



# Answering the call for corporate social responsibility

*CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)*

*in*

*THE CONTACT CENTRE INDUSTRY*

A white paper about corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its impact and implementation within the contact centre industry.

This paper is offered with the aim of raising awareness about CSR in the industry and is for consideration purposes only.

*a white paper on behalf of the Hong Kong Call Centre Association*

*written by:*

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## ***CSR IN THE CONTACT CENTRE INDUSTRY***

Usually when the acronym *CSR* is used in the contact centre industry it is referring to a Customer Service Representative. In the wider scheme of business, *CSR* refers to *Corporate Social Responsibility*.

### **What is corporate social responsibility?**

So what is *CSR* and why is it crucial that the contact centre industry embraces the *CSR* concept? Corporate social responsibility (*CSR*) is no longer a nice to have, it's a must! With mounting worldwide attention on issues such as sustainability, global warming, and corporate governance, businesses can no longer afford not to practice *CSR*. It has become imperative to any organisation that strives for excellence.

*CSR encourages organisations to be accountable for their social and environmental impact beyond profit or legal obligations. It suggests that organisations consider their "stakeholders" in all aspects of conducting business.*

### **Who are stakeholders?**

Stakeholders are all those who are influenced (directly or indirectly) by an organisation. They can generally be grouped into the categories of:



- **Employees**
- **Customers**
- **Suppliers (supply chain management)**
- **Community (including environmental impact)**
- **Shareholders (and other investors)**
- **Media**
- **Government and regulators**

### **Whose responsibility is it?**

As *CSR* has an impact on so many different stakeholders, responsibility for it must be taken by all areas of an organisation. Corporate philanthropy (although falling under the stakeholder of community) has very little to do with *CSR* despite this common belief. This is because philanthropy is about how a company spends its money. *CSR* is about how a company makes their money and how responsibly they conduct their business in doing so.

## **CSR standards**

What is interesting about CSR is its recent rise in popularity amongst corporations who are embracing the concept even though it is by and large not compulsory. Whereas corporate governance practices are a requirement of publicly listed companies, there are no regulatory requirements legislating CSR.

Having said that, if corporations are not practicing CSR, they are risking being non-competitive as it becomes something of the norm rather than the exception.

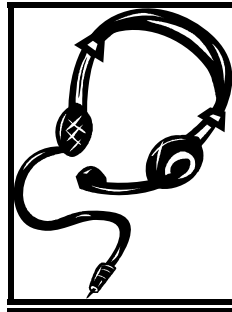
Possibly the closest move towards a worldwide CSR standard is ISO26000 (International Standards Organisation) which is a guideline being developed for social responsibility. Social responsibility embraces the same concept as CSR only that it relates not only to corporate (which puts the “C” in CSR) but also government and non-government organisations.

## **Why CSR makes great business sense**

CSR makes great business sense because of the many direct and indirect benefits associated with its practice.

Some key benefits for the contact centre industry include revenue enhancement, cost savings, reducing staff turnover and becoming an employer of preference. These and other examples are explained further in the **key benefits** and **reasons for answering the call** section of this document.

Not only does it make good business sense, there are SRI (socially responsible investing) financial funds (such as pension, 401K, superannuation, MPF, CPF and various managed funds) which only invest in companies that can satisfy criteria linked to CSR practices. Companies that ignore this phenomenon risk being left out of the portfolios of major funds which could have an impact on their share prices and market capitalization. Many companies now provide a section in their annual report about CSR, or in best practice examples provide a separate CSR report.



### **Facing the facts about CSR in the contact centre industry**

There are many misconceptions about the contact centre industry with regards to social responsibility. On the whole our industry provides mass employment in our communities and indirectly jobs in other industries. Thus it benefits the economy. Salaries are of a good standard in most countries and the contact centre industry can provide an excellent grounding for career paths both in the contact centre industry itself (e.g. customer service rep to management and senior management) and also within a particular company or industry.

Working conditions in contact centres often far exceed other industries, somewhat due to the focus it has received through negative press surrounding its practices. The industry has been forced to clean up its act on the whole.

