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Reimagining Corporate Social Responsibility

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CAPSTONE PAPER SIGNATURE PAGE

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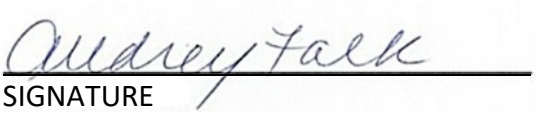
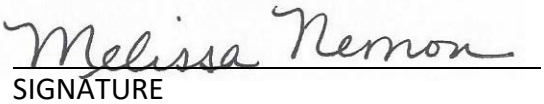
Audrey Falk, Ed.D. DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	 SIGNATURE	April 21, 2023 DATE
Melissa Nemon, Ph.D. INSTRUCTOR, CAPSTONE COURSE	 SIGNATURE	April 21, 2023 DATE

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Abstract

Like Civil Rights, Gay Liberation, and Black Lives Matter, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a social movement that has evolved with societal demands for change in the workplace. This work looks at the evolution of CSR and the models that have followed like Triple Bottom Line and Corporate Citizenship. Through a community-based workshop CSR is examined by reviewing its history, the basic models, and principles for success, explores why businesses should consider this framework and where the next phase of CSR is headed. Using data from a post-workshop survey participants rated whether they could understand the connections between CSR and the social justice issues we are facing societally and if they were motivated to act at their own organizations.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements **3**

Abstract **4**

Literature Review **9**

Project Plan **32**

Situation Statement 32

Define Your Goals 33

Incentives for Engagement 34

Crafting a Clear Message 34

Identify Outreach Methods 35

Responsibilities Chart 36

Tools/Measure to Assess Progress 36

Implementation Timeline 36

Logical Framework 37

Methodology **38**

Participants 39

Materials 39

Procedure 40

Results **42**

Discussion 46

Limitations of the Project 48

Implications for Future Projects 49

References 51

Appendix A 58

Appendix B 60

Appendix C 73

Appendix D 74

Appendix E 76

Reimagining Corporate Social Responsibility

"The public expectations of your company have never been greater… Every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution to society. Without a sense of purpose, no company, either public or private, can achieve its full potential" (Barton, 2018, p.5).

By definition "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic/discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (Carroll, 2016 p.2). It is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public (Business School 101, 2021). The methodology of Corporate Social Responsibility said more simply, is to be is profitable first while obeying the laws and regulations for their industry, doing what is fair and just to ensure no one is harmed, and lastly being a good corporate citizen (Carroll, 2016). While this is a great place to start, I am challenging this framework as the minimum and not the aspiration.

We are at a pivotal time in our work history. The COVID-19 pandemic and the systemic injustices of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others have ignited movements and transformation around the globe- including in the workplace. The Summer of 2020 was an awaking for businesses to put away insincere Corporate Social Responsibility efforts and, "check the box" practices, and instead examine their workplace cultures, policies, hiring practices, and the way they are supporting their employees and other key stakeholders through a social justice lens using compassion, care, and purpose. As a result of 2020, companies must hold themselves to a higher societal standard than ever before.

In tandem with the pandemic was The Great Resignation, a record number of people left their jobs since the pandemic, which has disrupted businesses everywhere (Ellerbeck, 2022). To account for this exiting of the workforce or change in work industry, corporations are turning to higher pay, sign-on bonuses, and more perks. However, they are not addressing the actual problem which is that their employees are craving a renewed sense of purpose. Employees are grieving, stressed, tired, and burnt out (Smet et. al, 2022). They are looking for the human element in their work and are seeking true belonging. Whether that is in-person meetings or work that feels purposeful they are craving meaningful interactions with their co-workers and with the greater community. Businesses must support employees in these efforts.

This is not just for Fortune 500 companies. A hairdresser working for herself, the restaurant on the corner, or the clothing store downtown can also be thinking about their impact on their community. Patrons and employees of these establishments are part of the community, spending their time and money to keep the doors open, and so are these businesses. By aligning their values with the needs of the community even small businesses can make a community impact through time, talent, or donations both financially and in-kind.

Another contributing factor that businesses need to consider when reimaging their company's purpose work is, that we have five generations in the workforce, more than at any other time in history. The Traditionalists, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z all approach work a little differently and all expect different things from their companies (Smith, 2021). "In fact, 82% of millennials consider CSR efforts when deciding where to work and 70% of them are willing to take a 30% pay cut to work for a company with strong social values" (Benevity, 2022, para.30). This means as leaders in our workspaces we must fully

understand how these generations are approaching work and what they are seeking most from an employer. On top of that, Edelman's latest Trust Barometer Report stated that "my employer" has emerged as the anchor of trust and stability and 78% of employees trust their employer over the government, NGOs, and media (Edelman, 2022). This suggests that despite the burnout and stress, employees still find their employers to be a source of safety and security, which makes having a strong approach to corporate social responsibility all the more critical.

Corporations are awarded great privileges and with that privilege comes immense responsibility. Some laws protect corporations against being sued, wrongful deaths, paying taxes and so much more. Corporations need to be crystal clear on their core values and what they stand for. Now is the time for businesses to take a stance on how they can better support social justice issues, create diverse and creative workforces, and listen to the voices in their companies on what issues they can help solve in society.

The purpose of this project will be to host a workshop for local businesses in Southwest NH on developing and implementing a meaningful, thoughtful, and approachable Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. I want participants to have an understanding of the components of CSR, why it matters, why now more than ever before companies must make this a priority and where we are headed with CSR in the future.

Literature Review

"Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means that a company takes steps to ensure there are positive social and environmental effects associated with the way the business operates. Businesses that engage in active CSR efforts take stock of the way they operate in the

world to incorporate addressing cultural and social issues, intending to benefit both in the process. Not only can CSR models increase business revenue, but they also promote change and progress throughout the world, which often involved helping people with few or no resources" (Ohio University, 2022, p.1). Ohio University goes on to say CSR is not just philanthropy, when done well it is deeply rooted in a company's corporate culture. It is ingrained in the values and mission of the company and is considered in every and all business, people, and community decisions the company makes (2022).

There are a few terms often exchanged for Corporate Social Responsibility and those would be Corporate Citizenship and Triple Bottom Line. They all mean the same thing - aligning company goals and operations with the overall purposes of societal and environmental good. Corporate citizenship is "when a firm intentionally goes beyond compliance with the requirements of the law in pursuit of some social or environmental good" (Ogola & Mària, 2020, p.2). In the 1990s, President Clinton drew attention to this idea of corporate citizenship and social responsibility when he created the Ron Brown Corporation Award for companies that were good citizens (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019). It has been used to connect business activity to broader social accountability and service for mutual benefits (Ogola & Mària, 2020). This term as well as corporate social responsibility are often interchanged with business ethics, corporate responsibility, sustainability, social impact, creating shared value citizenship (CSV), and plain social responsibility (Epstein-Reeves, 2011).

There are five stages of Corporate Citizenship, which include the elementary stage, the engaged stage, the innovative stage, the integrated stage, and the transforming stage.

In the elementary stage, a company's social impact is basic and unrefined. This is because there is little corporate awareness and no leadership involvement. This is often a place where small businesses hover (Hayes, 2022). "They can comply with the standard health, safety, and environmental laws, but they do not have the time nor the resources to fully develop greater community involvement" (Hayes, 2022, para. 8).

In the engagement stage, companies start to have policies that involve employees and managers and are starting to move past basic laws (Hayes, 2022). This is when top management wakes up to society's increasing expectations and starts to become more informed about community, environment, and social issues. Companies at this stage are very reactive to what is happening in the world and often bring in consultants to enhance functional know-how (Mirvis & Googins, 2006).

In the third stage, innovative, we start to see more meetings with consultants and shareholders that promote innovative corporate citizenship policies (Hayes, 2022). Companies at this stage usually grapple with creating a business case for citizenship and start to monitor their social and environmental performance and publish the results in public-facing reports (Mirvis & Googins, 2006). In this stage, a company may have an established foundation or staff dedicated solely to their giving work, allowing for their social impact and business culture and practices to blend fluidly with regular operations. "Employees know all about the impact work, they participate and are engaged. The impact is talked about openly and consistently and community activities start to be monitored and driven into the lines of business" (Hayes, 2022, para.10).

In the fourth stage integrative, citizenship activities are formalized and blend in fluidly with the company's regular operations. Performance in community activities is monitored, and these activities are driven into the lines of business (Hayes, 2022). At this stage, a company is having to confront how deep its commitment to citizenship is and are more apt to disclose its failings as corporate citizens publicly (Mirvis & Googins, 2006).

Lastly, transforming companies understand that corporate citizenship plays a strategic part in fueling sales. Social impact is a regular part of operations, and it helps to foster and retain talent at the organization (Hayes, 2022). Corporations at this stage are innovating and not imitating their social impact. They take their corporate values seriously and are deeply troubled by social and environmental conditions and are motivated by their corporate purpose to help resolve them and have the aspiration to make the world a better place (Mirvis & Googins, 2006). At this stage companies are not working alone, they are partnered with other businesses, community groups, and non-profits to address social problems, reach new markets, and develop local economies (Mirvis & Googins, 2006).

Triple Bottom Line is another phrase that means the same thing as CSR and Corporate Citizenship developed by John Elkington in 1994. These phrases are often used interchangeably but have the same sentiment. Triple Bottom Line expands business success metrics to include contributions to environmental health, social well-being, and a just economy. These bottom-line categories are often referred to as the three "P's": people, planet, and prosperity (University of Wisconsin Extension, 2022). This is a transformative framework for businesses to move toward a regenerative, sustainable future. The tools in the triple bottom line help measure, benchmark, set goals, improve, and evolve to more sustainable business models.

Lastly, the triple bottom line illustrates that if a company is only focused on profits and is not considering the planet and its people, they aren't accounting for the full cost to do business and will be less successful in the long run (University of Wisconsin Extension, 2022).

