

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Interview Questions And Answers Guide.



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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Job Interview Preparation Guide.

Question # 1

What is the antithesis or opposite of CSR?

Answer:-

Solely focusing on direct and short-term financial profit.

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Question # 2

What is the difference between CSR and sustainability?

Answer:-

Sustainability is more the overall picture (here and there, now and future a la Brundtland) for how we have to change the world to survive as human beings. CSR is the contribution companies can give.

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Question # 3

Does CSR require a paradigm shift?

Answer:-

Absolutely! Companies should not only do some add-on philanthropic things, but should change their strategies and business models and really build the CSR approach into their management accounting and control systems. What we see now is that businesses have beautiful ambition related to CSR; the question however, remains how they are going to fulfill these ambitions.

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Question # 4

What is corporate social responsibility (CSR)?

Answer:-

CSR expresses a situation in which firms not only strive for economic gains, but in which they adopt a broader view and take responsibility for their impact on society. Impact on society captures the total impact which includes the economic, environmental and social dimension. To be able to optimize positive impact and reduce negative impact, they have to use a long-term horizon perspective and involve stakeholders into their strategy development. In short CSR means: steering on 3Ps (people, planet and profit); involving stakeholders; and using a long-term horizon.

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Question # 5

Are you searching at the right company?

Answer:-

Next, think about the companies in your search. I categorize companies as "2x4" (those who have been whacked and now see the value in CSR) and "epiphany" (where CSR is an integral part of the company's mission and business model).

Almost any job in an "epiphany" company will give you exposure to corporate responsibility - which can open up many job possibilities - but these companies are typically overwhelmed with résumés and the competition is fierce. Corporate responsibility jobs within "2x4" companies are more focused and thus less plentiful, but there are many more companies in this category.

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Question # 6

What is the business case for CSR? Is it the same in developed economies as in emerging markets? Would you please describe a specific environmental, social or governance issue from a business case for CSR perspective, comparing and contrasting the business case for CSR perspective of the specific issue in a developed economy and in an emerging market?

Answer:-



The business case for CSR can be found in all kind of indicators which do lead (in)directly to a stronger financial performance of the firm. Issues that are often discussed in academia as well as in practice are, for example: access to finance, employee retention, employee satisfaction, new markets, new products and stakeholder satisfaction. While CSR implicates that firms take measurements that go above legal requirements, the specific issues differ for developed economies and for emerging markets. In emerging markets, issues like child labour and working conditions can be hard to address. The circumstances are so different in different countries - what is legally required in one country is high above standard in another country.

An example of the business case for CSR is the rising trend of firms developing strategies targeting the so-called Bottom-of-the-Pyramid (BoP). These firms distinguish themselves in that they seek to create new markets involving customers, employees, SUPPLIERS, and/or distributors at the Bottom of the Pyramid, which have an average daily purchasing power of \$2 or less (Prahalad, 2005). It is argued that these initiatives can lead to profitable businesses and economic development for people living at the bottom-of-the pyramid as well as the multinational companies that serve them. An example is the production of affordable life-saving medicines for Africans.

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Question # 7

What advice would you give to a young graduate wanting to enter the corporate responsibility field?

Answer:-

As a board member for company, I get asked this question a lot. In fact, the company annual conference is coming up quickly and I would expect that a healthy percentage of the nearly 3,000 participants have this question on their mind too.

When we met at Harvard, you made the point that a lot of the information in my book is applicable beyond the corporate responsibility field - which I considered high praise! This answer will also have broader application for new graduates looking for jobs. Consider the steps below as guidelines to keep in mind before starting a job search in any field. As the father of two young adults, I can sympathize with the struggles that young people face in landing a job these days, much less the ideal job that aligns with your values and offers you the opportunity to make a difference.

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Question # 8

Consider the maturity of the corporate responsibility program within your target companies?

Answer:-

More mature programs are likely to have more jobs, but the jobs will also be more specialized and thus constrained to certain aspects of the program. Jobs in less mature programs will be more entrepreneurial but also more ambiguous and chaotic. In these programs you may find yourself designing the strategy and developing the programs. If you go to work in one of these programs, you should be comfortable dealing with ambiguity and being self-directed.

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Question # 9

Start with a bit of self-reflection and analysis?

Answer:-

If you were completely honest with yourself, would you be best suited for a more technical role (e.g., supply chain auditor), a less technical role (e.g., communications) or a managerial position (e.g., self reflection corporate responsibility director or vice president)? Use your self-analysis to filter -- or at least prioritize -- the jobs in your search.

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Question # 10

What steps have businesses taken to ensure that they are acting as responsible members of society?

Answer:-

In an important management trend, businesses have engaged in voluntary initiatives to improve their compliance with law and with "softer" social constraints on their behaviour. Some twenty years ago, firms began issuing policy statements -- or codes of conduct -- setting forth their commitments in various areas of business ethics and legal compliance. A second step was the development of management systems designed to help them comply with these commitments and the standardisation of these systems (e.g. ISO 9000 and 14001). A new management discipline has emerged involving professionals that specialise in regulatory, legal and ethical compliance. More recently, steps have been taken to formulate standards guiding guidance for business reporting on non-financial performance.

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Question # 11

Can you please explain what would you do if someone in management asked you to do something unethical?

Answer:-

Determine how the candidate defines ethics.
Determine how the candidate views their role in cases of ethics.
Determine how the candidate views power.

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Question # 12

Tell me about a time that you have experienced a loss for doing what is right?