CSR however is about facing the hard facts. As an industry we need to address our stakeholders and act upon their suggestions. The contact centre industry is often accused of:

- Having a modern day “sweat shop” image
- Is known for its high turnover
- Is infamous for the high stress levels placed on staff
- Has reported incidences of staff suicide as a result of work pressure
- Contact centres are often viewed as a high cost business unit and therefore a prime candidate to be outsourced
  - This effects staff as they are made redundant or displaced
  - Customers complain about off-shoring jobs and that local service standards are compromised
  - Customers have concerns over data security when it goes offshore
- Jobs in contact centres are seen as simply a foot in the door for staff wanting to get into a company

CSR when practiced properly can address these and other challenges facing our industry.

## **Stakeholders and the contact centre industry**

The following section discusses stakeholders and how they relate specifically to the contact centre industry.

### **Employees**

Whether your contact centre is one of the largest with staff numbers in the thousands, or just a few seats in size, it is a labour intensive industry. This brings with it responsibilities towards our employees beyond regulatory or legal requirements – the human aspect of our industry.

Some points of consideration are:

1. Work/life balance – Evaluate if your rosters or working hours permit a work/life balance that is reasonable or even makes you stand out as a preferred employer (reducing turnover and improving staff tenure)
  - Consider “family friendly” rosters and flexible working hours
  - Stakeholder dialogue with employees about workforce management is crucial
2. Working conditions - watch for and build contingency plans for signs of employee stress:
  - Train management and supervisory teams to identify the warning signs and act accordingly
  - There have been examples in the contact centre industry of workers blaming (perceived) unrealistic sales targets or key performance indicators (KPIs) for their stress levels. Some of these cases have ended up in legal proceedings and in the worst and most disturbing cases, suicide of employees related to working conditions
  - It is advisable to preempt such situations by reevaluating your current KPIs and other business targets
  - Engage with employees (surveys, performance reviews, meetings and other avenues) to seek and act upon their opinions where appropriate
3. Regulatory safety requirements such as occupational health and safety standards should be implemented and maintained. Where they don't exist, industry guidelines should be followed.
4. Staff team building activities promoting employee participation. The best practice examples are contact centres which budget for these activities.
5. Consider stretching/exercise breaks to promote fitness (roster)
6. Providing facilities that promote good ergonomics, a stress free and healthy environment
7. On the subject of health, consider contact centre specific issues such as eye strain and emissions from monitors; hearing issues from headsets; discouraging prolonged sitting by ensuring staff have regular breaks;

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sufficient working space is provided, and general display screen equipment guidelines are followed

8. Air quality in call centres – consider air purification systems where applicable for staff health (can reduce sick leave)
9. Reducing carbon emissions – heat from P.C.'s/CRT monitors; large old pc towers; changing light globes to energy efficient globes; turning off equipment not in use (energy saving machines); office design to deflect light and heat and consider participating in a carbon emissions offset programme
10. If looking for new premises for a contact centre consider the location for staff accessibility to transport, safety, car parking, and sufficient retail outlets in the vicinity for food and other purchases
11. Recruitment policies – ensure your contact centre follows and has current diversity policies in place such as non-discrimination and cultural acceptance
  - E.g. is your staffing level of women and men disproportionate and in need of addressing?
12. Cost cutting initiatives such as contact centre centralization projects and outsourcing should be done with due consideration to employees and their well-being, not undertaken just as a cost cutting measure
13. Career path and training focus
14. Dress down! Instead of having the air conditioning set at a low temperature, allow lighter clothing to be worn and turn the air conditioning temperature up. This is particularly the case if your contact centre issues uniforms to staff that include jackets etc. If your staff wear jackets then chances are your air conditioning is set too low which is harming the environment by using more energy. A cold environment can also harm the health of staff.

***Key benefits***

- Enhanced revenues resulting from a motivated and engaged workforce
- Reduced costs resulting from lower staff turnover and energy usage
- Socially responsible employee practices make your organization a preferred employer for prospective staff



## Customers

Contact centres exist because we have customers, and our delivery of both service and product are top priorities.

Some services will never be replaced by the internet or automation. The contact centre is often the first or only touch point a customer has with a company and its brand, a community service or government body. This brings with it responsibilities.

