

How are corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employing PWD in the open labor market connected?

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Corporate social responsibility in the current concept represents a coherent set of activities and practices that are an integral part of the social, environmental and economic aspects of a company's strategic management and are implemented beyond legal obligations in order to improve the living conditions of the company. This multi-dimensionality of social responsibility has been newly defined by the European Union as "the responsibility of companies for the impact of their activities on society."

Concepts of corporate social responsibility are usually based on the areas of environmental or sustainable development; most often they are the "calling card" of the social responsibility of a business. They are more visible, the trend is understandable. An often used form is philanthropy or volunteering.

Unjustly neglected is the social pillar, which requires a more complex approach, but which nevertheless contains considerable potential for the development of human resources, as well as for the internal and external relations of the firm, usable for building added social value and improving market position in the future. It does not have to concern only ethical behavior, charity or volunteer activities.

This manual for employing PWD in the open labor market is primarily focused on selected activities of the social pillar of CSR, with an emphasis on employing PWD, respecting equal opportunities, corporate philanthropy, volunteerism and diversity.

People with disabilities, potential employees, are typically a group of people disadvantaged in the labor market. The law remembers them. It requires employers to fulfill obligations of solidarity to support their entry into the workplace. For many reasons, this obligation is linked to a number of problems of a systemic nature. The focus on this category of disadvantaged people is representative of the possibility to validate the benefits of the social pillar of CSR (SP CSR). Practice shows that other categories of disadvantaged people can similarly be accommodated in the labor market, such as persons 55+, people within ethnic diversity, sexual diversity, and within other minorities.

The link between CSR and employing PWD increases the potential of the newly responsible competitiveness of companies in that:

- 1) it supports diversity in the form of integrating PWD and their potential in the labor market;
- 2) it contributes to the creation of new opportunities in the market for products and services that are made available to and proposed for both PWD and other disadvantaged groups in the labor market, and this is an important factor in resolving the problems of an aging population in the EU;
- 3) it strongly supports an inclusive society, where the involvement of PWD in the labor force is a key factor, where social innovation is seen as an important part of its development;

- 4) employing PWD is a part of CSR, whereby foreign “parent companies” introduce their Czech “subsidiaries” in the context of organizational culture.

Much has been said about employing PWD. From noncritical proclamations to the experience of disappointed employers under the slogan “Never more”. The contemporary concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) represents a coherent set of activities and practices in the economic, environmental and social fields, which are an integral part of managing corporate strategy and which are implemented above and beyond legal obligations and have a voluntary character.

The activities of the social pillar are diversified – from flexible forms of employment and providing care for mothers with preschool children to equal opportunities in the workplace. The social pillar, however, also includes the following activities: employing PWD, corporate philanthropy and volunteering, relationships with stakeholders, and diversity in the workplace. If we connect these activities to “user instructions” in the form of a practical manual, an interesting synergistic effect will occur, where the user receives, in addition to “user instructions” in the form of a description of the form and content of specific steps on how to proceed in employing PWD, how to proceed with the activities of corporate philanthropy and volunteering, how to approach relationships with stakeholders and with implementing the principles of diversity in the workplace, a tool to simulate the economic benefits from employing PWD for his own firm at www.spcsr.cz/kalkulacka2. This tool was developed and tested by a number of major employers in the open labor market, the same as these “user instructions” were created in the form of a manual with their suggestions.

This inclusion of selected activities of the social pillar of CSR in the manual makes it possible for employers in the open labor market to use these previously isolated and intuitively applied activities in their corporate strategies and in their corporate organizational culture. While for major employers this activity is a “de jure” and “de facto” subject of their professional interest, it is not among the corporate priorities of small and medium-sized companies with a staff of more than 25 employees in the open labor market. It is in the interests of both people with disabilities and companies themselves to change the present situation.

The project “Social pillar of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in relation to employing PWD in the open labor market” offers a comprehensive, clear and practically useful Manual on applying CSR principles in the field of human resources.

This material is thoroughly based on the needs and requirements of practice and will attempt to offer answers to these questions:

- What is the content of the social pillar of CSR?
- Who are people with disabilities, and what role can they have in your business?
- How much will it cost and what economic benefits can you expect?
- What to do and what not to forget.
- What are the specifics associated with the application of the most common forms of disability.
- How can philanthropy and volunteering be combined in the social pillar of CSR for employing PWD.
- How to communicate with stakeholders (partners involved) and the external environment.

The benefits of employing PWD for market positions in a company

The transparent and systematic integration of PWD into teams of coworkers may influence, according to the experience of the authors:

- the strengthening of the transparency and credibility of a company in terms of entities and persons involved in the activities of the company – “stakeholders”;
- higher attractiveness for investors and the company’s own employees;
- building a reputation and resulting strong position in the market;
- distinction from competitors, highlighting the “brand” for consumers;
- increasing productivity and employee loyalty;
- increasing turnover;
- increasing the offer and quality of products or services;
- enhancing the know-how and image of the company.

Creating the conditions for and employing persons with disabilities in a company is ethical and socially responsible. Such responsible entrepreneurs, often large and well known companies, are becoming more and more interested in this opportunity, usually in connection with building the image of a socially responsible business, which enhances their prestige, brand value, and therefore their competitiveness. Incorporating the employment of PWD in the product development of the firm can open the way to new customer segments. It begins with using suggestions and ideas up to directly engaging PWD in product development and focusing on the specific needs of customers from among people with disabilities.