

# The Festival Organiser's Guide To Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Part 3 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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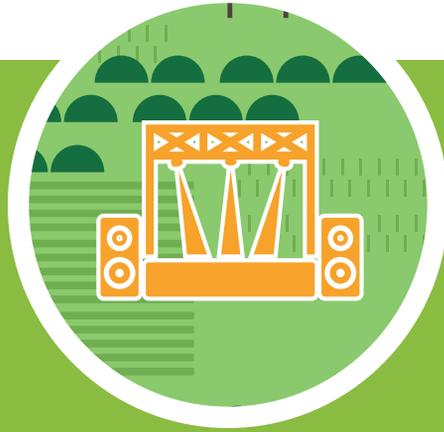
TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CSR STRATEGY

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 of this article, we talked about how festivals and shows use corporate social responsibility to their advantage and highlighted a case study on how Glastonbury, a leading UK festival implements CSR.

In Part 3 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.

## **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE**

The purpose of implementing corporate social responsibility within your festival's activities is not specifically for increasing profit, however the results of your activities can lead to improved efficiency and an increased audience, therefore improving your revenue stream.

Here are just a few advantages CSR offers which can have positive results to your bottom line. discover how CSR is being used and perceived within this industry.

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### Enhanced Reputation

One of the main benefits to any festival or show participating in socially responsible activities is that it enhances their reputation. This is especially true when the festival makes a contribution to the local community which leaves the local people singing the festival's praises.

For example, Bestival has an onsite shop which sources all of its produce from local traders, essentially acting as a wholesaler for them. This keeps local people happy as the festival is contributing to the local economy. This also increases the festival's bottom line as socially conscious attendees are happier to purchase products from the on-site shop knowing that it results in a positive contribution to the local community.

Each type of activity, from the environmentally friendly to the socially responsible, enhances the festival's reputation in the eyes of potential attendees and may be the tipping point to convince people to buy a ticket.

These actions can also result in specific awards, such as the internationally renowned 'A Greener Festival Award', which Shambala Festival has won four times, successfully cementing its reputation as a 'green' festival.

### Differentiating From Competitors

Each festival attracts a certain audience demographic, from lovers of folk music or cheese and wine enthusiasts. There are still many options for festival go-ers to choose from and any factor which differentiates your festival from the competition is going to put you at an advantage.

If your audience is environmentally conscious and wants to attend the most environmentally friendly festival, they may be more willing to attend Wood

Festival over the competitors, as Wood Festival is 100% powered by renewable energy and has been described as "a beacon of environmental sustainability" by Julie's Bicycle, a leading global charity bridging the gap between environmental sustainability and the creative industry.

### Promoting Socially Responsible Actions

It's important for each festival to promote their socially responsible activities in order to let their audience make a fully informed decision when choosing which festival to attend. Any awards won for environmentally or socially friendly behaviour might just be the differentiator that encourages your audience to attend your festival over the competitors.

### Attract Highly Qualified Staff & Popular Acts

Improving your bottom line doesn't just come from the financial contributions of attendees; it also comes from the efficiency of your team and the attractiveness of the acts performing at your festival.

Festivals that treat their staff well, pay a fair wage and offer something extra are more likely to attract experienced, hardworking team members whose efficiency will ensure that tickets sell out, the event runs smoothly and the post-event clean up is performed efficiently. This contributes to the overall bottom line of the festival as money is not wasted through unsold tickets, mishaps during the festival and inefficient processes.

It is also key to the success of each festival to attract the right entertainment and a good CSR strategy can make this happen. Glastonbury is a great example of attracting talent with the right CSR

strategy, as Paul McCartney reportedly accepted a fee of just £200,000 instead of his usual asking price of £4 million. This is because Paul McCartney knew that Glastonbury wasn't trying to profit from him as all proceeds generated go to charity.

### Charge a Premium

Festival go-ers realise that it costs more for a festival to adhere to environmentally friendly practices and for the most part they will be willing to pay a little extra for their ticket in order to support renewable energy, reduced waste and a cleaner festival. A 2015 survey by Nielson revealed that 72% of respondents aged between 15 and 20 are willing to pay more for products and services from companies who are committed to positive social and environmental activities. An increase in awareness and education of these topics has resulted in a generation of people who want to make a conscious effort to preserve the planet.

### The Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility

Besides the aforementioned benefits to your bottom line, corporate social responsibility can have a positive effect on various other aspects of your business. A well thought out corporate social responsibility strategy can springboard your festival into the mainstream and engage your audience in a truly meaningful way.

