

The Festival Organiser's Guide To Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Part 2 of 3

By Dan Rose

DETAILING WHAT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS, HOW FESTIVALS ARE USING IT AND HOW YOU CAN IMPLEMENT A SUCCESSFUL CSR STRATEGY WHEN PLANNING A FESTIVAL

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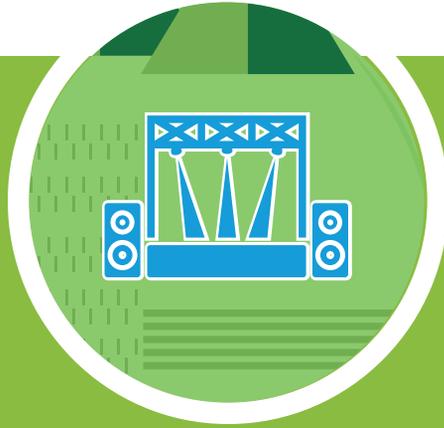
TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CSR STRATEGY

WHAT IS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

THE BENEFITS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE

HOW FESTIVALS AND SHOWS USE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



In Part 1 of this article, we discussed what is corporate social responsibility, highlighting the ISO 26000 CSR Guidelines, CSR and the Community, the Environment, the Economy and more.

In Part 2 you will learn about how festivals and shows use corporate social responsibility to their advantage including a case study on how Glastonbury, a leading UK festival implements CSR.

HOW FESTIVALS AND SHOWS USE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THEIR ADVANTAGE

There is no denying that the most successful festivals have incorporated corporate social responsibility into their activities and that it is having a positive effect on the environment, community and economy. We have spoken to some of the top festivals and shows in the UK and - along with our survey and secondary research - have discovered not only how and why festivals are incorporating CSR but what their views on the subject are too.

WHAT FESTIVAL ORGANISERS HAVE TO SAY

Throughout our research we have spoken to a number of festival organisers to get their opinions on the importance of CSR and to find out how they include CSR within their festival. We have conducted a survey, spoken directly to festival organisers and carried out research online to discover how CSR is being used and perceived within this industry.

66% of festival organisers say CSR is of high priority to their festival

We asked our survey respondents (all of whom are festival organisers) exactly how much of a priority corporate social responsibility is to their festival/show. With 66% of respondents indicating that CSR is of high priority to them, it is clear to see how engrained CSR is into the festival culture. Each festival has their own way of implementing CSR activities and all of them agree that these activities help to strengthen relationships with the audience and increases their audiences' loyalty to the festival itself.

As we have already mentioned, CSR activities are not primarily a strategy for increasing profits, however they do have a knock on effect which can result in a financial gain (we will talk more about this later). With 83% of our survey respondents stating that CSR activities do have a positive effect on their bottom line, it is quite apparent that if you implement CSR effectively then it doesn't have to eat into your budget with no return on investment.

One of the main reasons the festival organisers we spoke to said that CSR benefitted them was by improving relationships within the community. One organiser said "We involve the community in as many activities as possible. We give generously to charity and provide free sessions for young people to get involved in sport for free. We also celebrate with a family fun day at the end of the sessions where we support local businesses through trade and by inviting them to attend." The local community are important to this festival and the organisers do what they can to maintain a positive relationship with them. Also stating that these types of activities are "Very effective in getting more people involved in a community activity" which is one of the main goals of the festival.

It is clear to see that even larger festivals, for example Boomtown Fair, which has a capacity of around 50,000 people, are committed to improving relationships with the local community, as they say on their website, "Since finding our home at the Matterley Estate in 2011 we have been working hard to give back to (the) local community as much as possible and have donated over £30,000 directly to charity projects and organisations around the Winchester area and to the parishes near the festival site.

"Each year we look to get more and

more local people involved in the festival, from volunteering as stewards, working as part of the onsite team, trader, supplier or as external contractors." This level of investment into the local community demonstrates how important a good relationship with the local community is for a festival to succeed and to be accepted as a positive force in the area.

Maintaining and Promoting Ethical Standards

Another reoccurring theme that came up in our research was the importance of CSR activities when maintaining, promoting and encouraging high ethical standards. A representative of Vegfest UK, Europe's biggest vegan festival, told us that ethical issues were the most important aspect of CSR for their festival and that their main aim was to "Support veganism (and) the abolishment of using animals as food sources". They also stated that they are seeing "More and more attendees supporting the vegan philosophy" which indicates that their CSR activities are at the very core of their festival and that they are working in order to achieve their goals.

We also spoke to Farmfestival to get their view on ethical standards within their festival. They said, "We have turned down sponsorship from several large corporations that do not fit with our ethical values". This is a great example of a festival sticking to their core values and remaining socially responsible instead of sacrificing their beliefs for financial gain.

