Editorial Special Edition

It wasn’t all that long ago when Green was just a color, corporate boards were wary of NGOs, and most people had never heard of corporate social responsibility (CSR) or Sustainability.

As today’s companies face increasing competition and greater pressure than ever before from shareholders, customers, and employees. The need to differentiate from others is critical to business success.

Therefore CSR has continued to gain recognition as one way to make businesses stand out from the competition. With the aid of Dubai Chamber’s Centre for Responsible Business, companies in Dubai are facing this challenge and moving from cash-only charitable giving to more strategic CSR.

The Dubai Chamber’s CSR Label is a solemn recognition of companies’ CSR leadership, compliance and commitment in Dubai and the UAE.

It recognizes companies’ efforts to observe, uphold and promote universal principles of social responsibility and sustainable development in their economic activities, social relationships, and value creation.

The Label promotes the continued appeal of productive investment and growth in the long term in six main themes, community, stakeholder engagement, marketplace, workplace, environment, and communication.

In this Special Edition of CSR Al Youm we will be celebrating Leadership as you will be introduced to the first winners of the Dubai Chamber’s CSR Label and the voyage they took to achieve the label by seamlessly aligning CSR with their organizational objectives.

You will also be briefed on our seminar and expert class themed Healthy Workplace, Healthy Community -Implementing Wellbeing Practices at the Workplace which also saw the launch of the Wellbeing Guidebook which serves as a starter kit for any business that is looking at implementing Workplace Wellbeing Programs.

And to compliment this special edition on Leadership, we will introduce you to the first Sustainability Network CEO Seminar which brought top executives from Aramex, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Intercoil International, Puma Middle East and Unilever MENA to provide an insight into how best to integrate strategies and business processes which support CSR and sustainability.

Finally, we are issuing this Special Edition of CSR Al Youm in response to the success of the Dubai Dialogue: Responsible Recovery event. This event was another prime example of what the Dubai Chamber’s Centre for Responsible Business is trying to achieve – bringing cutting-edge thinking into the region and facilitating learning and debate amongst academics, practitioners and business leaders.
Leadership Matters Executive Management Critical Role in Endorsing CSR

Leadership is critical in any organization, and it is especially important in the area of CSR, where initiatives will be new and organizations may be entering previously uncharted areas. In this section we highlight one valuable study of leadership approach. We hope it provides guidance to build and reinforce successful leadership in CSR programs.

Consider the following findings from the Hay Group: Research conducted worldwide shows that leadership contributes to 70% of corporate atmosphere, while corporate atmosphere contributes to 30% of corporate performance. Therefore, leadership can exert direct influence on 21% of corporate performance. The first conclusion reinforces that leadership does have a significant impact on organizational performance. But the second conclusion tells us that leadership development in regional companies really has a long way to go. Sustainable business leaders are evaluating new markets, new products, and going after the most innovative people. At a high level, these organizations are defined by common characteristics:

- Company has a genuine commitment to sustainability by management at the highest level, with sustainability principles present in core values and business strategies.
- Sustainability strategies are cascaded down through management and are incorporated into organizational and individual performance goals.
- Employees are informed, motivated, and actively engaged in the company’s sustainability program.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for sustainability are fully integrated into the business processes, corporate performance, and employee recognition.
- Company has active dialog with key stakeholders on sustainability issues, including customer to understand how sustainability issues relate to different market segments.
- Product stewardship is integrated into the development process, with production and procurement decision-making supporting more sustainable choices.
- A Supply Chain Management strategy that aligns company and supplier performance targets to deliver a sustainable supply and stimulate product innovation.
- Business risks and opportunities associated with sustainable development are well-understood and communicated to key stakeholders, especially investors.
- Defined strategies to ensure business sustainability initiatives add value both to the company and community and to the business.
- Transparent reporting on sustainability concepts and sensitive issues, with both positive and negative results.

### CRB Tip

**Communication**

Communicating what your organization stands for in CSR is an essential strategy for current and potential business. It will have a direct and positive impact on the bottom-line as it opens up new business opportunities. Be clear and consistent about the messages that you communicate. The effective use of targeting different audiences is critical. Appropriately address each market in language and methods that speak best to them. Consistency in messaging is critical as is both short-term and long-term thinking and strategies. Communications needs to be open, honest, and transparent. Leaders need to show a sense of self-awareness and authenticity.

The CEO and senior management need to set the stage with consistent messages and demonstrate a clear vision and mission, passion, and ongoing commitment to CSR. Summarizing the vision and mission in one or two sentences is ideal.

### Sustainability Network

**CEO CSR Seminar**

Dubai Chamber launched its Sustainability Network in 2010. The objective of this network is to advance CSR and Sustainability in the UAE, promote and internalize CSR best practices and to build CSR based competitive advantages and business reputation. This network offers its members the opportunity to network, share experiences and demonstrate CSR and Sustainability leadership.

Under this network, the first Sustainability Network Seminar was held on 29 May and brought together top executives from Aramex, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Intercoil International, Puma Middle East and Unilever MENA to share their CSR journeys and provide an insight into the integration of strategies and business processes to support CSR and Sustainability within their companies. This event also saw our Network members come together for the first time since its launch.

Throughout this seminar businesses were able to gain a better understanding of CSR viewpoint from the leadership level. The seminar provided a forum for leading global CEOs to share their priorities and insights on to a high-level audience of businesses and media.

Topics under discussion ranged from the importance of responsible leadership to how sustainability can strengthen a company’s reputation in the marketplace. The role of the private sector in leading the CSR and sustainability drive was also highlighted during the seminar.