History of CSR

To understand how CSR, Corporate Citizenship, and Triple Bottom Line have evolved of the years it is important to understand why they appeared as business frameworks in the first place. The Civil Rights Movement, The Gay Liberation Movement, and Black Lives Matter are all examples of social movements that broke conformity and changed the system for the better. There was a societal cry for change and that cry was answered by new laws, policies, and practices to protect those involved. CSR was founded in a remarkably similar way.

The earliest social component in corporate behavior can be traced to ancient Roman Laws through the support of asylums, homes for the poor, and orphanages (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019). In the US, early CSR can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution, in the mid-to-late 1800s, a period often viewed as corporate irresponsibility. Criticisms were looming over the factory system because of unsafe working conditions, pollution, and the employment of women and children. Some industrialists realized the necessity of corporate social responsibility to have healthier employees who improved profits and productivity while others saw it as a way to help the less fortunate and give back (Thomas Insights, 2019).

Taking the idea of worker necessity, safety, and philanthropy a step further, Milton Hershey in the early 1900s opened his chocolate business on a farm and built a town around it for his workers. This included banks, a hotel, schools, a trolley system, and leisure activities (Hershey Community Archives, 2018). To Hershey, worker welfare was a genuine concern, and

he deeply understood the obligation of his wealth to his entire community. Hershey also could see that happy, healthy employees improved profits and productivity (Ledecky, 2022). Hershey could see that if workers were treated fairly and lived in a comfortable place, they would be better workers and during the industrial revolution time, large workforces were needed.

Early CSR focused heavily on people and philanthropy and there was not much emphasis put on legal, ethical, or environmental standards. This began to shift in 1953 when Howard Bowen authored a book called *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* and originally coined the term "Corporate Social Responsibility" (Bowen et al., 2013). Bowen believed that the obligations of businessmen [and businesswomen] are to pursue policies, to make decisions, and to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society (Bowen et al., 2013). He believed that businessmen were the central figure in American society and a symbol of our culture and throughout his book he tried to express how important this role was, as well as the decisions made by the businessman in the greater society (Bowen et al., 2013).

Increased societal awareness in combination with anti-war sentiments and protests of the late 1960s and 70s led to massive shifts in CSR. An oil spill in Santa Barbara, California in 1969 resulted in the first-ever Earth Day in 1970. On this day, April 22, 1970, 20 million people protested across the United States demanding clean and sustainable policies and actions from corporations as well as strict laws and penalties from the government for violations and pollution. At the time these were all mainly caused by corporations in the form of oil spills, toxic dumps, and polluting factories and power plants (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019). This first Earth Day influenced the creation of four major governmental departments - the Environmental

Protection Agency, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and Consumer Product Safety Commission – all by the close of 1970 which led to regulatory frameworks that would impact corporation's behavior and responsibilities (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019).

It was not until the important social movements of the 60s and 70's, civil rights, consumer, environmental and women's rights did we start to see refinement and application of how businesses should and could implement CSR (BC Campus, 2021). This is when Archie Carroll, in 1979, introduced his four-part definition of CSR, the most widely used framework still used to date. Carroll's pyramid balances the self-interest of business with the greater need of the community. He stated, "Corporate social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic expectations that society has of organizations at any point in time. This framework created the foundation for businesses to use to understand their responsibility to the broader society" (BC Campus, 2021 para.7).

Carroll's pyramid identifies four core responsibilities that every business has as part of its overall operational structure (BC Campus, 2021). He then relates each piece to have an obligation as also to society. In this sense, he is purposefully tying the everyday actions of a corporation to the expectations of society so that a company can operate acceptably within the social sphere. The four key responsibilities involve economic responsibilities, legal responsibilities, ethical responsibilities, and discretionary or philanthropic responsibilities.

Economic Responsibilities

Carroll believed the first responsibility of a company is to be profitable to be sustained. "As a fundamental condition or requirement of existence, businesses have an economic

responsibility to the society that permitted them to be created and sustained" (BC Campus, 2021, para. 7). At first glance it may seem strange to think of this economic responsibility as social responsibility, but society expects and requires businesses to be able to sustain themselves and the only way to do that is to be profitable and to incentivize owners and shareholders to invest and have resources to continue operating (BC Campus, 2021). "He believed businesses create goods and services that society needs and wants and to continue operations a company must be financially stable. This means paying attention to revenues, costs, investments, marketing, and operations. Therefore, economic responsibility is a baseline requirement that must be met in a competitive business world" (Carroll, 2016, p.3). Carroll believed that being profitable was the priority of a business so they could pay their workers and sell products at a fair price to consumers. It is the only way to be able to do any of the other CSR activities, survive the long term, and benefit society.

Legal ***Responsibilities***

"Society has not only sanctioned businesses as economic entities, but it has also established the minimal ground rules under which businesses are expected to operate and function" (BC Campus, 2021, para.9). These ground rules include laws and business regulations and reflect societies codified ethics. Legal systems are businesses' codes of ethics and are founded on the idea that society wants businesses to operate on a moral grounding. For a corporation, this could look like laws, regulations, and fair business practices and are set on federal, state, and local levels. This also includes fulfilling legal obligations to stakeholders, and providing goods and services that meet legal requirements, while being law-abiding corporate citizens (Carroll, 2016). This is important in CSR because it protects the company, its employees,

and the community. Following the law protects the company from lawsuits. Employee handbooks, for example, are created so both the employer and the employee are protected. Obeying rules and regulations in the workplace create environments where employees feel safe and comfortable to do their job effectively and plainly states the consequences if rules are broken.

Ethical Responsibilities

"The normative expectations of most societies hold that laws are essential but not sufficient. In addition to what is required by laws and regulations, society expects businesses to operate and conduct their affairs in an ethical fashion" (BC Campus, 2021, para.11). Carroll believed in addition to laws and regulations society expects businesses to be ethical in their operations even when it is not required by law (Carroll, 2016). Between laws not changing fast enough to keep up with the rapidly changing landscape, businesses are not getting guidance quick enough on how to respond but if they followed the "do what's right" principle they would be able to navigate these expectations (BC Campus, 2021, para. 10). This is an important piece to CSR because ethical norms are always evolving in society and businesses need to be nimble, because being a corporate citizen is doing what is expected morally and ethically and realizing that business integrity and ethical behavior go beyond basic compliance with laws and regulations. A management team sets the tone for the entire company, when they act in ethical practices they lead by example, and this creates a long-lasting positive effect on the company. This also attracts and retains talented individuals as well as creates a positive reputation in the community (Horton, 2022).

Philanthropic ***Responsibilities***

Corporate philanthropy includes all forms of business giving. It embraces business's voluntary and discretionary activities and although it may not seem like a responsibility in a literal sense it is expected by a society of businesses today (BC Campus, 2021). Carroll believed society would label a business unethical if it did not meet its philanthropic responsibilities. This includes any activity that is voluntary or discretionary and not required by law. "To fulfill its perceived philanthropic responsibilities, companies engage in a variety of giving forms – gifts of monetary resources, product and service donations, volunteerism by employees and management, community development, and any other discretionary contribution to the community or stakeholder groups that make up the community" (BC Campus, 2021, para 13). This is the most vital component of an overall CSR strategy. It not only benefits the community but the employees as well. Philanthropic programs that involve employees create deeper connections and increase employee engagement (Givinga, 2022). The second benefit is improved brand reputation with employees, customers, investors, and the community at large. The more a company does, the better the brand perception is. Corporate philanthropy also does not just attract talent internally it attracts new customers. Lastly, there are significant tax savings associated with charitable giving. While companies should not give solely for this gain, it does help provide economic rewards (Givinga, 2022).

United Nations Global Compact

If a company is unsure how to find philanthropic efforts to support its communities or is in the process of finding its voice on social issues to align with, the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations is an excellent place to start. "In September 2015, all 193

Members States of the UN adopted a plan for achieving a better future for all, over the next 15 years to put an end to extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet" (UN Global Compact, n.d., para.1). They provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At the heart of this plan were the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that define global sustainable development priorities and aspirations through 2030. These goals seek to mobilize global efforts around a common set of metrics and targets. This framework guides companies on how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their contribution to the realization of the SDGs (GRI et al., 2015).

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs offers 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which cover a range of topics from eliminating poverty and hunger (goals 1 and 2); to increasing good health outcomes, access to education, and gender equality (goals 3, 4 and 5); as well as environmental goals focused on climate, our oceans, land use (goals 13, 14 and 15) as well as clean water and clean energy (goals 6 and 7). Additionally, several goals are posed in a way that specifically calls for corporate engagement, such as decent work and economic growth (goal 8), industry and infrastructure (goal 9), reduced inequalities (goal 10), sustainable cities (goal 11), responsible consumption and production (goal 12), and peace, justice, and strong institutions (goal 16). Many corporations look to these goals to help define their CSR goals as well as choose key metrics from the goals to assess their work.

When you look at each goal on the SDGs website, you can drill down and find the role of the business, examples of actions and solutions, indicators, business tools, and targets, and the business theme addressed for each target area. This is helpful to businesses that may not know

where to start with CSR or are not sure what to focus on. They can refer to this list and get on board with a global direction on the main issues businesses should be helping to solve through 2030. Businesses should note they do not need to focus on all seventeen things, just the ones that resonate with them, their business, and social impact goals (UN Global Compact, n.d.).

Stakeholder Theory

Corporations often are not focused on all the tenets of CSR because they are focused on making money for the organization. Their efforts are on the economic pillar, which is important, but stakeholder theory suggests "that shareholders, aka financial investors, are one of the groups a corporation or organization must serve. Under this theory, anyone that is affected by the organization or its workings in any way is considered a stakeholder. This would include employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, environmental groups, governmental groups and more" (McAbee, 2022, para.2). Stakeholder theory holds that corporations should strive to do right but all stakeholders and if they do their organization will achieve long-lasting success (McAbee, 2022).