Improving Environmental Impact

Most of the festivals we spoke to mentioned the importance of festivals improving their impact on the environment in some way. One organiser saying "I certainly believe all should be trying to minimise the negative environmental effects of events". This

belief is repeated throughout the industry. Farmfestival also agreed and gave us an insight into how they are reducing their impact on the environment by "Increasing levels of recycling and trying to use local contractors to cut transport costs and environmental impacts". This is one of the most important areas of CSR when it comes to festivals and this has become increasingly apparent throughout our research.

HOW THE LEADING UK FESTIVAL IMPLEMENTS CSR

With such an environmentally conscious audience, it is wise for leading festivals to participate in CSR activities, especially CSR tactics regarding the environment. Find out how the leading UK festival, Glastonbury, implements CSR.

GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL

Glastonbury Festival is one of the best at implementing corporate social responsibility strategies. With the festival's organiser, Michael Eavis, being from a humble, farming background, his sense of social responsibility has come naturally to him and the festival is focused on pleasure over profit.

Glastonbury is particularly active when it comes to addressing their environmental responsibilities. In addition to their efforts to cut emissions for festival attendees travelling to the event, Glastonbury Festival is keen to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and therefore regulates what staff, contractors, sponsors and traders bring into the venue.

Recycling at Glastonbury

Glastonbury is also active in its recycling efforts, with half of all waste generated at the 2014 festival being recycled (around 983 tonnes of waste). The total cost of cleaning up after the event is £780,000, which is money that could be better spent elsewhere, so Glastonbury try to encourage people to clean up after themselves with various campaigns, such as the Love Worthy Farm, Leave No Trace and Take It Don't Leave It.

83% of festival organisers find that CSR activities have a positive effect on their bottom line

86% of festival organisers say that the main benefit they see from CSR activities is improved relationships with the community

Sustainable Energy at Glastonbury

There is also a real effort to use sustainable energy sources in order to power the festival. Solar power and wind power are used for the Theatre and Circus and Shangri-La areas, as well as all the cafes, stalls showers and stages above the old railway line in the Green Fields.

Combine that with the use of hybrid generators and Glastonbury is certainly looking more and more like a 'green festival'. Worthy Farm (Glastonbury's location) also has the largest privately owned solar PV array in the UK, with 1,500 square metres of solar panels generating around 250KW of power on a sunny day which is used to power the farm, with any remaining energy being redirected to the National Grid.

Reducing Water Usage at Glastonbury

Glastonbury Festival also concentrates efforts on preserving water and reducing its usage at the festival. Their 'Don't Waste A Drop' campaign encourages attendees to conserve water and cut down on their usage for non-essential tasks such as cleaning mud off boots. They have even built their own reservoir that holds 1 million litres of water with plans to build another one and have introduced a reusable water bottle which is available on site to reduce plastic bottle wastage.

Glastonbury's Social and Community Responsibilities

The list of environmental protection methods used by Glastonbury is vast, from reducing road deliveries and CO2 emissions to planting trees and providing compost toilets. Social and community responsibilities are also a priority for the festival: for starters, all tea, coffee, sugar and hot chocolate sold on site is Fairtrade, with stallholders being actively encouraged to stock Fairtrade products. This shows Glastonbury's commitment to the social wellbeing of those providing these goods.

Glastonbury and the Local Community

In terms of the local community, Glastonbury Festival contributes a

substantial amount of time and money into the renovation and rejuvenation of the area. For example, since the year 2000, Glastonbury Festival has built the new Pilton Working Men's club, a football pitch, tennis courts and pavilion in Pilton Playing Field and has completed a housing project which provides affordable homes for the offspring of villagers who cannot afford Pilton prices.

They have also renovated and repaired numerous buildings, including the Glastonbury Abbey Tythe Barn, Pilton Paris Church, Pilton Methodist Chapel, Glastonbury Library and several footpaths and children's play areas. The festival's organiser, Michael Eaves also employs people all year round to keep the area clean and tidy by litter picking, clearing streams and ditches and removing graffiti, amongst other jobs.

The local community benefits economically from the festival too. Records show that Glastonbury Festival spent over £6 million with local companies in 2007, with the net value of the festival, including spend from attendees in the local area, being valued at over £35 million in the Mendip area.

The local community aren't the only ones to benefit financially though, as the festival donates a generous sum to

several different charities, including Oxfam, WaterAid and Greenpeace. These charities are given the opportunity to take part in the festival itself, enabling them to recruit like-minded people and spread the word of their message further.

Glastonbury Festival is a shining example of how festivals and shows can take part in corporate social responsibility activities which benefit the environment, community, economy and social wellbeing of all those involved. Depending on the size of your festival, it may be unrealistic to try and cover as many areas as Glastonbury does, however it is advisable to find at least one area, for example the environment, and concentrate your efforts there.

In Part 3 of this article, you will learn about corporate social responsibility and your bottom line, the benefits of corporate social responsibility and top tips for creating a successful corporate social responsibility strategy.

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A study by 'a greener festival' in 2006 indicated that 74% of festival goers agree or strongly agree that festivals should implement environmentally friendly practices, and 91% agreed that festival organisers should be responsible for minimising the festival's effect on the environment.