Members of the network – include Aramex, Saeed & Mohammed Al Naboobah Group, Pepsico, Sarasin Alpen, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Puma, Unilever and Alpen Capital. More companies are set to join this year.

This seminar highlighted the role of business in demonstrating CSR action and...
Dubai Dialogue Responsible Recovery

The fourth Dubai Dialogue: Responsible Recovery organised by Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Centre for Responsible Business held on Wednesday, April 27 was a resounding success. Inaugurated by H.E. Hisham Al Shirawi, 2nd Vice Chairman, Dubai Chamber, over 200 attended the conference which examined the subject of responsible recovery post global economic crisis and how companies can profit and prosper by adopting sustainable practices.

Presentations on Economic Recovery, Local and Regional Indicators and Challenges by H.E. Hamad Buamim, Director General, Dubai Chamber and other leading CSR and Business experts including Mallen Baker of Business Respect; Masood Razaq of GoodGate; Gerald Lawless of Jumeirah Group and Dr Alan Knight of Single Planet Living, spoke on CSR and Sustainability in the recovery phase, and debated on ‘What Comes First, Sustainability or Economic Growth?’

The main goal of the conference this year was to look at how organizations can use the post crisis conditions to ‘recover responsibly’. It looked at new measures and checks that companies can put in place to ensure that their organizations are mitigating future risks.

The conference also looked deeper into the concept and practices of CSR – basics and understanding the applications in various areas of an organization. The conference examined the myths and the business case for CSR and discussed whether or not the impact of the financial crisis would have been as strong had more robust CSR models been in place. Opportunities CSR could provide to lay the groundwork for new and improved ways of doing business post crisis were also examined.

Healthy Workplace, Healthy Community
Implementing Wellbeing Practices at the Workplace

Dubai Chamber in Strategic Collaboration with Johnson & Johnson, TNT Express, Barclays and DLA Piper ME has launched a first of its kind initiative themed ‘Healthy Workplace, Healthy Community’ that focuses on Wellbeing at the Workplace. This initiative has seen the companies come together to develop a Wellbeing Guidebook with case examples which other companies can use to develop and implement wellbeing programs within their organizations and within the community.

As a part of this initiative the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Centre for Responsible Business organized a seminar and expert class themed Healthy Workplace, Healthy Community - Implementing Wellbeing in the Workplace at the Chamber head office.

The event saw around 100 professionals from public and private sector companies come together to learn and interact on wellbeing practices in the workplace.

This seminar focused on the importance of Wellness at the Workplace and the impact on business and Community. The seminar covered various aspects of starting, planning and implementing a Wellbeing Program in the workplace.

Conducted Centre for Responsible Business, and DLA Piper Middle East, the seminar also included case studies presentation TNT and Johnson & Johnson. The seminar also had demonstrations in Chair Yoga by Prime Medical Centre and Breathing Exercises by Art of Living.

This seminar also saw the launch of the Wellbeing Guidebook itself which serves as a starter kit for any business that is looking at beginning or expanding Workplace Wellbeing Programs. This guidebook aims to develop the understanding and capacity of businesses to implement and contribute towards Wellbeing in the Workplace through Responsible Business practices.

It provides implementation methods and resources for wellbeing initiatives in the workplace directly to the business community and other stakeholders free of charge.

These peer reviewed guides are customized, based on local requirements for wellbeing initiatives, and are relevant to the UAE.
The First Dubai Chamber CSR Label Ceremony
Recognizing Leadership

On May 5 2011, in a special ceremony held at the Dubai Chamber main offices, Emirates Gas, Intercoil, and Mashreq Bank received the Dubai Chamber CSR Label. Developed by the Dubai Chamber Centre for Responsible Business. The Label brings credibility to the reputation of the awarded companies and ensures that companies formalize their CSR commitment showing that they do more than just making profit; they do it bearing the specific importance of the company with regard to its relationships with the community, staff, environment and customers.

During the ceremony, H.E. Hamad Buamim, Director General of the Dubai Chamber, stressed on the fact that the awarded companies were from different sizes, sectors and corporate cultures which proves that CSR practices can be adopted and implemented by large and small companies alike.

More companies than ever understand now the comprehensive approach of CSR. The gap between the corporate communication and the operational reality is decreasing but the road is still long. The Dubai Chamber CSR Label will definitively help companies that want to manage efficiently this global trend that impacts all organizations.

The Dubai Chamber CSR Label
CSR Toolkits

To provide support to companies interested in the Dubai Chamber CSR Label, CRB has developed six CSR Toolkits to assist them in becoming more competitive and innovative in addressing their social and environmental impact. The toolkit includes separate guidebooks on:

Communication: this toolkit provides guidance on designing the right internal and external communication plan to make stakeholders aware of the companies social and environmental behavior.

Marketplace: this toolkit outlines the business case for implementing responsible supply chain practices. It also explores evolving consumer behavior and expectations of organizations today.

Strategy and Stakeholder: this toolkit provides guidance on how to engage stakeholders in the development process of a CSR strategy/initiative. It is a management tool to guide the process and ensure successful implementation.

Environment: this toolkit outlines best practices for companies wishing to take a leadership position in the field of environmental management as well as for those who are just getting started.

Community: this toolkit outlines best practices for companies wishing to make a leadership position in the field of community investment.

Workplace: this toolkit outlines best practices for companies wishing to improve their diversity, health and safety standards, work culture, employee satisfaction and engagement, talent retention, ethics, attracting and retaining staff.