Answer:-

Determine how the candidate defines "what is right."
Determine how the candidate defines "a loss." Is there a loss in terms of fundamentalism, social institutions, moral agency or virtuous organizations as a whole?
Fundamentalism: Financial and legal responsibility only "Business of business is profit."
Social Institutions: Social contract exists beyond economics and legalities. Need to accommodate stakeholders' interests.
Moral Agency: Moral obligations similar to people. Morality and ethics are part of culture: The 'right thing to do.'
Virtuous Organizations: Organizations that foster the good society. Obligation to build a better world.

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Question # 13

If you knew that your supervisor was doing something unethical, what would you do?

Answer:-

Follow handbook, contract, or past practice concerning handling the potential dishonest behavior.
Don't immediately assume that the supervisor is guilty of dishonest behavior.
Use appropriate compliance hotlines if available.
Contact human resources for compliance help.
Don't spread the potential dishonest activity news to employees or others who do not have responsibility over the matter.

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Question # 14

Explain an ethical standpoint, what should the relationship between a supervisor and their employee consist of?

Answer:-

The relationship should be an honest, open, and trusting one where questions can be asked and opinions can be expressed without concern of retaliation.

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Question # 15

You have recently been promoted to a manager position. You are aware of another employee who is using the computer in an unethical way. This other employee used to be your co-worker. How would you handle this?

Answer:-

Follow handbook, contract, or past practice concerning handling the potential dishonest behavior.
Don't immediately assume that the supervisor is guilty of dishonest behavior.
Use appropriate compliance hotlines if available.
Contact human resources for compliance help.
Don't spread the potential dishonest activity news to employees or others who do not have responsibility over the matter.

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Question # 16

How far is too far for monitoring employee movement, within and outside the confines of the company?

Answer:-

There should be a balance between the need to know information about the whereabouts of employees and the need for privacy. Keep up with employee handbook policies and laws concerning this matter.

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Question # 17

You feel that you are a very good employee and others, including your boss, are telling you that you don't measure up - what would you do in this case?

Answer:-

Find out what specific behaviors are inadequate. Even if the impressions are wrong about you, do not retaliate.

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Question # 18

You feel that you are a very good employee and others, including your peers, are telling you that you don't measure up - what would you do in this case?

Answer:-

Find out what specific behaviors are inadequate. Even if the impressions are wrong about you, do not retaliate.

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Question # 19

How to deal with employee handbook policies that have contradictory values?

Answer:-

If the handbook is inadequate, there are several other ways to deal with contradictions such as

1. Consider past practice.
2. Consider joint recollection of what the parties intended to mean when the handbook was written.
3. Consider letters of understanding that help explain the handbook policies.
4. Consider what other arbitrators, companies, or court cases have done in that, or similar, situations.
5. Consider costs (financial, social, ethical, etc.) of doing things in different ways.

Consult with management and human resource management concerning potential contradictory policies.

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Question # 20

There is a former employee of your company who wants to come back to work for you. You have an opening for which the former employee is qualified. Should you post the position? Why or Why not?

Answer:-

Find employee handbook, contract, and legal constraints to not posting jobs first.

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Question # 21

If a company has a diversity policy, including sexual orientation, and there were employees who complained about this facet of the policy, what would you do?

Answer:-

According to the Hewlett Packard Case, a company has a right to enforce such diversity policy.

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Question # 22

A Company provided beeper includes several different tones, including the song, "Dixie," and an employee is offended by the fact that a beeper holder chose this option. What would you do?

Answer:-

Follow handbook, contract, or past practice concerning handling potentially offensive behavior.

Don't immediately assume that the employee is guilty of offensive behavior.

Contact human resources for policy help and interpretation.

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Question # 23

Suppose if you were new to a company that did not have an ethics or compliance program, where would you start for information?

Answer:-

Type "Ethics Programs" or "Compliance Programs" on a search engine.

Find existing ethics compliance programs published through the Bureau of National Affairs, Commerce Clearing House, etc.

Check your local library for ethics books and texts.

Check the Journal of Business Ethics.

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Question # 24

Your boss has a principle that he/she strongly believes in and the program has decayed. The program is hurting the organization and the boss wants you to still push this program with the employees, what will you do?

Answer:-

The buck stops at the top. Contact the boss to discuss specific concerns about the program. Discuss alternatives.

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Question # 25

In what business situations do you feel honesty is inappropriate?

Answer:-

In the Movie "Liar, Liar," the actor Carey portrayed a lawyer who shared his honest feelings to all around him. Sharing honest feelings, especially ones of anger, frustration, and hate, may be inappropriate and also based on inadequate information about another person or situation.

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Question # 26

If you saw a coworker doing something dishonest, what would you do?

Answer:-

According to the employee handbook, contract, or past practice, inform the most relevant authority(ies) about specific behaviors witnessed.

Follow handbook, contract, or past practice concerning handling the potential dishonest behavior.

Don't immediately assume that the coworker is guilty of dishonest behavior. Use appropriate compliance hotlines if available.

Contact human resources for compliance help.

Don't spread the potential dishonest activity news to employees or others who do not have responsibility over the matter.

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Question # 27

What is corporate responsibility?

Answer:-

The core element of corporate responsibility concerns business activity itself -- the function of business in society is to yield adequate returns to owners of capital by identifying and developing promising investment opportunities and, in the process, to provide jobs and to produce goods and services that consumers want to buy. Economic history attests to the power of business sectors operating in effective environments of private and public governance to raise general welfare and living standards.

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Question # 28

Be wary of under-funded CSR programs?

Answer:-

Another factor to watch out for in your job search is under-funded programs. As mentioned above, many corporate responsibility departments are small - often just a leader and one or two people. These roles will require you to cover a wide swath of the issues and responsibilities outlined in my book. To the extent feasible, and in the interest of your own self-preservation, you should seek clarity on the scope, responsibilities, and objectives in these roles.

Now that you've narrowed down your search, here are a few tips that will help you in the selection process:



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