Stakeholder theory was laid out in 1984 by R. Edward Freeman in his book "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach" (McAbee, 2022). "Corporate policies had changed as a response to the public interest and as a result, this often had a positive social impact" (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019, p.10). This meant that CSR from a business perspective now had even more obligations to all its stakeholders. In short, companies need to move beyond what is legally required and start focusing on minimizing all harm and maximizing the firm's impact on society (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019). For example, an auto company recently goes public. Shareholders want to see their stock values rise and the company wants to oblige, but those

are not the only investors the company should strive to serve. Employees, for example, expect to be compensated fairly and work in a safe place. The auto company should treat vendors fairly and think of their employees and stakeholders. Their customers are some of their largest stakeholders and the auto company needs to ensure they are providing a safe, efficient vehicle to their customers (McAbbe, 2022).

"In practice, stakeholder theory can promote a positive feedback loop that ultimately leads to greater returns for stakeholders and shareholders. For example, when employees are viewed and treated as valued stakeholders, they are motivated to do better, higher-quality work" (McAbbe, 2022, para.14). This boosts production, which leads to happier and more satisfied customers, satisfied customers boost sales, which makes shareholders happy (McAbbe, 2022).

Creating Shared Value

As CSR continues to evolve and now includes thinking about all shareholders of a corporation the concept of creating shared value was introduced by Mark Kramer and Michael Porter in a 2011 McKinsey Award-winning article "Creating Shared Value." They began the article by saying our capitalist system is under siege. In recent years businesses are being criticized as a major cause of social, environmental, and economic problems and are prospering at the expense of their communities (Porter & Kramer, 2011). They went on to say, trust in business was at an all-time low and they believed that the problem lay within the organizations themselves, which had a narrow approach to value creation (Porter & Kramer, 2011). "Why else would companies ignore the well-being of their customers, the depletion of natural resources vital to their businesses, the viability of suppliers, and the economic distress of the communities

in which they produce and sell? It does not have to be this way. Companies could bring business and society back together if they redefined their purpose as creating "shared value"—generating economic value in a way that also produces value for society by addressing its challenges" (Porter & Kramer, 2011, abstract). They believed this could be achieved in three ways, reconceiving products and markets, redefining productivity in the value chain, and building supportive industry clusters at the company's locations (Porter & Kramer, 2011). "We believe that CSR is a different—if overlapping—a concept from creating shared value. Corporate social responsibility is widely perceived as a cost center, not a profit center. In contrast, shared value creation is about new business opportunities that create new markets, improve profitability, and strengthen competitive positioning. CSR is about responsibility; creating shared value is about creating value" (Kramer, 2011, para.2).

For example, Nestle, known for their hard-nose approach to business, redesigned its coffee procurement process, collaborating closely with small farmers in impoverished communities. Nestle provided advice on farming practices, helped growers secure plant stock, pesticides, and fertilizer, and started paying them handsomely for better beans. This increased growers' incomes, the environmental impact lessened, and Nestle's supply of good coffee grew significantly. That is shared value creation (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

CSR as a Business Case

Now that we have established what CSR is and how it evolved and iterated throughout the decades, we need to understand why CSR is so critical to all businesses large and small. "Corporate Social Responsibility describes how a company manages its industry and takes responsibility for its social impact" (Chen et al., 2021, p.1). CSR is also known to have reciprocal

advantages for employees, stakeholders, partners, and the broader community if done well. Corporations that have successful CSR strategies have an easier time attracting and retaining staff, have better financial performance, have better brand recognition, and have an easier time accessing capital (Invest Northern Ireland, n.d.).

CSR has other benefits, the first is employee satisfaction. “The way a company treats its community says a lot about how it treats its people. People who feel respected and supported in their jobs are more productive and satisfied. Letting employees volunteer during work hours builds a sense of community at work and within the larger community. Employees will gain motivation and feel pride in their work through these community-building and personal growth opportunities” (Business School 101, 2021, 1:20).

CSR also helps improve public image. Companies that do things in and for their communities get exposure for their involvement. This improves brand image and reputation in communities (Business School 101, 2021). “CSR also increases creativity, CSR encourages employees to think outside the box, try new things, and be innovative. Through this social involvement, employees might start contributing to the bigger picture and may come up with ideas for internal processes, reporting, or even new products” (Business School 101, 2021, 2:39).

Consumers are looking for companies to be more human. Making great products and providing exceptional customer service is not enough. We are moving into a new era of business where consumers are demanding brands take a stance on causes, they believe in. In an Accenture study of over 30,000 people, “consumers in the United States are no longer making decisions based solely on product selection or price; they’re assessing what a brand

says, what it does and what it stands for" (Barton et al., 2018, para.1). Activating a purpose-led brand will create a competitive advantage and add to a company's bottom line (Barton et al., 2018). They went on to say, 62% of consumers want a brand that takes a stance on sustainability, transparency, and fair labor practices (Barton et al., 2018). Patagonia is an exceptional example of this. Founder Yvon Chouinard recently gave his $3 billion-dollar company to a specially designed trust which is a non-profit organization. He wanted to ensure all the companies' profits were being used to combat climate change and protect undeveloped land around the globe (Patagonia, 2022). For consumers, transparency is where a company sources its goods, what is in the products, and how it treats its employees. The other highest-ranking stats from the survey were great company culture, a company does what it says it does and delivers on promises. They care about the environment and reducing plastics, the brand has ethical values and demonstrates authenticity in everything it does (Barton et al., 2018).

People are looking for brands to be clear and authentic. Consumers are not looking for greenwashing or insincere attempts at what a brand stands for. Greenwashing is a term coined by environmentalist Jay Westerveld in 1986, which is when an organization spends more time and money on marketing itself as environmentally friendly than doing things to make an environmental impact (Edwards, 2022). Today, consumers are looking for authentic leaders who are willing to put a stake in the ground and fight for something they believe in. employees overall are demanding companies become more sustainable. In an article by Forbes, they stated corporations have "been falling over themselves to express their green credentials since the Glasgow Cop26 climate summit." For instance, in his 2021 "Dear CEO" letter, Blackrock chief Larry Fink wrote there is no issue more important than climate change (Gaskell, 2021, p.1). The

Glasgow COP stands for "Conference of the Parties", and the one in Glasgow was the 26th annual summit. Ahead of it, two hundred countries were asked for their plans to cut emissions by 2030, a follow-up from pledges made under the 2015 Paris Agreement (BBC News, 2021). They recognize the emergency we are in globally due to the rising temps; we need accelerated action, we should move away from fossil fuels, and we need to focus on loss and damage and complete the Paris rulebook (United Nations, n.d). Studies show there is a shift in the public increasing demand on tackling climate change, 83% of workers think their employers are not doing enough to be more sustainable and tackle the climate crisis (Gaskell, 2021). This is important to workers because they believe that if their employer cares for the environment, they will likely care for them, and many workers are willing to take a pay cut to do so (Gaskell, 2021).

CSR in Today's World

This is an interesting time in our work history. For the first time, we have five generations in the workforce and each generation approaches work a little bit differently. They all expect different things from their employer, want different things for themselves, and believe their company should be having a social impact at varying degrees. The five generations include Traditionalists (76-99 years old) who are 2% of the workforce; Baby Boomers (57-75 years old) which are 25% of the workforce; Generation X (41-56 years old) which are 33% of the workforce; Millennials (26-40 years old) which are 35% of the workforce; and Generation Z (25 years old and younger) who are 5% of the workforce (Purdue University Global, 2022).

Another reason business' need to focus on CSR efforts now more than ever, is the COVID-19 pandemic which dramatically changed the way we work. Early in the pandemic those

businesses that could adapt went remote and employees were working from their homes permanently. There was a shift that occurred in the American worker at that time. Employers were invited into our homes, in our private spaces. The work slowed down and we were suddenly not traveling for work as much, being just as efficient at home and able to spend time with the ones we love the most. This invitation into our homes made people reevaluate their workplace culture and value alignment. People realized how much they like the flexibility in their schedules. “One of the most defining characteristics of all the generations was the expectation to have flexibility in working options especially Millennials at 76%, Gen Z at 69%, and Gen X at 64%” (Brower, 2022, p.13). Brower goes on to say, this provides people with greater choice and control over when, where, and how they work (2022).

Value alignment is another key factor coming out of the pandemic, 29% of millennials will leave a company if their values do not match. “This future underscore the need for companies to stay attuned to the expectations of their people and the need to continue evolving their culture. If they do not, there is a risk of future leaders looking elsewhere” (Americas, 2022, para 11). “Employee expectations have shifted over the course of the last 2.5 years and have the ways people want to feel valued. They are looking to be supported both professionally and personally” (Americas, 2022, para.2). They go on to say, all five generations in today’s workforce value different programs, policies, and benefits, presenting challenges and opportunities for organizations that are looking to attract and retain top talent (2022).

According to the Accenture study, 65% of consumers are influenced to buy based on the actions, values, and beliefs of a company’s employees as well as the CEO or marketing person. Therefore, a brand must be crystal clear to employees and stakeholders their brand position

and how they are creating a sense of brand belonging (Barton et al., 2018). A company's corporate culture is also especially important, that is how someone feels at work and whether they feel valued, supported, and as they belong. Baby boomers tend to care about culture less, at 29% compared to younger workers, Gen Z, and millennials, who say culture matters "a great deal" at 39% (Americas, 2022). Three-quarters of workers, across generations, believe their employers' commitment to DEI is authentic but millennials are particularly passionate, 76% would leave an employer if DEI initiatives were not offered. Ben and Jerry's are an excellent example of this. They moved from ice cream makers and leaders in that space to social justice advocates. If you follow them on social media or visit their website you will see them, take on racial inequities, human rights, and environmental regeneration. They are also in the top five highest-grossing ice cream brands in the United States (Kolmar, 2022).

