

RJW Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy 2010-12

Summary

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) relates to the economic, social and environmental impact of our business on staff, clients, operations and the wider community.

At Russell Jones & Walker we recognise that we have an economic, environmental and social impact that goes beyond our core activity. Our CSR strategy is the principal way we seek to co-ordinate and manage practices to maximise positive social and economic contribution and minimise the environmental impact of our business.

Engagement with key stakeholders including clients, employees, community, environmental stakeholders, regulators, business partners and suppliers is central to RJW's approach to CSR. We want to ensure all our people have the opportunity to get involved to help them develop to their full potential and be responsible citizens.

RJW recognises the benefits of having a comprehensive CSR strategy and is developing a programme covering pro bono legal work, charity donations and fundraising, volunteering and sustainability policies. Endorsed by the senior management team, this is being developed and managed by a CSR committee, which will be supported by CSR champions in each office responsible for motivating colleagues.

One of the most visible components of CSR is corporate community involvement (CCI), which can include provision of funding, sharing skills, offering gifts in kind (such as computers, furniture and office space) and giving local people employment opportunities. This also benefits the firm in a number of ways, including recruitment and retention of talented staff, skills development and enhancing brand and profile.

Our CCI programme will support organisations that promote access to justice or social inclusion, are all about people (rather than animals, the environment or health research etc.) or are linked to the work that we do (for example, Age UK or the Children's Trust).

It will also provide opportunities for all staff, both lawyers and non-lawyers, across all our offices to get involved.

Our environmental and sustainability programme and our pro bono activities will also be promoted and developed under the CSR banner. Once the programme is established, diversity and wellbeing issues and supplier management will also be brought under the CSR strategy.

1 What do we mean by CSR?

1.1 Corporate Community Involvement

One of the most visible components of CSR is CCI - a partnership between a business with one or more community organisations (locally or further afield) which helps to address business and community needs for mutual benefit. Increasingly potential recruits, clients and consumers are looking for firms that have established CCI programmes as a demonstration of their commitment to CSR.

Our CCI programme will cover a wide range of activities and partners in order to maximise benefits to the firm and the wider community and ensure all staff, including partners, fee-earners and central services can get involved, such as:

- Staff fundraising
- Corporate giving
- Give as you earn ("payroll giving")
- Offering gifts in kind (such as computers, furniture and office space)
- Training, education and employment opportunities for local people
- Local sourcing of products and services
- Pro bono: offering professional skills for free
- Volunteering: sharing skills e.g. IT, finance, legal, HR, marketing etc; mentoring; team challenges

1.2 Sustainability and resource consumption

The issue of climate change is continuing to rise up the business and political agenda. We aim to take a positive, solutions oriented approach that recognises our impact on the environment and will encourage our partners and suppliers to reduce their own adverse environmental impacts. Our main environmental impact comes from carbon emissions, energy, water and product consumption, business travel and waste. Our environmental programme will look to:

- Reduce fuel carbon emissions and improve our energy efficiency
- Minimise resource consumption and purchase goods with the least environmental impact
- Reduce waste at source wherever practical and re-use and recycle remaining waste
- Comply with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, applying the best available techniques and demonstrate environmental best practice in all areas of the business.

1.3 Diversity and wellbeing

The CSR strategy will also work with HR to develop further our commitment to diversity and wellbeing issues, both in terms of our people, our clients and the communities we work in.

This includes giving employees the opportunity to be engaged in issues affecting the company and supporting them in contributing to the CSR strategy.

1.4 Responsible procurement

Responsible procurement and supply chain management are also key aspects of any established CSR programme. From 2012, a responsible procurement strategy should be developed to ensure RJW prevents any purchasing decisions from having a negative impact on the environment and local community, while continuing to consider the cost and quality of individual goods and services.

2 *The business case*

The “business case” for CSR is undeniable as numerous businesses both small and large will testify. Below is a summary of the obvious business case for our CSR programme:

Recruitment and retention of talented staff - by providing volunteering and pro bono opportunities, corporate giving and matched funding, every member of staff feels they have the opportunity to give something back.

Developing staff and team skills -volunteering and pro bono work provide vital opportunities to develop a range of skills including leadership, project management, networking, problem-solving and team-working skills.

Promoting diversity - particularly through local training and education, recruitment and work placements.

Impressing and retaining clients and improving stakeholder relationships - clients and external stakeholders are increasingly seeking to hold companies accountable for social issues and many clients require detailed information about CSR programmes as part of the tendering process.

Enhancing brand and profile - increasingly firms are trading on their reputations and brand value as much as their products and services and the public perception of socially responsible behaviour is more and more important.

Cost savings and reducing environmental impact - high energy and fuel costs mean there is financial as well as staff and consumer pressure to be more environmentally friendly. Responsible procurement of eco-friendly products and services, effective facilities, travel and IT management and recycling are environmentally sustainable and help save costs.

A structured approach - rather than ad hoc initiatives, a proper CSR policy helps to ensure a company takes full advantage of CSR benefits and helps make CSR fully visible to staff and clients. Having a thematic focus also helps ensure CSR is linked to strategically important issues (e.g. access to justice) and will help manage both internal and external requests for funding and other support.

3 *RJW’s CSR programme*

3.1 Pro bono legal work

- Encourage every fee-earner to provide approximately 12 hours per annum of pro bono/CSR work of any type.
- Record pro bono work on one file code (81.5) and monitor this.
- Discuss and support pro bono/CSR contribution in all annual appraisals based on time records.

- Recruit pro-bono champions in each of our main offices (London, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham and Cardiff) to manage relationships with partners and co-ordinate volunteers.
- Build partnerships with a local pro bono project in each of our main office locations and each department/office will provide a list of preferred partners.
- Establish a regular group of volunteers to provide pro bono support to designated beneficiaries.

