

**Bringing CSR into 2009**

15<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Happy New Year 2009! Unfortunately this year has not had the best spring board due to the continuing economic downturn and post festive-season-spending reality checks.

Inevitably companies are looking to cut back on those areas which do not show up as the absolute essentials and in previous times one could have argued that the corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda was undoubtedly one of the first 'nice-to-haves' to go. Nowadays though, organisations are realising the benefits of sustainability and leading corporations are telling a different story.

Forerunners who have already built [Sustainability and Responsibility](#) into their culture are now realising the long term and robust benefits of their efficiency. For them it is not even an option to cut costs in CSR; it is so deeply a part of their workings that environmental, social, ethical and economic efficiency are all 'absolute essentials'. But what about those so-called 'greenwashers'? The economic downturn may actually flush much of the superficial aspects of the sustainability agenda which are now unaffordable and present no real benefits. Actually, sustainability may have an opportunity to take advantage of the financial crisis and in fact present a true opportunity for branding, reputation, ethics, and 'corporate citizenship'.

Still, [CSR and Sustainability](#) must continue to prove their value in order to survive the storm. Long term commitment and pro-action will be critical for organizations who intend to weather the economic climate and prosper in a sustainable future. There is no escape or question that organizations will continue to be under economic strain in the near future, but hopefully tempting, immediate savings from reducing their consumption of, for example, energy, water, waste will pave the way and bring to light the efficiency and benefits of investing in sustainability.

"There is no escaping the crisis," says Neela Bettridge, "but it will be interesting to see which companies will be actually walking the walk, and the business benefits and innovation they display in the coming year"

2009 may well prove a difficult time for most businesses bottom-line but will almost certainly provide business benefits for; organizations with CSR already ingrained in their operations; for those who introduce sustainability as a cost cutting measure; and for those already saving on the sustainability path where it just doesn't make sense to give up now!

For more information on how CSR can help your organization prosper in 2009, visit Article 13 at [www.article13.com](http://www.article13.com) or contact Fiona Banyard:

Email: [fionab@article13.com](mailto:fionab@article13.com)  
 Phone: +44 (0)20 8840 4450  
 Website: [www.article13.com](http://www.article13.com)