If value alignment, workplace flexibility and a sense of belonging were not present for American workers during this period, they left. The Great Resignation is "an ongoing economic trend in which employees have voluntarily resigned from their jobs en masse, beginning in early 2021 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic" (Smet et. All, 2022). Among the most cited reasons for resigning include wage stagnation compared to the rising cost of living, hostile work environments, a lack of benefits, and inflexible work-from-home policies (Microsoft, 2021). With more than 19 million US workers leaving their jobs since April 2021, companies are struggling to address the root of the problem. Businesses are quick to offer higher wages and more perks but that is not satisfying workers. They see this as a transaction over true appreciation and reminds workers that their needs are not being met (Smet et al., 2022). Employees were far more likely to prioritize relational factors, whereas employers were more

likely to focus on transactional ones (Smet et al., 2022). Employees are grieving and are tired. They want a renewed sense of purpose in their work. “For example, when employers were asked why their people had quit, they cited compensation, work–life balance, and poor physical and emotional health. These issues did matter to employees—just not as much as employers *thought* they did. By contrast, the top three factors’ employees cited as reasons for quitting were that they did not feel valued by their organizations (54 percent) or their managers (52 percent) or because they did not feel a sense of belonging at work (51 percent). Notably, employees who classified themselves as non-White or multiracial were more likely than their White counterparts to say they had left because they did not feel they belonged at their companies—a worrying reminder of the inequities facing Black employees and other minority groups” (Smet et al., 2022, p.16). Belonging in the workplace is one of the key phrases in business today. For generations, executives have not acknowledged how people, especially those with diverse backgrounds have fit into their work culture (Bond, 2022). This is another important piece coming out of The Great Resignation and it is more critical than ever. Belonging is an employee’s sense that their uniqueness and their whole selves are being accepted and even highlighted but their colleagues and businesses (Bond, 2022). It is going to a place that feels safe and welcoming and where their unique perspectives are encouraged and valued (Bond, 2022). Bond goes on to say, “diversity is being invited to the dance, inclusion is being asked to dance, and belonging is dancing like no one is watching, that’s how free you are to be yourself” (2022, para. 14). In Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, love and belonging sit strongly in the center of safety and esteem. It is one of our basic needs as humans and since work is where most of us spend most of our time, we must support our employees in this way. Belonging

impacts business performance and well-being and this leads to retention and less turnover (Bond, 2022).

No Blueprint for Success

According to Andre Beaupre in his book the *Purposeful Nine and Soulful Advantage* (2021), there is no blueprint for CSR. In his book, he highlights nine small to large businesses that have been socially responsible since their inception. Each of the companies highlighted in the book has a different journey to how they achieved CSR success. While there is no single roadmap to follow, he did notice several themes while he was researching his book that could help businesses start to think about their own CSR strategies and how to get started.

The nine companies highlighted all focused on their own companies first, emphasizing and embedding values and a clear social and environmental mission in their workplace culture (Beaupre, 2021). All nine stated they wanted to make a difference because "it was the right thing to do" (Beaupre, 2021, p.236). Competitive advantage came from becoming a better corporate citizen. He went on to say, these "organizations did the opposite of performance activism, a pejorative term referring to the myopic self-enhancing visibility initiated to improve one's social capital" (Beaupre, 2021, p. 236). Other commonalities were they were all-purpose pioneers. They got into the game long before society or the government said they should (Beaupre, 2021). They were focused on creating measurable outcomes and telling people about them through annual reports, validating intentionality, focus, and measurable progress year over year.

All nine companies were and are committed to sparking social change and inclusion and have incorporated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into their companies' culture (Beaupre,

2021). These companies have multi-level stakeholder missions. Stakeholder capitalism broadens purpose and value by driving progress across every stakeholder (Beaupre, 2021). Half of the companies are supporting the UN's Sustainability Development Goals which are a blueprint for a more sustainable future adopted by 193 countries (Beaupre, 2021). Half are B Corps companies which is a certification that companies must apply for and pay lots of money to get. B Corp status legally requires them to now consider and validate the impact of their decisions on all stakeholders including workers, customers, suppliers, community, consumers, and the environment (Beaupre, 2021). Lastly, these companies all have a wide range of programs focusing on the physical and mental wellness of their employees. They believe their businesses are only as strong as their people (Beaupre, 2021).

Overall, Beaupre found that companies needed to figure out what works for them and what they care about as an organization. There is no right or wrong way to do CSR or make a social impact. The only way this can be done incorrectly is by not doing anything at all.

Future of CSR

Corporate Social Responsibility is evolving once again. We have seen over the decades how it is evolved with the changing world. First starting as a place to give to the poor, to environmental impacts, to align with hundreds of other nations on global initiatives to move our world forward. We are about to embark on another phase of this evolution. Corporate Social Justice is the latest buzzword emerging in this space centered on equity. "Corporate social justice means actively managing businesses' policies, practices, and outputs from a place of equity. Doing so can help correct inequalities and minimize negative environmental impacts before they begin" (Blacken, 2020, para.4).

Corporate Social Justice goes beyond feel-good projects and is a commitment by employers to make a positive, sustainable change to all its key stakeholders. “Corporate Social Justice centers are focused on the measurable, lived experiences of groups harmed and disadvantaged by society” (Zheng, 2020, para.3). It is a framework regulated by trust between a company and all its stakeholders including the community with the explicit goal of doing good for everyone. It is the deep integration of every aspect of how a company governs itself and functions. Examples would be paying employees a living wage, in line with inflation, and reflecting the diversity of the community; ensuring community both locally and globally is central to day-to-day operations. Exceptional customer service examines the pain points and needs of customers while looking at all aspects of the supply chain including the impacts on the environment and health of the people creating and using the products (Blacken, 2020). Now is the time to be thinking deeply about social impact. We are facing a climate crisis, coming out of a global pandemic, and are still struggling with equal pay, human rights for all and so much more. Corporations have the money and workforce to help make a difference in these areas. Forbes released an article in early 2022 discussing the biggest threats and risks for businesses in the next year. They ranked climate change, The Great Resignation, the pandemic, obtaining talent, burnout, and the failure to innovate in this list to name a few (Segal, 2022). These topics must be part of the business conversation moving forward. They need to run deep and wide in companies before it is too late. CSR could be a solution for companies facing these unprecedented risks to their business model while also being good corporate citizens.

Current Project

The purpose of this project will be to engage local businesses in southern New Hampshire in a workshop that will focus on the defining CSR, exploring the benefits to CSR, and developing a plan to engage in CSR. In the end, it is expected that participants – and their affiliated companies – will gain the preliminary skills to engage more meaningfully in their community both as a community good and as a necessary business practice.

Project Plan

The purpose of this project is to bring awareness to area business leaders on how to incorporate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into their businesses. This will include an introduction about what CSR is, what is included under that umbrella with examples, why it is important to think about, and how implementing some simple strategies can increase company morale, boost engagement, and increase profits. The COVID-19 pandemic and social injustices for George Floyd and Brianna Taylor have changed the modern workforce. Companies are offering hybrid work models, and increasing salaries but are missing a key component, people are looking for value-aligned workplaces with a strong community presence. They want companies that take a stance on social issues whether that be its people, environment, or the community at large. Now is the time for companies to include CSR in their business models and this workshop will teach companies how to do just that.

Situation Statement

The S&P 500 published a CSR report in 2019 stating that 90 percent of companies had a CSR practice up from just 20 percent in 2011 (Stobierski, 2021). Stobierski continues that, this is due to consumers becoming more conscious of climate change, wage and gender inequality,

unfair labor practices, and healthcare disparities (2021). “Seventy percent of Americans believe it is “very important” or “somewhat” important for companies to make the world a better place” (Stobierski, 2022, para.5). “Ninety percent of employees who work at companies with a strong sense of purpose report feeling more inspired, motivated, and loyal. This leads to longer tenure, better engagement, and a higher brand reputation” (Stobierski, 2021, para. 22). The state of our workforce has shifted tremendously since the COVID-19 pandemic. More people than ever are working from home and are seeking value-aligned companies. The Great Resignation has people looking for jobs that provide them work/life balance, fulfillment, and have purpose bigger than the job itself. Business leaders must be looking at the trends in the workforce and adapting accordingly. Adding a CSR program will address a lot of the issues people are having with their current employers and can help make companies more attractive for recruiting and retention.

Define Your Goals

By engaging the community and business leaders in a corporate social responsibility workshop. They will leave with the following:

- Participants will be able to define what CSR is, be able to recognize a CSR example in the real world and articulate why it fits the CSR or Triple Bottom Line framework.
- They can summarize why CSR is an important piece to any good business strategy, and easily interpret the benefits of having a CSR plan and how not focusing on CSR may be hurting their business and work culture.

- Participants can easily discover places of improvement within their organizations that make sense for the business and the employees. They can articulate strategies of where change can occur and can begin to take the steps to make them happen.

Target Audience

The audience targeted for this workshop is small to medium size business owners with little to no CSR in their current workplaces. Small to medium size businesses like manufacturing firms, electric or plumbing companies, and hair salons tend to be focused on the day-to-day profit-making of the company and don't often take the time to reflect on the office culture, health, and wellness of their staff, how they can give back to the greater community at large. These types of businesses are usually lean operations without a dedicated HR staff, or anyone dedicated to community relations or volunteering.

Incentives for Engagement

With the current state of work affairs including The Great Resignation businesses must engage in CSR to stand out from the crowd. Engaging in CSR activities increases a brand image, attracts top talent, and retains current employees, all while making the community better. It is a win-win-win. If a business is unsure how to start with CSR this workshop will clarify any confusion and participants will leave with handouts, they can immediately use.

