

Steps to Creating a Social Responsibility Program

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

We've discussed how important being socially responsible can be for a company. So, how does a company ensure that it acts in a socially responsible way? This tutorial will provide an overview of the steps to implementing a social responsibility program. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Steps in a Social Responsibility Program

A company can set up a social responsibility program to ensure that it acts in a socially responsible way. There are six different steps in setting up a social responsibility program:



STEP BY STEP

Step 0: Need Recognition:

Let's start with 0, because this first one is a pre-step, in a way. This step is need recognition, meaning that someone in the organization or a client notices that there's a need for a social responsibility program, or that there is a deficiency in the company's current social responsibility program.

Step 1: Planning:

This is where the goals and objectives, the funding, and the scope of the program come into play. Now, in planning this particular step, it's vital that the leadership and the higher-ups in the company get involved. If a program--any program--is going to succeed, it must start from the top of the company.

Step 2: Action:

Next is action, or implementing the program. This involves getting the program started and off the ground.

Step 3: Results:

Then, you want to look at the results that the program is generating. It's important to clearly identify measurable results that you can then track and observe, to see if you're hitting your desired targets. Often, this is accomplished with a committee within the organization that is committed specifically to that program.

Step 4: Ongoing Leadership:

In this step, the company sets up a clear organization of responsibilities to the program to ensure it stays on track.

Step 5: Follow-Through:

Lastly, you want to check the program and make sure that it's being followed. You'll need to conduct audits, and when you find instances where the program isn't succeeding as well as it should, you'll need to alter and refine the practices that are involved, to ensure that the company stays on track.

IN CONTEXT

Suppose your company wants to set up a recycling program.



Step 0: Need Recognition.

Someone inside or outside the organization recognizes that you have a need for a recycling program. You are simply putting too much of your recyclable material into landfills, and it's creating a missed opportunity for your company.

Step 1: Planning.

Next, you want to plan, so you find someone who's higher up to serve as a champion for this particular program. You also want to look at the goals: What do you want to do? Do you want to separate specific recyclables, or do you want to try to combine all of them? How much recycling do you want to pull out of the landfill? What is the measurable reduction in the trash that you want to see when this program is fully implemented? Note, typically that champion is going to be the one driving the planning for these goals and objectives, including how much it's going to cost, or--if you're lucky--how much it's going to save you in the end.

Step 2: Action.

Next, implement the program.

Step 3: Results.

Look at the results. Are you hitting the targets that you originally planned for? Here, the champion will team up with a committee to look at the results to make sure you're accomplishing your goals.

Step 4: Ongoing Leadership.

There should be a clear delineation of responsibilities for the program so that it stays on track.

Step 5: Follow-Through.

Finally, once the program is in place and running, you want to make sure that you continue the

success that the program has brought to your company.

Now, these steps are going to be true regardless of what size company you have. With small businesses, it's easy to get distracted by the day-to-day operation of the business. If you remember, partnerships and sole proprietors have limited resources on their hands, as far as personnel is concerned, so they're going to be busy running the business. Keeping up with a recycling program in addition to those daily responsibilities can be a big distraction.

Larger businesses, however, have their own issues. Often, they'll need to roll out the program in multiple phases and across different locations. For instance, if you have a recycling program that you're trying to implement in stores across the country, that's a big task and simply can't be done all at once.

2. Change Management

Now, what is change management? People get comfortable in certain situations, and they're typically resistant to change. If you're going to implement any type of change within an organization, you'll need to manage that change.

We'll cover this in much more detail in a later tutorial, but especially with a social responsibility program, it's important to have a change management team to ensure that the program works and is accepted throughout the organization.

In this case, leadership is absolutely vital, and not just a leader for the team. You will need the approval and support of higher-ups and executive management in any company to help drive this change. If the leadership doesn't set the tone and create an environment that is adaptable to the change, then it simply won't happen.



SUMMARY

Today, we learned about the **steps in a social responsibility plan**, focusing on the six steps to follow in setting up a social responsibility program. We explored a social responsibility program in practice, in our example with a recycling program. Lastly, we learned about **change management**.

Good luck!

Source: adapted from sophia instructor james howard