

CSR Lab facilitated by:

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42B- The networked firm: a more responsible company?

CONTEXT

The development of global value chains, outside of a proper legal framework, has fostered the development of companies organized in a network. New forms of cooperation are appearing, shifting the perimeter of responsibility. How is responsibility organized within these networked firms? Are they better able to take into account the interests of the stakeholders?

SYNTHESIS OF DEBATES AND/OR CONCRETE PROPOSALS

After this CSR LAB, the conclusion is clear: yes, the networked firm is a more responsible company. Indeed, the networked firm is a new manifestation of the “commercial revolution”. CSR influences the firms’ behaviors and brings about international agreements for labor rights.

According to Christophe LEGRAVEREND, the definition of network comprises the whole manufacturing process, from the conception of the raw material to the final sale to the client (vertical). More recently, it also includes the relations between the company and its partners such as the suppliers, the NGOs and the consumer associations (e.g. WWF) (horizontal).

The current legal framework demands to work in a network in order for the value chain to be fully transparent. The data needs to be protected and secured, and the supply chained monitored so as to respond to the expectations of safety, loyalty, environment and monitoring of the products.

Nowadays, the collaborative management influences CSR and so the management of the value chain. Multinationals and their subsidiaries, particularly subsidiaries in countries where labor is cheap, must cooperate together to improve working conditions.

The CSR questions the precarious conditions of the assembly-line workers who are ready to accept dangerous workplace to earn just enough to feed their families.

Following the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory on the 24th of April 2013, on the 15th of May 2013, the “Bangladesh Accord Foundation” was founded. Its goal is to raise awareness on the working conditions of the worker bees. Firms, Brands and trade-unions have signed an agreement to rearrange the working environment in a safe and healthy workplace in order to prevent tragic events like this one (which killed 1134 employees) from happening again.

However, despite such an agreement, it is important to set up tools to daily monitor the good implementation of the rules by all the signatories. If the firm was to fail to respect the agreement, it would lose the right to use the brand's name.

To that day, 1600 factories have been assessed, which constitutes a third of the factories in Bangladesh. 70% of the issues have been resolved.

To conclude, today, a new mode of management has emerged: the « supply chain management », which allows for a closer collaboration between the buyer and the stakeholders.

THEIR WORDS

« There is no such thing as « zero defect » » (C. LEGRAVEREND, Carrefour)

« Today, we must be responsible. » (C. LEGRAVEREND, Carrefour)

To discover more (indicate useful links or mentioned referral during the CSR Lab)

- Books
- Meeting
- Website
- Studies