Crafting a Clear Message

I am seeking to build awareness of the importance of implementing a CSR strategy for small to medium businesses. There are countless social injustices the world is facing, and companies can be important agents of change. By training employees on implicit bias or microaggressions companies can support racial injustice. By paying employees equally and fairly

they can support wage disparities among genders. By partnering with local non-profits to provide staff a place to volunteer or feel a sense of purpose they are fostering employee well-being and building community. Companies have immense power to change the world, but we need all companies on board. Currently, only fifty percent of small businesses in the US have social missions they stand by (Segal 2022). This means we have another fifty percent to convert to mission-driven work while remaining profitable. By offering a workshop that goes over the basic premise of CSR, describes the history of work in America in parallel to social movements and laws, and provides a list of recommendations on how to start CSR within their offices, participants will leave educated and prepared to act.

Identify Outreach Methods

I have partnered with the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene, NH. Their mission is to provide a space for entrepreneurs to get support on building a thriving business by providing pro-bono coaches with multiple expertise including marketing, accounting, strategy, and more for free. They offer training, workspaces, and countless resources to the business community. Hannah Grimes has a workshop questionnaire for all presenters to fill out where they gather key details about the workshop, what they topic and objectives are and what participants will learn. From there they will create a workshop sign-up link that can be shared on all social media platforms. Once I have that link, I will send it to the leader of Leadership Monadnock who has agreed to share it with the alumni list for that group. I will personally share it through my connections at the Keene Chamber, Linked In, the non-profit boards I sit on and with other key business leaders in the community.

Responsibilities Chart

NAME	ORGANIZATION OR AFFILIATION	RESPONSIBILITIES	CONTACT INFORMATION
Gina Burke	Merrimack College	Workshop presenter	Ginaburkehhc@gmail.com
Sara Powell	Hannah Grimes Center	Host/Market workshop	Sara@hannahgrimes.com
Susan Newcomer	Leadership Monadnock	Help market and drive attendance using the Leadership Monadnock mailing list and alumni community	@keenechamber.com

Tools/Measure to Assess Progress

Get Hannah Grimes link for sign-ups and distribution, track registrations, finalize workshop resources for take home, create agenda, create post-event survey, create follow-up thank you email. Decide/finalize small volunteer activity at workshop if possible.

Implementation Timeline

January 2022	Market event, track sign-ups, prepare attendance sheet, and post event survey. Finalize pillar resource document and non-profits in the region list complete with contact information.
February 2022	Host Workshop @Hannah Grimes.
March 2022	Summarize workshop findings and fix any capstone edits.
April 2022	4/6: Full capstone draft due 4/27: Submit final capstone paper for publication

Logical Framework

Learning Goal	Participants leave ready to implement CSR strategies in their business and have resources to look back on if they get stuck.		
Short Term Outcomes	Participants will leave the workshop with a general understanding of CSR, why it's important and a must for any business, and how to get started.	Participants will leave the workshop with examples in each of the four pillars and a document they can use to brainstorm how they can start a CSR program at their office.	Now that they have ideas on basic CSR strategies and ideas for each pillar participants have the skills to head back to work ready to assess their current work infrastructure and decide where they can take immediate action. If beginning a volunteer program or starting a payroll deduction partnership as part of their strategy, they will have a resource on who to reach out to start those initial conversations.

Methodology

I conducted an educational workshop with panelists and group activities at the Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurs in Keene, NH on February 15, 2023, from 9:30 to 11:30am. I chose the Hannah Grimes Center as a place to host this workshop because they provide space, tools and connections for entrepreneurs and established businesses in downtown Keene. They were a great partner who offered space for free plus they connected to their network to get interested people to come to the workshop. I set up a call with their Director, Sara Powell who had me work through a workshop planning questionnaire so she could get a better understanding of what the workshop was about, what the participants would learn by attending, as well as day of logistics including room set up. The Hannah Grimes conference room space was provided free of charge, and they provided coffee and tea, although I also brought water, fruit, and pastries for the participants.

The workshop planning document and agenda (appendix A) that I created helped gain greater clarity on what I wanted to cover but this also provided Hannah Grimes with the valuable data they needed to set up a web landing page so people could register with a link that they posted to all their social media sites including Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Hannah Grimes also included my workshop in their upcoming offerings section in their weekly newsletter which includes over 2,000 people. This list includes people that have taken classes at the center before, people they have worked with in their space and community members that have opted into their mailing list.

In addition to Hannah Grimes, another key marketer for this event was Leadership Monadnock, which is run out of the Keene Chamber of Commerce. Leadership Monadnock is

the cornerstone of a regional strategy to develop and enhance the communities of the Monadnock region. As emerging leaders, participants engage with others in the community to encourage diversity and vitality and learn about the challenges and opportunities of the Monadnock region and to our state. I was a participant in the 2021-2022 cohort, so I reached out to the groups team lead, Susan Newcomer. Susan has been running that program for business professionals in the area for over twenty years. I debriefed her on my capstone, the topic, and my future goals of helping companies in our area figure out their CSR strategy. She asked me to send her a link to learn more and sign up and she personally sent the invitation to our Leadership Monadnock alumni list which includes over 500 business leaders in the community.

Participants

I had sixteen people sign up for my workshop and nine came. This included my two guest panelists and seven people who signed up after seeing the link get published. It included decision makers at a school, yoga studio, ambulance company, food distribution, and a manufacturing plant.

Materials

I used “thinking of you” cards for my philanthropic intro and PowerPoint slides (see appendix B) to help guide my talk track and provide me with a framework and flow for all the information I wanted to share about CSR. On those slides, I focused on defining CSR, discussing the history, the terms often interchanged with CSR and why companies should pay attention. I also created two worksheets for my activities, the first Match Game (see appendix C) was a worksheet with two columns. On the left was a CSR strategy and on the right was a company

name. Based on what they know about the companies and what we just went over they had to find the match. This exercise provided me an opportunity to go deeper into CSR examples and really hit home how this work could and should align with what you do as a business and with company values. The second activity- Brainstorm worksheet (see appendix D) was to get participants thinking about where they could start with CSR in their own businesses. By working through the questions with their teams they can start to see where their organization is lacking and what pillar makes sense to start focusing on.

Procedure

I started the presentation with my philanthropic activity. I had thinking of you cards on the table with a stack of pens. As participants arrived, I asked them to grab a card or two and write a message to someone in our community. These cards were delivered to the Bentley Commons Nursing Home at the end of the event. I had a few message suggestion ideas on an easel that all participants could see in case they were not sure what to write. The purpose of this exercise was to get people thinking about philanthropy and how it does not need to be hard or complicated. You can make a difference in a very meaningful way by doing a small act that only takes a few minutes. Next, I started on my PowerPoint slides and presentation which guided the rest of the meeting. I went over what CSR is, other names for it, the history, and examples for each of the pillars. After 16 slides, the deck indicated it was time for activity one match game. At that point I passed around the activity one worksheet and participants in small groups quickly matched the company description to its company (See appendix C). After five minutes I brought the group back together for a group share. This gave me an opportunity to talk about each example, what pillar it aligns with and what makes it a good example of CSR.

From there it was time to hear from my panelists Danielle Ruffo the Senior Vice President of Community Engagement from Savings Bank of Walpole and Kim Vacca Director of the Red River Charitable Foundation. I gave each speaker ten minutes to talk about their role at their companies and explain how their organization does CSR including programs and initiatives. It was then time for open question and answer from the audience. I had questions on hand as a backup in case the room was quiet or could not think of anything. From there I continued my presentation and got more into why CSR is important to think about and even deeper into why now based on the pandemic, state of work, hybrid work, work generations and The Great Resignation. Then it was time for activity two, company brainstorm (see appendix D). I let people work on this in small groups again for 10 minutes and myself and one panelist walked around offering support by just checking in with groups and asking if there was anything they felt stuck on or wanted to talk through. I then brought the group back together for discussion and questions including what went well with that exercise and did it help get their wheels turning on CSR activities at their specific place of employment. We wrapped with a final lesson learned discussions and I asked participants to share something they learned or surprised them about CSR. I then handed out my evaluation tool and asked participants to fill it out during the last five minutes.

Once the workshop concluded, all data gathered from the survey was collated into excel and a word document. A dynamic mixed methods approach was used to explore the data. The post-event evaluation examined quantitively demographic data as well as learning outcomes. Qualitative data was used to access future improvements to the workshop and the sections of

the workshop that participants found the most beneficial. These themes were examined against the goal of the workshop and what was collected in the post-event survey.

Results

A total of nine people attended the workshop, with all nine participating in the workshop activities and eight completing a post-workshop evaluation.

Activity One Observations

Activity one: Match Game is when the group started chatting with people nearest them and seemed to get into the game element of the worksheet. It only took a few minutes for participants to appear done and then I brought the group back together for discussion. We went through each example one-by-one and people shouted out their answers. This led to deeper discussion about why these companies may be trying to do philanthropy in this way. This was reiterating the point that a company's philanthropic work can be a reflection or extension of their overall business or just make sense based on who their target market is. For example, Douglas Cuddle Toys sells cute and cozy stuffed animals, and their philanthropy of choice is feeding children. Food insecurity does not directly tie into a stuffed animal manufacturer but when you think of who typically buys stuffed animals or who they are bought for, this connection becomes a lot more apparent. These revelations made sense to the group, and they could easily see why these companies did the philanthropic work they did.

Panel Discussion

Attendees noted this was the section of the presentation they liked the most. They had just learned the components and history of CSR, Triple Bottom Line, and why this work is so important and something they should start integrating in their businesses and then the panelist

section came to validate all those findings. Each panelist discussed in detail what CSR work looks like at their respective companies and you could see participants having lightbulb moments and making connections to what we just learned. They validated and "sold" the participants on everything they just learned by discussing it through real-world experiences. This section came at a perfect time of the presentation. After the panelist discussed their CSR strategies and philosophies at length attendees asked the following questions. What of charities do you support? What department do you roll up to? Who sets the tone for this work, is it coming from the top down or bottom up? Lastly, what are the benefits you see from doing this work?

