on companies to address corporate responsibility and the range of issues to which they must give attention. In addition, the criticism of business is more far-reaching than ever before. Business leaders all over the world have therefore started to reassess the social and environmental impacts, if not the very purpose of their firms – and more often because they find themselves required to do so rather than out of choice.

While the harm done to consumers by marketing activities has been long studied, the harm done by consumers – as an indirect effect of marketing activities – has received less academic and managerial attention. We suggest that a stakeholder marketing orientation, comprising analysis of the harmful upstream effects of downstream marketing and consumption decisions, is key to designing a sound and credible CSR strategy. This strategy will also require an in-depth understanding of what differentiates an organization – its mission, values and core business activities.
The so-called “business case” for attention to CSR is certainly idiosyncratic, varying significantly from one company to another. This is in part due to the fact that there are numerous contingency factors – at the product and the company level – influencing consumer reactions to CSR information (e.g. positive or negative ethical consumerism). Drawing on the literature of consumer psychology, we thus suggest that CSR communications in tune with the (frequently quirky) workings of the consumer’s mind are often likely to be the key to success.

On the other hand, we also emphasize the need for companies to enhance their capabilities in identifying stakeholders and the issues they care about, as a mechanism to make a more convincing business case for CSR. While CSR by definition refers to the obligations of the firm to society or, more specifically, to those of the firm’s stakeholders who are affected by corporate policies and practices, many CSR statements fail to reflect a deep commitment to social and environmental issues or to identify the issues that matter most to stakeholders. “Impression management” is certainly not the right way to address social and environmental concerns.

If company CSR efforts and communications are to succeed, we urge marketers to pay greater attention to today’s broad business realities. Companies need to escape the “new marketing myopia” that leads marketers to view the customer only as a “consumer” while giving insufficient attention to broader stakeholder issues. We propose that marketing strategy and practice should engage multiple stakeholders in value creation. Following a broader understanding of marketing, practitioners should adopt a stakeholder-marketing orientation that aims to maximize the benefits to all stakeholders.

The marketing function thus has a key role to play in orienting company CSR efforts by lending its expertise in gauging the customer’s perspective and in engagement with other stakeholders. Moreover, CSR – if grounded in an accurate assessment of society’s best interests – can satisfactorily respond to the consumer’s own CSR imperative for positive market outcomes, such as ethical consumerism and a positive company/brand attitude. Through the embedding of a stakeholder orientation in marketing practice, we propose a mutualistic symbiosis between the marketing function and the firm’s CSR strategy to allow the company to prosper and grow in the unpredictable business environment of the twenty-first century.

References