3.2 Charity donations/fundraising

- Establish a biennial relationship with a “charity of the year” (two years may allow more time to develop an effective working relationship), perhaps chosen by a staff vote.
- Set up a CSR budget, administered by the CSR committee, to provide funding to agreed charity partners and matched funds for staff fundraising activities
- The firm to donate an agreed annual figure to CSR.
- Establish charity champions in each office to coordinate local fundraising and volunteering opportunities. We should aim to raise a set figure per head p.a. for our nominated causes.
- Target a big increase in the take up of payroll giving (we should aim for 10% of staff signing up by 2012).
- Monitor events and impact annually.

3.3 Volunteering

- Extend existing local HR-run projects beyond work placements and work experience to include, for example, mentoring and supporting reading in schools
- Establish relationships with other local/national charities to provide volunteering opportunities (for example, helping at Charlton school sports day or working with Softpower to help build a school in Uganda)
- Encourage fee-earners to participate in such schemes. Involvement to be noted in annual appraisals, although participation isn't compulsory.
- Aim for 10-15% of staff to take part in workplace-based volunteering by 2012.

3.4 Sustainability policies

- Work towards the principles of the Legal Sector Alliance (of which we are a member)
- Improve environmental awareness of staff and provide them with guidance and practical advice on sustainability and encourage them to take action.
- Investigate working towards the environmental standard ISO 14001
- Aim to reduce our consumption, including electricity and paper, and increase recycling and use of more sustainable products (e.g. Fairtrade)

4 Key policies

4.1 Leadership

Visible senior level endorsement and participation is central to the success of the programme. The SMT has formally approved and launched the CSR strategy and is accountable for it, although co-ordination of initiatives and activities is delegated to the CSR committee (see below), which will report regularly to SMT.

SMT and Heads of Departments are responsible for supporting CSR in their area, raising its profile, allocating sufficient resources, encouraging staff to get involved and ensuring all CSR activity supports this strategy.

4.2 Committee¹

We have established a CSR committee to ensure the programme maintains momentum and is future-proofed. The committee's role is to:

- Shape the programme and help with its delivery
- Motivate colleagues and monitor progress
- Ensure ownership and participation across all business functions
- Manage the CSR budget by agreeing criteria and screening requests

The Committee will:

- Have an annual rotating membership to keep it committee fresh and ensure anyone has the opportunity to take part
- Meet monthly and be chaired by the Pro Bono/CSR partner
- Be attended quarterly by SMT/Board for a report progress and success
- Not be larger than 6 people to ensure it stays workable

Local CSR champions should participate in meetings two or three times a year to keep the national committee updated on local activities.

4.3 Cash, management and administrative resources

4.3.1 Budget

Some cash input, regardless of how small, significantly helps to build relationships with community partners and demonstrate the commitment of SMT and the partnership to CSR.

From 2011 a three-year budget will be agreed as follows:

- An amount to support staff activities, such as £2k in year one, £3k in year two and £5k in year three
- An additional amount to be set aside for grants to our community partners or client CSR programmes (e.g. trade union campaigns) and charity donations, to be agreed.

¹ Initial composition as follows: Neil Kinsella (chair), Paul Daniels (CSR partner), Julie Morris (pro-bono partner), Tristan Hallam (PI partner), Chris Hopkins (HR rep) Louise Restell (CSR manager), Darren Hackett (sustainability champion).

The budget will be administered by the committee to ensure it is consistent with published criteria and make it easier to screen requests.

4.3.2 Administration

Initially, setting up and managing the programme requires approximately a third of a full time role (the Head of Public Affairs).

We will use any support available to reduce this element where possible, for example:

- Using CAF to administer payroll giving donations
- Using a broker organisation to match volunteering requirements with relevant opportunities e.g. City Action
- Involving others in the business to help plan, prepare and assist with the administration in organising specific activities

4.4 Themes

SMT has agreed the overarching theme for the CCI aspect of the programme to ensure cohesion and enable effective communication. These have been chosen to align with our business activities and values. They are:

- Promoting access to justice and / or social inclusion
- Education
- Organisations aligned with work we do (e.g. Headway, Children's Trust)
- All about people (rather than animals, environment, health research etc)
- National - enabling all offices to get involved² (although individual offices may also be able to support local charities/community projects that meet the other criteria)
- Lawyers and non-lawyers can offer their time (as well as fundraising).

4.5 Clients

We will ensure that while we continue to provide products and services of a high standard to meet the needs of our clients, we have consideration for the impact on the natural environment and communities where we operate. We will use our position to raise awareness of CSR with our clients and the wider market.

4.6 Communications

An internal communications program will ensure all staff are aware of the programme, regularly informed of progress and achievements are celebrated. This includes:

- A quarterly newsletter, Making a Difference, sent to all staff by email with a summary of successes and how to get involved in future activities
- A dedicated CSR section on the RJW website with a summary of our CSR strategy and information about our community partners and our pro bono, volunteering and fund raising successes.

² Ensure organisations are truly national and not split across England, Wales and Scotland (as Shelter actually is, with Shelter Cymru and Shelter Scotland)

- Information in local offices (posters, emails) letting staff know about any upcoming opportunities.
- Copies of the strategy and policies on Sharepoint.

4.7 Staff buy-in

In addition to participation on the CSR committee and as champions, staff will be given opportunities for engagement and, accordingly, ownership of the decision-making process. This includes staff voting for/ putting forward organisations we support, conducting staff engagement surveys, and holding events to celebrate success.

4.8 Community partners

We will work with efficient, enthusiastic, professional community partners who understand the constraints and expectations of the corporate world and who can support us in developing our CSR activities.