Activity Two Observations

Activity two: Getting Started with CSR did not solicit much feedback. Attendees stated they really liked the questions and were committed to doing them, but they wanted to take them back to their organizations and get help from their teams to fill them out. They stated it gave them a framework to start thinking about how to implement CSR and putting structure around how that would get done but they were not ready to work on it during our session together.

Survey: Quantitative Findings

Data was collected quantitatively for fifteen of the seventeen questions. This included workshop feedback and demographic data for participants. Question one was, "How you would rate this workshop?" Out of eight responses, 7 stated it was excellent and 1 as very good.

Questions two through eight were in asked in a matrix with a 4-point scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. When asked whether the workshop the goals were clear, 6

said strongly agree, and 2 said agree. When asked if the content was relevant, 7 respondents said strongly agree and 1 said agree. The next question asked if the topic is interesting, with all 8 respondents saying they strongly agree. Participants were then asked to reflect on whether Activity one: Match Game, where participants were asked to match impact initiatives to mission to their company name, was clear and 7 respondents said strongly agree while 1 said agree. When asked whether the guest panelists provided valuable insight into CSR and real-world application, 7 respondents said strongly agree, and 1 said agree. Participants were then asked to reflect on whether Activity two: Brainstorming worksheet, on how to start thinking about CSR, provided clarity and direction and 7 respondents said strongly agree and 1 said agree. Lastly, respondents were asked if the debrief/discussions in this workshop were meaningful to them and their work, where 6 respondents said strongly agree and 2 said agree.

Questions nine through twelve were designed to determine how participants might use the information from the workshop in their own companies. Responses were rated on a 4-ppoint scale from Very likely to Very Unlikely. The first question asked, “because of this workshop I will seek information about CSR” and 7 respondents said very likely and 1 said somewhat likely., The next questions if they would “share todays content with others at my workplace” and all 8 respondents said very likely. The next question was, “Because of today’s workshop I will start/restart or revise a CSR group or committee at work,” and 6 respondents said very likely while 2 said somewhat likely. Lastly, respondents were asked, “because of today’s workshop I will start/restart/revive a CSR initiative at my workplace based on the workshop” with 6 respondents stating very likely and 2 stating somewhat likely.

Participants were asked three demographic questions. Does your organization currently have an CSR program or initiative. Three respondents indicated, one stated no, and 4 said “sort-of”. If the respondents chose yes or sort-of, they were asked to explain. There were three participants that added comments. One participant said, “they have a philanthropy team, and active employee engagement work,” another said “yes, but it currently lacks a DEI component” and the third said “nothing formal, but we are always looking for ways to support and engage community partners.”

Next participants were asked how long they have been with their employer. Three stated anywhere from 1 to 10 years, and 5 stated 16 or more years. Lastly, participants were asked what their business size was and 1 said 10 or less people; 5 stated they are working at a company with anywhere between 11 and 50 people, and 2 in companies with more than 500 people.

Survey: Qualitative Findings

Data was collected and collated qualitatively for only two questions. The first question was, “What was the most beneficial part of this workshop?” The eight answers that participants stated they found the most beneficial was learning about the history of CSR, learning about the four pillars of CSR, the elements of social justice in this topic, the guest panelists, the group dynamics and interaction at the workshop itself, the activities, the overall theme of CSR and thinking about profit differently. Of those eight unique answers three had repeat votes. Both history of CSR and guest panelists each had three votes and pillar discussion had two votes.

The second question that was analyzed qualitatively was, “How could this workshop be improved in the future?” There were only two comments mentioned in this section. The two

answers were to provide more wait time between questions and sharing and more tips next time on how to get buy-in from both leadership and employees.

Discussion

My goal was for participants to leave with a general understanding of CSR and want to look at their own organizations CSR strategy and start or make improvements based on the new data they learned. Through the survey feedback and conversations, I had after the workshop, this was accomplished. My first workshop goal was for participants to be able to see a CSR example on TV, in the news, in conversation, and so on, and be able to tie it back to one of Archie Carroll's Pillars- economic, legal, ethical, or philanthropic or to the Triple Bottom Line framework of people, planet or prosperity. This was accomplished by first walking participants through the history of CSR in parallel to what was happening in the world during that phase of business. By showing participants how working conditions influenced laws and business practices which then influenced the creation of CSR, they were able to start to understand the bigger picture of how this framework came to be. During the years of early CSR, the United States saw impacts of the Industrial War, women and children in the workplace, environmental concerns because of oil spills and waste disposal. All those societal concerns resulted in stronger laws, rules, and regulations for businesses which in-turn eventually led into the Triple Bottom Line framework which also looked at environmental factors and how businesses could play a bigger role in protecting and saving the planet. Through Activity one, *Match Game,* participants were able to take their newfound knowledge of these principles and apply it by matching corporations to their CSR strategies. This led to discussion on which pillar their efforts aligned with and why it makes sense for their business and for the world.

My second workshop goal was for participants to leave understanding why CSR and Triple Bottom Line are a good business strategy and why not having this framework could be hurting their business and work culture. This was accomplished by walking participants through the current day work trends we are seeing post-pandemic. By exploring topics like The Great Resignation, Quiet Quitting, five generations in the workforce, and what employee's post-pandemic are looking for in an employer the case was made as to why having a CSR or Triple Bottom Line component to work could solve for some of these issues. Participants reported that 100% will share today's content with other coworkers and 80% said they would start, restart, or revive their CSR discussions at work based on the workshop.

Lastly, goal three was participants can easily discover places of improvement within their organizations that make sense for the business and the employees to incorporate CSR or Triple Bottom Line strategies. This was achieved with Activity two, *Getting Started with CSR* but not fully brought to fruition during the workshop. That activity was designed to get participants thinking about how they would start or restart CSR efforts within their organizations. Attendees seemed grateful to have the document and found the questions compelling and thought provoking, but all requested they bring them back to their respective organizations to brainstorm with their colleagues. In the future, this activity would better be served by posing one or two of the questions to the group to start working through the thought process of how they could implement one CSR strategy at work and what pillar it aligned with. Then send the handout as a follow up takeaway item they could do more thoroughly with their teams.

Limitations of the Project

One challenge of this workshop was not knowing who my audience was. Prior to walking into the Hannah Grimes Center, the morning of the workshop I had no idea who was attending, their role at their organization or what company they were from. As much as this topic is broad and is informational for anyone who works at a company if I knew my audience or had people in the same stage of their CSR journey, I could have customized the material to be more relevant. I felt like I needed to speak in broad terms and share information that could work for any type of organization, but it could be more impactful and successful if I were instructing a group in the same phase of CSR. This could include no CSR present, a few CSR initiatives but not part of the larger strategic plan or fully integrated CSR program but looking to take it to the next level.

Another limitation was the time. This topic would be better if it were broken up into smaller, shorter workshops. I was trying to cram a lot into a two-hour session, and it felt overwhelming even to me. If I knew what stage people were in coming in, I could customize this content to be relevant to whatever stage they were in now and not feel like I had to try to cover it all.

I also think starting off the session by asking attendees a few more questions would have helped the session. I had them state their name and organization, but I wish I had them state their goals and to describe where they currently sit on their CSR journey. This may have helped me with my talk track and think about examples that could resonate with the participants.

Implications for Future Projects

Although the sentiment of the 'thinking of you' cards made sense to my message, I am not sure it delivered like I wanted it too. I did not receive much feedback about it. It was also the first thing we did and putting that towards the end once we built some rapport would have been more impactful.

To expand this thinking project in the future I could see someone tying this foundational work about CSR to Rene Girard's Mimetic Theory. "Girard, a French historian, literary critic, and philosopher, developed a theory of human behavior that emphasizes the role of imitation and desire in social interactions. His concepts were based on the idea that from a very young age, human beings are fundamentally imitative creatures, and that our desires and behaviors are largely shaped by the desires and behaviors of those around us. The resulting theory has gained significant amount of attention in recent years, particularly among business leaders and entrepreneurs, not least because it provides a powerful framework for understanding both employee and consumer behavior" (Myers, 2023). If businesses could start to see themselves as influencers. Influencers to their employee-base, customers, suppliers, shareholders, stakeholders and behaved in all the ethical ways we expect a business to act. They follow the laws and regulations, they are careful about choosing suppliers that are ethical, they treat their employees with fairness and provide great benefits, they give back to their community and encourage their employees to do the same. Then based on Girard's theory that would rub off on all the people they touch, and they would be influenced to do the right thing, live an ethical life, and give back to their community. I have had this phenomenon happen to me in my own life. My company does a lot for the community and provides opportunities to volunteer

together as a company as well as provides us with paid volunteer hours to do the work on our own. This behavior over and over year after year has influenced me personally to do a lot more volunteering in my community. Prior to working here, I did not do any volunteering but since they believe it in so deeply and I have had profound experiences participating in such activities I am inspired to do more on my own.

Another direction this could head is getting very prescriptive on how to do this work. That is the largest obstacle for companies. They want and know they should implement CSR, but they are not sure on where and how to start. If there were steps written out, or a process that companies could use to figure out what this could look like specifically for their business model l think that would change the game.

