

Corporate Social Responsibility Reports

The financial markets have always been interested in environmental issues and their potential impact on the health of a business. Increasingly, they are expanding their focus to include business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

As reported on sustainability.com, Dow Jones & Company has joined forces with Zurich-based Sustainable Asset Management to launch a ranking system of some 100 separate sustainability indexes. Dow Jones Sustainability Group is not alone: Sustainable development performance issues are increasingly covered in the portfolio screening for major socially responsible investment (SRI) funds. According to some estimates, the SRI sector is now worth over \$2 trillion in the United States and over \$25 billion in the United Kingdom.

Annual reports have generally included some content related to social responsibility, whether through charitable works, community involvement, commitment to diversity or environmental stewardship. But currently, they do not achieve the depth of content and information of a corporate sustainability report.

Leading multinationals see sustainability reports as far more than just public relations. Rather, they form an integral part of a company's competitive strategy and risk management. Today, many Fortune 100 companies publish sophisticated corporate sustainability reports annually.

In an era of heightened scrutiny and transparency, this is one area where management is able to act proactively and forcefully to get a different kind of message out about the viability, vitality and indispensable contributions of a business. It is a unique opportunity to enhance the public's confidence in your company's management, strategy and business model. - *Addison*