Some points of consideration are:

1. Engage with customers through surveys and other avenues to seek their opinions on your service and products. Act on this feedback and align KPIs accordingly. Make sure there is a mechanism to tell customers that their feedback has been put into practice. Stakeholder dialogue needs to be a two way street.
2. Product quality and communication of product information/terms and conditions to customers should be accurate and up to date
3. Meeting all local and international laws in relation to customer interactions e.g. Telecommunications laws and customer interaction/privacy laws such as direct marketing guidelines. The customer should be considered as first priority.
4. Data security responsibilities – contact centres handle bank details such as, credit card files, health reports and other sensitive information. Companies have a responsibility to protect this data in their own contact centres, as well as in those that use outsourced services. Check your own data protection policies to ensure they meet both your internal requirements as well as regulatory requirements in the countries you operate in or service.
5. Ensure your contact centre follows a code of ethics which may be that of your contact centre, or your organisation
6. Let your customers know that your contact centre and company practices CSR. This could be done perhaps in existing communications with bylines about your programme, or a link to the CSR section on your website. The idea of this is to raise awareness amongst your customers about your social responsibility.
7. Through stakeholder dialogue, ask them what they think about your CSR performance and take their feedback onboard

### *Key benefits*

- Revenue enhancement and cost reduction from first contact resolution and minimizing avoidable contacts (accurate communication of product information/terms on the first contact)
- Brand protection by ensuring strict adherence to data security
- Service improvements from acting upon stakeholder dialogue with customers

### **Community (Including environmental impact)**

Contact centres can directly and indirectly have influence on the communities in which they operate.

Directly, the industry is a mass employer bringing with it community and economic benefits. Indirectly, the industry employs people in supporting industries such as technology, telecommunications. Many businesses benefit from the mass consumers that exist as a result of employment in the contact centre industry.

Although perhaps not immediately obvious, the contact centre industry presents many areas of opportunity where we can do our part to reduce environmental impact. Again, being an industry which is labour intensive and a large consumer of energy and products, certain responsibilities are bestowed up on us. This all impacts climate change and the community on the whole.

Some points of consideration are:

#### **Community:**

1. Supporting communities in which we work
  - E.g. If you are an outsourced location, are your management positions offered to locals rather than only expats?
2. Contact centres set up for NGO/emergency work can provide meaningful community support as well as a business opportunities
3. Philanthropy - Having the contact centre support community organisations with voluntary (or even as part of their scheduled work) involvement by staff. This could involve charity work or other meaningful participation. It may involve sponsorship by your company.
  - Make it relevant to your industry and area of competence e.g. providing P.C. training to underprivileged children and other skills such as business communications – these are tangible and sustainable community benefits rather than just money to a charity
4. If your centre services customers from other countries, ensure your staff are trained to be sensitive to the cultural differences they may encounter
  - E.g. Training should include information about the country and its people and service expectations

Environment:

1. Consider an optimal air conditioning setting that is comfortable and uses the least amount of energy
2. Procurement of energy efficient equipment
3. Ride a bike, car pool or catch public transport to work
4. Turn off computers during long breaks and at night
  - Make this automatic or provide screen pop-up reminders
5. Turn off office lights when not required (there is a misconception that turning off fluorescent lighting isn't useful due to the energy required to switch lights back on – fact is anything over around 10 minutes off time makes a difference)



6. Recycle paper
7. Reducing printing and encouraging this practice
  - Mandate that all internal communication must become paperless and work towards the same for external communication
8. Use web or video conferencing (even teleconferencing for across town meetings) to reduce carbon emissions
9. Consider work from home programmes to reduce travel to work if appropriate (also a work/life balance consideration)
10. Consider using an energy supplier that provides the option to use renewable energy
11. Executives can consider reducing air travel and making use of conferencing tools instead
12. When running your company's annual conference or the like, consider a programme to offset the carbon emissions created
13. Encourage and educate your staff to change to energy efficient light bulbs at home and do the same in the workplace (as employers there is an opportunity to benefit the wider community by educating our workforce)
14. Have a workplace audit on energy consumption carried out
15. If looking for new premises for a contact centre consider trying to find an energy efficient building e.g. LEED certified building

Consider rewards and incentives for staff who participate in voluntary initiatives you put in place.

**Key benefits**

- Job enrichment and enhanced skill sets for employees from community participation
- Reduction in carbon emissions can mean tangible cost savings e.g. utilities costs
- Healthier workplace and community

### **Suppliers (supply chain management)**

Contact centres have the opportunity to be mindful of the products they buy when dealing with their suppliers.