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Appendix A

Social Impact Planning Agenda: Take Your Business to the Next Level

9:30 AM- Noon

February 15, 2023

Hannah Grimes Center- Keene, NH

9:30 AM- 9:40AM (10 minutes)	Introductions, Agenda, Meeting Ground Rules Quick Ice Breaker • Participants will write out a thinking of you card. I will bring them to a nursing home, or they can choose to leave them around town hoping to brighten someone's day. This is to promote the idea that philanthropy and giving back isn't hard. It can be simple gesture that has a major impact.	Materials List -Thinking of You Cards
9:40 AM – 10:10 AM (30 minutes)	Topic 1 • What is CSR, (4) pillars, triple bottom line, examples in each pillar. • Participants will have a clear picture of what CSR is, what the pillars are, and have a better understanding of how CSR has evolved over the years. • Discussion/PowerPoint as a backup visual.	Materials List -PowerPoint slides
10:10 AM- 10:20 AM (10 minutes)	Activity 1 & Debrief • Breakout groups- In small groups participants will complete activity 1 worksheet that has real life philanthropy examples on one side and companies on the other. They need to match the company with their CSR strategy. • It helps participants think of CSR in real life examples of companies they see and hear about or visit every day. • The ability to start to see CSR around them. • Group share. Have teams give an example of a company or brand and which pillar it aligns with.	Materials List -Activity 1 worksheet
10:20 AM- 11:00 AM (40 minutes)	• Guest panelists- Danielle Ruffo- Community Engagement, Savings Bank of Walpole & Kim Vacca- Director Red River Charitable Foundation • The panelists will each have a turn to speak about what their companies do for social impact with examples. Open forum to ask any questions of the panelists.	-None

11:00 AM- 11:25 AM (15 minutes)	Topic 2 • Why should you care? Why is CSR so important, why now? What does the research say? Current work trends. How do you start doing this work? • Participants are crystal clear on what CSR is and why it's important. • Discussion/PowerPoint with key stats and data as a backup visual	Materials List -PowerPoint slides
11:25 AM- 11:40 AM (15 minutes)	Activity 2 & Debrief • Brainstorming worksheet- Participants can start to look at their mission/vision/values & historical data to start thinking of where and what pillar they may want to start with as they head back to their organizations. • Participants will leave with a worksheet of ideas they can take with them and start or continue implementing at their business. • Gather everyone and ask a few people to share some of the things they wrote down.	Materials List -Brainstorm worksheet
11:40 AM- 12:00 PM (20 minutes)	Wrap-up and final thoughts on workshop Open discussion on possible action steps • Have attendees share one take away from the workshop and what action they will take once they leave. • Evaluation Forms (Last 5 minutes)	Materials List -Evaluation Form -Sheet with my contact information and follow up resources on CSR to learn more.

Appendix B

How to Make a Social Impact
Gina BurkeMerrimack College

Agenda
01 Laying the Foundation
What is CSR? How did we get here?
02 Activity 1
03 Guest Panelists
Danielle Ruffo, Community Engagement Savings Bank of Walpole
Kim Vacca, Director Red River Charitable Foundation
04 Why now?
Current work trends, why now more than ever
05 Activity 2
06 Wrap up & Evaluation

“ The public expectations of your company have never been greater... Every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution t society. Without a sense of purpose, n company, either public or private, can achieve its full potential. ”

—Larry Fink, CEO- Black Rock

01

What is CSR?

Triple Bottom Line
Corporate Citizenship
Corporate Responsibility
ESG

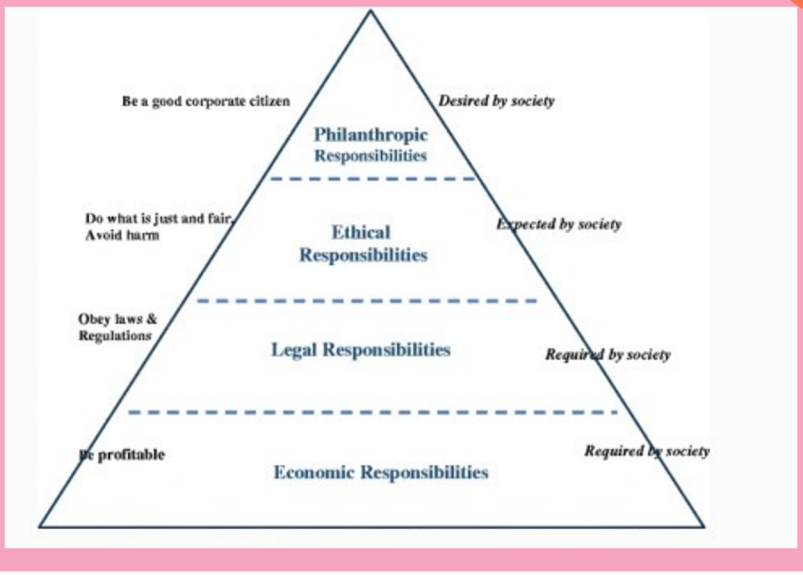
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic/discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time.

History of CSR

- Industrial Revolution (mid to late 1800's) Corporate irresponsibility, unsafe work conditions, pollution, women/child unemployment was leading to social problems rise of philanthropy
- 1900's Milton Hershey opens a town with a factory in take care of workers
- 1953 Bowen The obligations of businessmen are to pursue policies, to make decisions, and to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of objectives and values of our society
- 60's 70's First Earth Day 1969 Oil spill in CA
  Led to Environmental Protection Agency, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and Consumer Product Safety Commission

Archie Carroll's Model - 1979



70 %of Americans believe it's either "somewhat" or "very important" for companies to make the world a better place.

(Only 37% believe its MOST important to make money.)

Corporate Citizenship (late 90s)

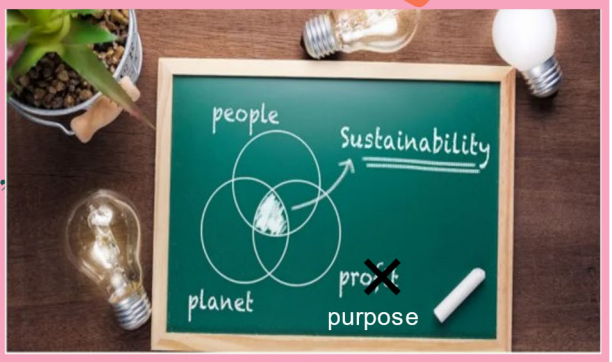
When a firm intentionally goes beyond compliance with the requirements of the law in pursuit of some social or environmental good.

1) **Elementary** – basic, unrefined – no leadership support
2) **Engaged** – few policies – moving past basic laws
3) **Innovative** – social impact/business practices begin to merge
4) **Integrated** – fully integrating citizenship programs, such as sustainability and DEI initiatives, into their business' bottom line.
5) **Transforming** – corporate citizenship plays a strategic part in fueling sales. Social impact is a regular part of operations and it helps to foster and retain talent at the organization.

Triple Botton Line

(John Elkington 1994)

Rather than solely focusing on generating profit, or the standard "bottom line." It can be broken down into "three Ps": profit, people, and the planet.



Instead of "best in the world" aspire to be the "best *for* the world."

Environment & Business

1948- 1st law on water quality
1948- 20 dead 600 hospitalized over sulfur emissions steel & wire plant
1949- butterflies disappearing because of DDT
1950- 1st conference on air pollution in 1950
1953- smog kills 200+ in NY City
1955- Eisenhower discusses air pollution
1963- Clean Air Act finally passes
1965- Water Quality Act passes- Motor Vehicles now have emission standards

1970- First Earth Day
1979- Three Mile Island- evacuation of 140K people in PA- nuclear power plan- takes 10 years to clean up!
1982- Gov't sent 6K truckloads of soil laced with toxic PCBs to a poor, black, rural neighborhood in NC
1989- Exxon spills 11 million gallons of oil- kills 250K birds and 1300 square miles of oceans
1990- 20 yearanniversary of earth day- 76% of Americans call themselves environmentalists

Theory

Stakeholder

Stakeholder Theory "is a view of capitalism that stresses the interconnected relationships between a business and its customers, suppliers, employees, investors, communities, and others who have a stake in the organizatio The theory argues that a firm should create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders.

CSV

Creating shared value is the practice of creating economic value in a way that also creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges.

77%

Of consumers are motivated to purchase from companies committed to making the world a better place.

5 strategies to maximize stakeholder value

1) Promote Healthy and Inclusive Workplace Culture
2) Design Goals with Measurable Impact
3) Align Community Impact Goals with Business Practices
4) Socially Responsible Companies Leverage Their C Capabilities
5) Solicit Stakeholder Feedback and Engagement to Maximize Stakeholder Value

Pillar Ideas

People	Planet	Purpose
• HR handbook • 12 week parental leave • DEI Policy • Recognition program • Career development • Improve society • Transparency • Compensation • Promote wellness • Quality of life	• Waste reduction • Plant trees • Hybrid work • Zero waste initiative • Green initiatives • Recycling facilities • Renewable energy • Sustainability policies • Energy efficient office spaces	• Payroll deduction program for giving • Volunteer program • Donations • Company match • Partnerships with non profits • Volunteerism • Board membership • Sponsorships • Office drives • Access

Activity 1

MATCH MAKER

Let's look at some company examples and try to match them with the companies that they align with.

Welcome Guest Panelists

Danielle Ruffo- Savings Bank of Walpole

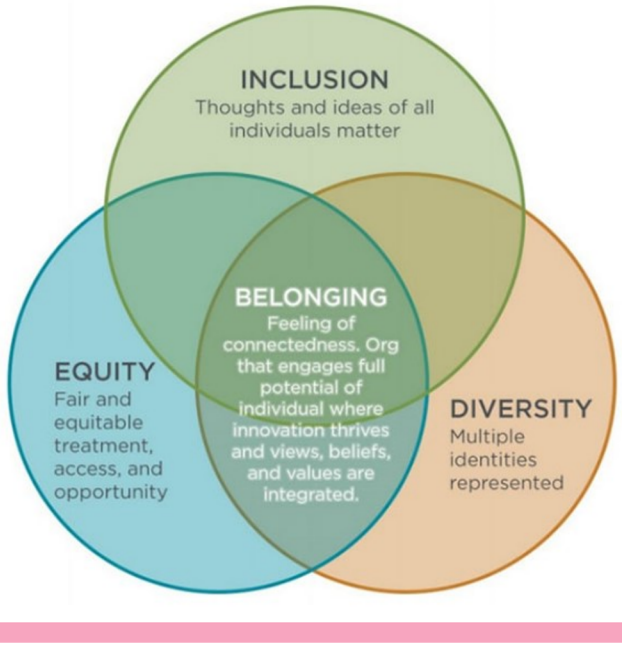
Kim Vacca- Red River Charitable Foundation

Why CSR?
Right thing to do
Longer retention
More profits
Employees/consumers are demanding it
Positive reputation

93%
of employees believe companies must lead with purpose.
88%
believe it's no longer acceptable for companies to make money at the expense of society at large.