### Happier Workforce

When you implement CSR strategies that ensure your staff are treated fairly and offered a working environment that suits their personal needs, you end up with a happier workforce which offers a real benefit to your festival. A study by the University of Warwick found that happy employees were 12% more productive, while unhappy workers were 10% less productive. Encouraging positive working relationships, a healthy work-life balance and offering added incentives to your staff will make them advocates of your festival, which will increase your audience and improve your reputation.

### Building Relationships

CSR is a great tool to help your festival build relationships with other organisations and communities. Supporting charities gives you access to their audience and marketing channels whilst portraying your festival in an empathetic and socially responsible light.

You may also want to connect with other businesses in order to implement a joint CSR strategy and any involvement with the local community builds stronger

relationships with local businesses which can result in discounted goods and a more tolerant community.

### Public Relations

CSR activities are something to shout about, therefore they make fantastic PR. Consumers are tired of companies and festivals shoving sales messages under their noses all the time. Taking part in CSR activities gives your festival a positive message to send out to the world that isn't sales-focused, but simply promotes the good work you have been doing, which people will be much more interested in.

### Positive Impact

Despite all the benefits CSR has in a business sense, it shouldn't be forgotten that the purpose of these activities is to have a positive impact on the environment and the community as a whole. Reducing emissions, increasing recycling efforts and using renewable energy sources all have a positive impact on the health of our planet, which is something all businesses should be working towards in the modern world. Supporting local communities ensures that the social wellbeing of those most impacted by the festival is looked after.



## TOP TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

While corporate social responsibility is not a new concept, many businesses, shows and festivals alike struggle to get a CSR strategy off the ground. This is sometimes due to a lack of direction or information available regarding CSR strategies. Here are five top tips for implementing CSR within your festival or business and how you can make it a success.

### 1 Assign a Budget for CSR Activities

You will struggle to have a successful CSR campaign without spending any money, so when planning your budgets you should always set something aside specifically for CSR activities.

Try to have an idea of what it is you want to achieve through

your CSR activities and this will help you decide how much of a budget you need to assign.

Remember that CSR can be investment if implemented correctly and while it is not used to generate profit, it has many benefits that can improve your bottom line.

### 2 Align Your Csr Strategy With Your Company Values

Most businesses have a clear set of values which they live by. These values help to define the personality of the brand and give everyone involved an idea of the way the business likes to operate. When creating a CSR strategy, it's important to take these values into consideration and ensure that your approach to CSR aligns well with your values. For example, if one of your core values is to be respectful, your CSR strategy may include a clean-up of the local community after your festival in order to show respect to the community.

### 3 Choose A Key Area To Focus On

Depending on the nature of your festival, be it a music festival, beer festival, food festival or any other, there may be a specific area of CSR you feel it would be most appropriate to concentrate on. For example, if your music festival directly impacts the local community through noise pollution and traffic congestion, you may want to consider concentrating your CSR efforts on improving relationships with the local community.

If you run a beer festival which uses a large amount of plastic cups, you may want to concentrate your efforts on an environmentally friendly recycling campaign. Decide what is most important to you and your audience and concentrate on that instead of trying to cover every angle.

### 4 Encourage Involvement From All Staff

The only way to ensure your CSR strategy is a true success is to educate all staff members, from the top to the bottom, and to encourage their involvement with CSR activities.

Your staff members represent the festival's brand and if they are not on board with your CSR activities, your chances of success are much lower. Training staff on the reasons why you are using CSR and getting them to partake in activities will help to get them on board and will encourage positive growth of your CSR strategy.

### 5 Promote Your Csr Activities

Although CSR is not implemented purely for public approval, it is certainly something to shout about. Let your audience and critics know what you are doing to improve your impact on the planet and use those activities to draw attention to your festival.

Festival go-ers are traditionally eco-friendly and community minded, therefore releasing details of your CSR activities will ensure your brand resonates with the audience well. Your festival's website is the ideal place to promote these activities, as well as on partner sites.

### Your Next Step

Taking influence from the most successful festivals will help take your festival to the next level.

Appealing to all stakeholders and their needs, wants and values ensures that their interest in your festival continues to grow, which in turn encourages growth and development of the festival itself. If your festival isn't already participating in social responsible behaviour, it might be time to start considering it.

A great starting point is to do in-depth research, particularly when it comes to your audience. There is no point in blindly attempting to take action in order to impress your audience; you need to know what matters to them and where the most negative impacts of your festival are perceived, and rectify them.

You also need to know what your objectives are. Setting KPIs will keep your strategy on track. Perhaps you want to recycle 50% of all waste at your festival, or you aim to get a local building rebuilt or renovated in a certain time period.

These objectives will give your strategy direction. Whatever you decide, your festival does have a responsibility to rectify any negative impact and maximise the positive impacts it has on the world. Corporate social responsibility is something all festivals should concentrate on going forward in order for us to continue enjoying these fantastic events in beautiful locations across the world.

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