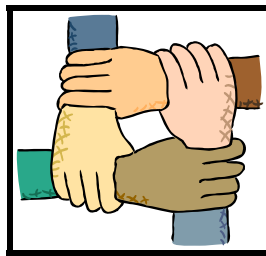
Everything from equipment such as headsets and furniture, to PABX systems and LCD screens used in contact centres comes from a supply chain. Companies should consider whether their suppliers have their own CSR practices in place which align with that of their own organisations.

Some points of consideration are:

1. Ensure outsource providers have CSR practices that align with yours e.g. Customer data protection and privacy compliance; recruitment practices for staff they employ such as security screening of applicants.
2. What is the criteria of your supply chain vendors? Sub-contracting of work can sometimes mask practices that do not align with your own CSR initiatives. Ensure that outsourced work that is sub-contracted or further outsourced still meets with your requirements and write this into service level agreements.
3. See to it that your company's code of ethics are adhered to by your suppliers - if this is not the case you risk damaging your reputation and brand
4. During any tendering process, consider making CSR a part of your RFP (request for proposal) in order to ascertain information such as whether your potential suppliers practice CSR e.g. where products to manufacture equipment are being sourced by your provider
  - This may require spot audits to be allowed of suppliers to ensure items such as branded (or purchased) goods are not being made under inhumane conditions e.g. employing child labour or employees without pay – this can damage your brand, reputation and revenues

#### ***Key benefits***

- Efficient and socially responsible service level agreements
- Brand enhancement and protection (ensuring ethical conduct in your supply chain management before damage is done to your brand)
- Cost reduction and quality through a more efficient and safe supply chain



### **Shareholders (and other investors)**

Particularly if you belong to a publicly listed company, investors often have questions which they ask of your contact centre staff. Although some questions are best handled by your investor relations department or public relations, consider knowledge which can be availed to your customers via your contact centre. This assists customers in achieving first contact resolution with your centre and also reduces avoidable contacts.

If your company is not publicly listed, there are still generally other investor stakeholders in your business.



Some points of consideration are:

1. Ensure that staff are aware of the company position and relevant shareholder benefits and information e.g. whether a discount is offered on products sold through your contact centre if the customer is a shareholder. As contact centre staff are frontline customer serving, they get asked all sorts of questions relating to your company. This should be part of training or can be briefed in team meetings. Standard information should be made available in databases accessible by staff when required.
2. Educate staff so that they know where to direct inquiries or have the relevant person contact the customer where applicable
3. Corporate governance regulations should be followed in all contact centre practices where applicable
4. By practicing CSR and having a programme in place, the company has a better chance of being included in the portfolios of large SRI financial funds which can impact stock prices and market capitalization of the company. These institutions may ask questions surrounding product and brand risks which are associated with your company's reputation.

#### **Key benefits**

- Reducing avoidable contacts for investors and employees by having an informed workforce
- Brand enhancement raises your profile in the investment community
- Company value can be enhanced through further investment

## **Media and Government/Regulators**

The media are a stakeholder who hold unique power to assist or damage brand reputation. Having said that, they generally report objective views based on facts. If your company is socially responsible, this goes a long way to fostering favourable media relations.

Generally the media would be handled by public relations, communications or public affairs, and questions fielded by contact centre staff should be directed accordingly.

As for government and regulators, it would be appropriate to ensure stakeholder engagement takes place with regulators such as telecommunications authorities and government bodies.

Being a member of contact centre associations assists companies in keeping up to date with new regulations, and the facilitation of stakeholder input when called up by regulators e.g. providing input to the government when consultation is called upon for “do not call lists.”

Associations also have media ties which can be an added benefit of membership.

### ***Key benefits***

- Ensuring your centre complies with laws and regulation changes
- Influencing industry decision makers through participation
- Raising the profile of the contact centre industry



**Next steps**

The following guidelines may assist in your journey towards implementing an effective CSR programme within your contact centre, and or organisation.

