

The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Our Sustainable Staffing Approach

As an award-winning staffing company, Indotronix Avani engages in various fields for a variety of clients. We see the effects of our work reflected, not just in the performance of the company and candidate but also in surrounding communities. We understand that we have a responsibility, outside staffing, to aid society. To truly understand how we approach this role, it is necessary for us to examine the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility.

In the 1960's, economists such as Milton Friedman argued against businesses playing a role in social investment arguing that an enterprise's sole responsibility is to "use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits"¹. This argument held little water when it was first proposed, and it holds even less merit now as it makes a fundamentally flawed assumption that a neat distinction can exist between "public social goals and private economic ones"².

Every large company, by virtue of its size alone, generates all kinds of social consequences from economic decisions. If this company responds to an economic recession by laying off employees, that has a direct and consequential effect on the individuals and the communities they are a part of. The environmental policies of mega corporations have direct, existential consequences for our descendants and the world they might live in. A corporation is thus caught in a "web of its own power" and thus "cannot claim neutrality"³. To quote a relatable adage "With great power comes great responsibility". Though popularized by the Spiderman comics and movies, this saying can be found throughout history, such as after the French revolution where it was spoken of in reference to the new leaders and representatives of the French people⁴.

In antiquity, social responsibility was expected from the ruling class and was called "*noblesse oblige*" (literally nobility obliges). A King had a responsibility to the betterment of his subjects' lives. Today, it can be said that the crown has been dethroned by the currency and the mantle of social responsibility has thus passed from monarchs and politicians to the companies and corporations.

At Indotronix Avani, we recognise our role and the responsibility that comes with it. Bowen states that the "social responsibilities of businessmen have meaning only in relation to the values and goals which we seek from our economic system"⁵. Therefore, the first question that should be asked is "What are those social goals that we, as a staffing agency, should value?".

¹ (Mitzinger, 1983)

² (Mitzinger, 1983)

³ (Mitzinger, 1983)

⁴ (quotereasearch, 2015)

⁵ (Bowen, 2013)

The Indotronix Avani Group (IAG) has committed to an annual pledge and we use these funds to answer that question in a variety of ways.

As advocates of equal opportunities, we strive to empower underprivileged children with access to primary school education, STEM learning, and personality development programs⁶. A few of our notable collaborations include:

- **Nigama Foundation:** A school funded and operated under the leadership of CEO Sameer Penakalapati for children who are orphans or whose parents cannot afford to care for them.
- **Edison Career & Technology High School:** Indotronix Avani has been actively involved with a program dedicated to providing access to STEM education for inner-city youth who lack the means but have the aptitude. We have sponsored over 30 children from Dale Carnegie training on Social Skills so that they may have better chances at employment after their trade training. We have learned that over 65% of those kids have gotten jobs as a result of these enhanced skills.
- **Red Cross Youth Club:** Indotronix Avani is an enthusiastic sponsor of the Red Cross Youth Club since these clubs provide the tools and experience needed for attaining strong leadership, communication, and community service skills.
- **YMCA Youth programs:** Indotronix Avani is proud to provide ongoing funding of various youth programs for children in need through the YMCA and their affiliated programs.
- **Saraswathi Vidya Mandir:** We sponsor the education and related costs for 50 kids over the past six years.
- **Covent House (Homeless Children in NYC):** We have engaged in an annual donation scheme to help homeless kids obtain access to housing and education.
- **Khan Academy:** We are dedicated supporters of free education and thus we have been contributing to Khan Academy, a celebrated open, online school, for the past 3 years.

The future of society is also inextricably linked to the health of our environment and thus, we assume responsibility for our carbon footprint and take active measures to reduce emissions wherever possible:

- **LED Certified Office Facilities:** Our large internal teams in India work from entirely LED certified facilities. We believe this investment into alternative technologies is a significant step in the right direction.
- **Going Paperless:** Over the last half-decade we have transitioned key parts of our operation online. Our entire onboarding process now happens electronically, and we have reduced our paper trail by over 80%.
- **Remote and Virtual:** Wherever possible we encourage web conferencing and virtual interaction to mitigate the emissions and costs associated with travel and in-person workspaces.

⁶ (Indotronix, 2023)

- **Environmental Programming:** We have plans to move towards a model where we associate the margins, we make on placements towards planting trees.

Lastly, any focused effort to build a sustainable effort must invest in ethical and fair policies. Everyone at the company is offered the **same opportunities to succeed** and are **compensated fairly** with benefits, accommodating for one's **work-life balance**. We have a **zero-tolerance policy for cases of workplace and sexual harassment, data theft or favoritism and bribing in our processes**. Everyone is held accountable for their conduct and actions. We take pride in being amongst the few companies of our size and calibre that are privately owned and perform **audited financial reporting**, with no special benefits package (health insurance, retirement savings account, flexible spending limits etc.) to the company's principal owner.

We believe that fair hiring policies that engage communities and promote diversity and inclusion are fundamental to a prosperous society. Thus, we have a strong commitment to diversity & inclusion, focusing on veterans. In the US and UK, we are making concerted efforts towards having veterans in the workforce. In the US, our head of veteran affairs is a veteran spouse, and, in the UK, it is a marine commando. 13% of our consultants are veterans themselves.

Indotronix Avani's company conduct, and sustainable staffing approach are focused on the future. As a staffing agency, we have our finger on the pulse of society. We see how its needs continue to evolve and what it requires from its workforce and employers. This insight puts us in a unique position, giving us the power to choose those candidates, employers and policies that can create positive and lasting social change.

Bibliography

Bowen, H. R. (2013). Economic Goals. In H. R. Bowen, *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* (p. 298). Iowa: University of Iowa Press.

Indotronix. (2023). *Giving Back*. Retrieved from iic.com: <https://www.iic.com/about/giving-back>

Mitzinger, H. (1983). The Case for Corporate Social Responsibility. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 13.

quoteresearch. (2015, 07 23). *With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility*. Retrieved from Quote Investigator: <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2015/07/23/great-power/>