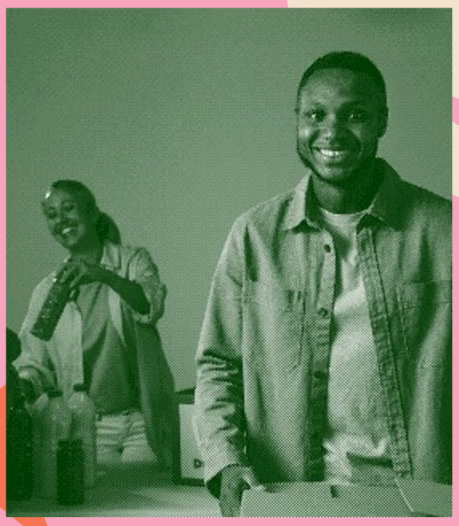
Why Now?

-Summer of 2020
-COVID-19
-Great Resignation
-5 Generations at work
-Trust all time high



Corporate Social Justice

Managing businesses' policies, practices and outputs from a place of equity.



Activity 2

Look to our history

Reinvent the future

Wrap Up & Takeaways

Thank you!

Do you have any questions?
ginaburkehhc@gmail.com
603-443-0394

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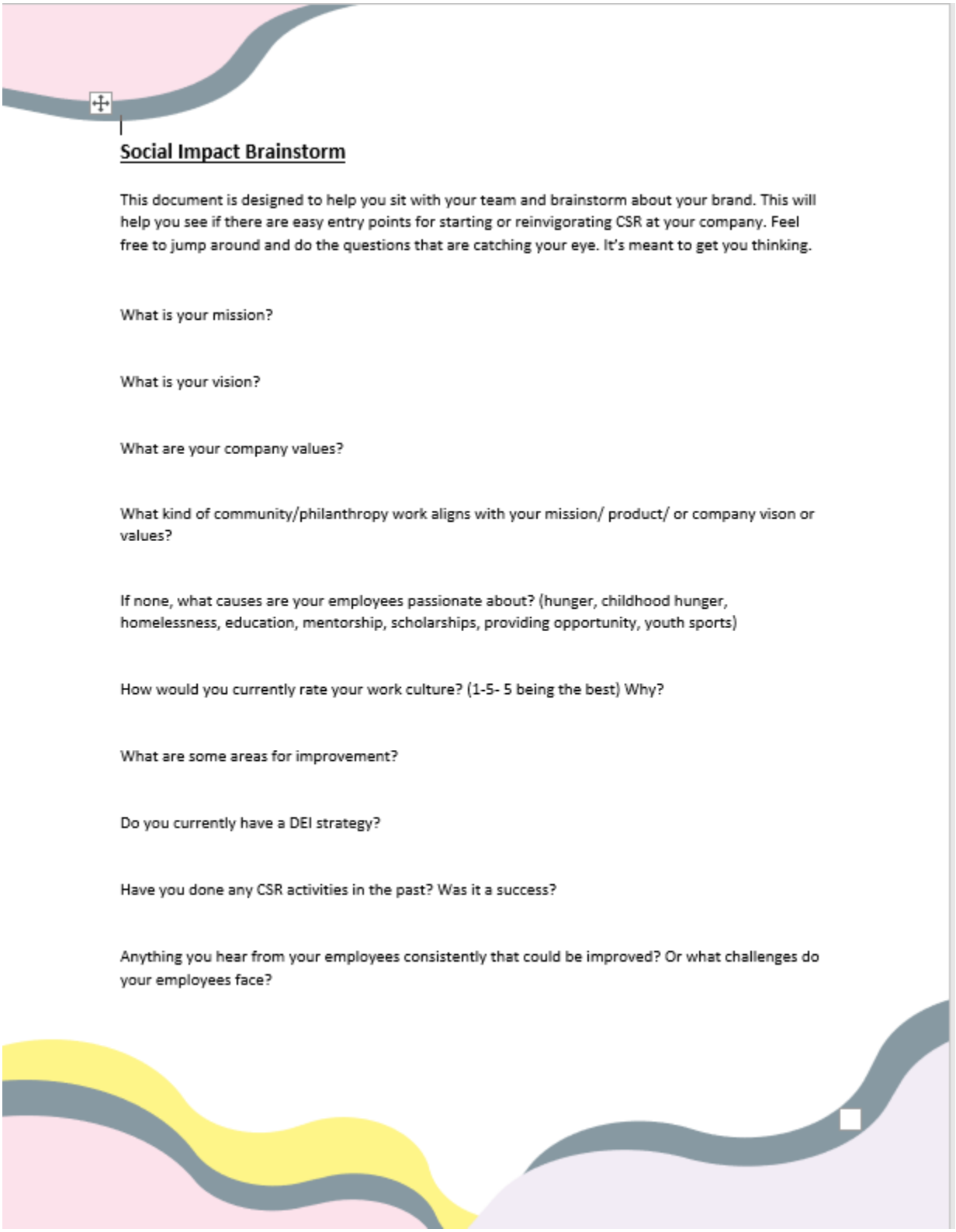
Appendix C

Match Game

Look at the initiative on the left and match it to the correct company on the right. Think about their business model and why this community initiative may make sense for them.

1) We are a proud Second Chance Employer. We hire the best person for the job, regardless of criminal history. We have witnessed first-hand that someone's past does not define their future, and that sometimes giving someone a chance is all they need to become a Good Seed.	4 Ocean
2) We were able to donate over $94,000 in 2021 to help eliminate childhood hunger within the community we live and love.	Feetures
3) We believe in vision for all 2.5 billion people around the world need glasses but don't have access to them. In the U.S., two million children lack the glasses they need to read a book, see the board, or participate in class.	Douglas Cuddle Toys
4) Our socks are designed to be long lasting with a custom-like fit to enable easy movement with fewer blisters, less sock slippage, and a greater degree of comfort. We know Lifetime Guarantee sounds too good to be true, but we guarantee our quality and our socks.	Warby Parker
5) We are an ocean cleanup company dedicated to ending the ocean plastic crisis. As a Public Benefit Corporation and Certified B Corp, we harness the power of business to fund a global cleanup operation that's responsible for recovering millions of pounds of plastic and trash from the world's oceans, rivers, and coastlines.	Dave's Killer Bread

Appendix D



Social Impact Brainstorm

This document is designed to help you sit with your team and brainstorm about your brand. This will help you see if there are easy entry points for starting or reinvigorating CSR at your company. Feel free to jump around and do the questions that are catching your eye. It's meant to get you thinking.

What is your mission?

What is your vision?

What are your company values?

What kind of community/philanthropy work aligns with your mission/ product/ or company vison or values?

If none, what causes are your employees passionate about? (hunger, childhood hunger, homelessness, education, mentorship, scholarships, providing opportunity, youth sports)

How would you currently rate your work culture? (1-5- 5 being the best) Why?

What are some areas for improvement?

Do you currently have a DEI strategy?

Have you done any CSR activities in the past? Was it a success?

Anything you hear from your employees consistently that could be improved? Or what challenges do your employees face?

What pillar do you want to focus on first? (people, planet, purpose)

What are some ideas you could do in that pillar?

Of those ideas which one do you want to start with?

What would you need to do to get started?

Do you have a person at your organization that could support with this initiative?

What are the action steps needed to make this happen?

How could you fund this?

Is there a non-profit in the area you could partner with?

Could you partner with another business?

Any other ideas you want to jot down?

Appendix E

Workshop Evaluation with Gina Burke

Thank you for your participation in today's workshop. As a Community Engagement graduate student at Merrimack College, today's workshop is a part of my capstone project. I would appreciate it if you could complete this evaluation based on the workshop today. Your thoughts, opinions, and reactions will be used solely for research purposes, and all responses will be kept confidential.

1. Overall, how would you rate this workshop today?

Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

In thinking about the workshop…	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. The goals of the workshop were clear.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The content was relevant to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The topic is interesting.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Activity 1- Matching companies with their impact initiatives helped me understand the tie between company mission and community impact.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The guest speakers panel provided valuable insight into CSR in real-world applications.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Activity 2- The brainstorming worksheet on how to get started provided clarity and direction on how to start a CSR journey.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The debrief / discussions in this workshop were meaningful to me and my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Because of this workshop…	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely
9. I will seek out more information on CSR	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I will share today's content with others at my workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I will start / restart / revive a CSR group or committee at my workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I will start / restart / revive a CSR initiative at my workplace based on today's discussion	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. What was the most helpful or beneficial part of this workshop?

_____

_____

_____

14. How would you recommend this workshop be improved?

_____

_____

_____

15. Does your company currently have a CSR program or initiative?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes
- ○ Sort of

If "yes" or "sort of", please explain:

_____

_____

16. How long have you been with your employer?

- ○ 1-5 years
- ○ 6-10 years
- ○ 11-15 years
- ○ 16-20 years
- ○ more than 20 years

17. What is your business size?

- ○ 1-5 people
- ○ 6-10 people
- ○ 11-50 people
- ○ 51-100 people
- ○ 101-500 people
- ○ more than 500 people

Thank you so much for your time today and for filling out this evaluation.
I wish you all the best in your social impact journey and am available to help if you need it.
EMAIL: ***Ginaburkehhc@gmail.com***