**Implementation matrix**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Actions</i>
<p><b>Establish a CSR committee and consider a full-time CSR headcount/team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See if your company already has a CSR programme in place. If they do, be proactive in having the contact centre represented on the CSR committee.</li> <li>• Encourage your company to implement a programme if there is not yet one in place. All areas of the business need to be represented that have impact on the various stakeholders.</li> <li>• Identify who will head up the initial committee</li> <li>• To give the committee clout there must be representation from senior management or higher as well as from all divisions and interested volunteers</li> <li>• Examples of representation based around stakeholders are Employees - Human resources and frontline staff; Customers - Contact centre head and other heads of customer related functions; Suppliers - Procurement or finance/I.T.; Community - Public relations and communications; Shareholders - Finance department and public relations and communications; Media - Public relations and communications; Government and regulators – Applicable department heads and legal department/I.T.</li> <li>• If your organisations does not have all of these departments/divisions then designate committee members that are usually responsible for the particular stakeholder. In smaller organisations it may be the case that one person is responsible for various stakeholders on a committee panel.</li> <li>• Over time a committee will evolve with best practice companies appointing a headcount in charge of CSR (or it may become part of an existing role). Only key representation will be present on the committee, with others called upon for consultation as required</li> <li>• Commitment from top management is vital. CSR is an all-encompassing approach that touches all points of a business</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conduct a SWOT analysis on CSR for your organisation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWOT - Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats</li> <li>• This analysis is to work out where you currently have aspects of CSR in place, and where you can improve or need to implement</li> <li>• Refer to the SWOT analysis example</li> </ul>

<p><b>Identify your key stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify your stakeholders such as those discussed earlier in this document. Examples may be customers, employees, government, outsource agencies and clients etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a working CSR definition and framework</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should be developed around your identified stakeholders</li> <li>• Investigate examples of existing CSR programmes for benchmarking</li> <li>• Have the applicable CSR committee or department members execute required tasks e.g. Human Resources to carry out a diversity policy review</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gap analysis</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform a gap analysis on the SWOT results in relation to your CSR framework, stakeholders and targets</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication is key!</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once documented and an agreed upon strategy has been designed, decide how communication of your programme will be delivered to your stakeholders</li> <li>• Communication may be as simple as staff newsletters and briefing sessions, to more complex communications such as press releases, legal changes in service level agreements and client contracts</li> <li>• A section on the company website about CSR as well as your intranet</li> <li>• Consider CSR training sessions for staff to raise awareness and communicate objectives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholder engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your stakeholders how they believe you are measuring up to your CSR objectives</li> <li>• Conduct face to face dialogue with customers, staff, suppliers, N.G.O.'s, government and any of your identified stakeholders</li> <li>• Take action on their feedback with measurable targets and report back to them – remember, stakeholder engagement needs to be two way</li> <li>• Report on your progress to your stakeholders and consider a CSR supplement in your company's annual report (this is applicable for company wide CSR programmes)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continuous improvement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee should meet on a regular basis and discuss progress</li> <li>• As CSR touches all parts of your business there will always be ongoing improvement and new considerations</li> <li>• Stay in touch with what is happening in the “CSR world” via the newswires, associations and consider a partnership with a CSR consultancy firm</li> <li>• Benchmark against competitors and other companies that have CSR programmes in place</li> <li>• Consider entry into a CSR award to benchmark your company and strive to be a CSR leader</li> </ul>

**CSR S.W.O.T. analysis example**

A SWOT analysis will allow you to position yourself with regards to your current CSR practices.

Brainstorm with your committee and include anything in the analysis that effects your stakeholders. After completing the SWOT analysis, a gap analysis should then be performed to see what is required to meet your CSR programme objectives.

<p><b><i>Strengths</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing non-discrimination policy on employing people with disabilities</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement carried out through staff and customer surveys and we are part of the telecommunications industry advisory committee</li> <li>• We work strictly within the telecommunications laws of our location</li> <li>• Ergonomic and workstation health assessments are carried out on a quarterly basis for all staff</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Weaknesses</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No supply chain management guidelines around sustainable procurement of energy efficient I.T. equipment</li> <li>• Staff who wear headsets can develop hearing problems. We do not currently conduct regular medical checks of hearing abilities or provide safe usage guidelines to employees</li> <li>• Energy efficient light bulbs are not in use in our centres or organization</li> <li>• Although we engage with stakeholders via customer surveys this is a one way communication channel which needs further follow up</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Opportunities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve our policy of non-discrimination in the workplace by broadening it into a diversity policy covering all stakeholders</li> <li>• Save energy and reduce our carbon footprint by introducing a sustainable energy efficient procurement policy for new equipment</li> <li>• Encourage our company and contact centre staff to support more community assistance programmes</li> <li>• Evaluate whether our current rosters allow our employees a suitable work/life balance through further engagement on the topic</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Threats</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our biggest competitor already has established CSR practices in place and our staff turnover is consistently higher than their centre</li> <li>• We are a publicly listed company looking for institutional investors who are only interested in corporations that practice CSR</li> <li>• Staff continue to complain about our strenuous workload and this is making us less competitive as an employer in the job market</li> <li>• We are losing revenues as customers are against our outsourcing practices</li> </ul>

*\*Information contained in the above grid is for example purposes only*

**Example CSR definition and framework**

The following is an extremely basic example of a CSR definition and framework. For further examples please visit some websites of prominent companies and find their CSR section (usually on the home page or under “about us.”)

To (X) Company, the impact on the environment and our stakeholders resulting from the way we do business is as important to us as it is to you. That’s why CSR practices are embedded in every aspect of the way we operate.

(X) Company considers stakeholders key to our sustained success and the wider community.

When it comes to **employees** we commit to practicing diversity in our recruitment practices and treatment of staff. Our staff are our customers too.

**Customers** expect and deserve the best possible products. At (X) Company we deliver on our promise to provide customers with quality products at the best possible prices.

To deliver on this promise, our products need to be sourced from a reliable **supply chain**. Without a reputable supply chain we can’t be reputable ourselves! We have the strictest code of ethics and conduct in place with all of our suppliers right down to their sub-contracting obligations.

Of course the **environment** is taken care of as an indirect approach to our supply chain management. In all of our supplier contracts, products must be sourced from manufacturers that meet our strict environmental policies. As a caring company we are now 100% carbon neutral as we have eliminated our carbon footprint by purchasing carbon credits for what we don’t make up for in our CSR practices.

But don’t just accept what we’re telling you! You can read about our full objectives and progress against our targets in the CSR section of our annual report and on our website. These are some of our **stakeholder engagement** avenues to communicate with you, our stakeholders, about our continuous CSR efforts.

**Gap analysis example**

As suggested in the implementation matrix, once a SWOT analysis is carried out and your definition and framework are in place, a gap analysis between your CSR objectives and SWOT findings is necessary. A brief example of a gap analysis template follows.

<b>Current Objective</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Rectification</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Practicing diversity in our recruitment	No policy on disabled staff	Committee to agree upon policy and implement changes	Committee and human resources	31 Dec 08

## **Return on investment (ROI)**

Setting up a CSR programme is of little cost (investment) considering the broad benefits that can be obtained (return).

Nevertheless, there may be cause for a business justification to implement CSR due to factors such as:

- Cost of time taken by key staff to set up the programme
- Cost of time taken by key staff to attend meetings
- Cost of attending CSR related training courses and events
- Cost of changing existing practices, training material and marketing collateral etc.

Apart from the many benefits mentioned in this document, a useful way to approach an ROI justification is to look at it from the perspective of potential lost business.

Check with your sales department to see if they are being asked during the RFP process (request for proposal) whether your company has a CSR programme (or other socially responsible policies) in place. This is becoming a common question on many RFP tenders.

If you then know the value of the particular client's business, you can put a figure on the potential loss of profit if that client chooses to deal with your competitors instead of your company. This can happen as a result of your non-compliance with their required standards and may be the difference between winning and losing a contract.

Potential revenue losses can far outweigh any investment required to set up a CSR programme, thus providing a dollar figure to your justification. It is also possible to put dollar figures to potential new business, retained business and cost savings from CSR.

<u>Example:</u>	
Potential loss of revenue from (x) company	\$1 500 000
Profit from potential new accounts	\$ 250 000
Cost reductions resulting from CSR	\$ 300 000
Total return generated per annum	<b>\$2 050 000</b>
Investment per annum for programme	\$ 25 000

*\* From the above example the investment required is far outweighed by the return*

<b>Reasons for answering the call</b>	❖ Revenue enhancement from retained and new customers as an indirect and direct result of CSR
	❖ Cost savings generated from stakeholder dialogue e.g. incorporating customer feedback into your operation
	❖ Preventing possible loss of revenue from not having a programme in place - This is of particular relevance if you are an outsource service provider bidding for contracts whereby companies request information on your CSR programme. If you don't have a programme in place you may lose a tender.
	❖ A higher profile for contact centres in the community and industry
	❖ A reduction in green house gases and carbon emissions and lower staff turnover from a healthier environment
	❖ Inclusion in SRI funds creating shareholder value for the company
	❖ Becoming an employer of preference and attracting the best talent as a result of being a responsible company
	❖ Setting up a CSR programme is of little if any cost. It is no longer a question of can you afford to participate in CSR, it is a question of can you afford not to?
	❖ Effective marketing tool - CSR when implemented properly is worth talking about!
	❖ Brand enhancement – CSR can enhance your brand, standing in the community, reputation, trust that your brand image projects, and make you the first choice for customers and business partners
	❖ Risk management – by having a CSR programme, many potential risks to your brand can be avoided by practicing socially responsible business
	❖ Trust – when your brand and company is reputable you will obtain the trust of your stakeholders benefiting all aspects of your organization
	❖ Local community support – CSR will greatly enhance the support you receive from the communities in which you operate

**Conclusion**

Corporate social responsibility is an all-encompassing approach to how a company goes about its business, and this concept is readily applicable to the contact centre industry.

As this can be a large undertaking, it is worthwhile considering employing the services of a CSR consultancy firm for guidance or using this document as a reference point.

CSR makes great business sense and the many benefits of practicing CSR make it a matter of priority for all companies. Answer the call now!

## Acknowledgements

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Mr Michael Cowell	<p>Executive Committee Member Marketing &amp; Membership Development Hong Kong Call Centre Association Website: <a href="http://www.hkcca.com">www.hkcca.com</a></p> <p>Managing Director Teledirect Hong Kong Limited Website: <a href="http://www.teledirect.com.hk">www.teledirect.com.hk</a></p>
Professor Richard Welford	<p><b>Richard WELFORD</b> is one of the founders and a director of CSR Asia. He is also a professor at the University of Hong Kong and a director of ERP Environment, a UK-based publisher. Website: <a href="http://www.csr-asia.com">www.csr-asia.com</a></p>
Mr Simon Kriss	<p>President and Chief Executive Officer Sagatori Consulting Website: <a href="http://www.sagatori.com">www.sagatori.com</a></p>
Ms Edith Bagda	<p>Manager International Trade Marketing EganaGoldpfeil Group Website: <a href="http://www.egana.com">www.egana.com</a></p>

## **About the Hong Kong Call Centre Association**

### **"Background of Call Centre Association"**

Hong Kong Call Centre Association (HKCCA) was formed by a group of call centre users in September 1999. The association has a mission to help local organisations improve their customer service by deploying the best management practices and latest technologies. It aims to promote excellence in three main areas: Process Improvement, People Management and Technology.

### **"Objective"**

HKCCA is a non-profit organisation representing the entire on-line customer service and interaction in Hong Kong. We invite all companies and organisations that engage in on-line customer interaction to join the association for promoting the well being of the industry.

### **"Mission"**

We are committed to improving customer satisfaction by supporting members in continuous quality improvement and productivity growth in contact centres and online customer interaction.

### **"Membership"**

- **Corporate Membership** (call centre operation unit with more than 10 agents and located in Hong Kong (Annual fee of HK\$3,000-)

- **Corporate Membership for Small and Medium Call Centre** ( call centre operation unit with 10 or below agents and located in Hong Kong ) (Annual fee of HK\$1,800-)

- **Corporate Membership for PRC** ( call centre operation located in PRC) (Annual fee of HK\$2,000-)

- **Vendor Membership** (Annual fee of HK\$5,000-)

- **Individual Membership** (Annual fee of HK\$800-)

For details, please [click here](#)

## **About the author**

Chris Knop is the Director of Customer Contact Centres for Shangri-la Hotels and Resorts, overseeing regional call centre and CRM operations in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Based in Hong Kong, he has held several senior management roles with Shangri-La over the last 6.5 years. Prior to that he managed a conferencing call centre for Worldcom in Hong Kong, and worked at QANTAS Airways in Australia.

Chris sits on the Shangri-La Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Committee. He is also executive committee member for CSR at the Hong Kong Call Centre Association, and sits on the Australian Chamber of Commerce Sustainable Development Committee as a Vice Chair.

He has spoken at various conferences on the topics of CSR and contact centres.

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