



## CSR AND SHAPING OF VALUES FOR STAKEHOLDERS

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**Abstract:** The concept of an interest groups is strongly emphasized when defining the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, it is difficult to disagree with the thesis that an enterprises as an entities operating in the environment of other entities, which using a goods, should serve the interests of a broad group of a stakeholders. The article presents the concept of the CSR with particular emphasis on the needs of the stakeholders and ways of satisfying them on the example of Polish economic practice. According the data of research the enterprises in Poland pay attention on other groups of stakeholders (apart a customers) and take they into account in business practices.

**Keywords:** CSR, stakeholders, value for stakeholders, research's data

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### Introduction

The concept of corporate social responsibility was entered to business practice at least over a dozen years ago. The enterprises that can boast of a responsible approach to business, preparation of social reports are, first of all, large corporations, very often of a transnational nature. Popularization of the concept, also by co-financing CSR activities (e.g. under the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Program) has caused that it is also increasingly noticed by small and medium-sized enterprises operating in Poland. Enterprises are increasingly aware of the need to care not only for customers, but also for other groups of stakeholders, ie employees, suppliers, media, public administration and the local community.

The purpose of the article is to determine the degree of responsibility and activities of enterprises addressed to each stakeholders. The article assumes that enterprises operating in Poland undertake additional initiatives (in addition to the conditions laid down by law) for individual stakeholders.

### Place of the stakeholders and shareholders in the functioning of the enterprise

At the core of the concept of creating a value for a shareholders is the assumption that the company is a collection of capital resources owned by the shareholders. In practice, this means that the company is treated as the shareholders ownership and its main task is to provide value to its owners (Copeland 1994,

p. 8-30). According the assumptions that accompany this concept, the company's management staff should strive for two key objectives on behalf of shareholders:

- 1) generating the optimal level of dividend payments - profit for shareholders,
- 2) maximizing the market value of the enterprise.

In order for these goals to be mutually exclusive, the company striving to create a value have to be focused on maximizing the effects of investments so that the increase in capital employed causes more than a proportionate sales revenue (Howaniec, Waszkielewicz 2013, p. 228). Creating value for the stakeholders is exposed component as well as the attribute of business models (Brzóska, Jelonek 2015, p. 48) and managers should look for new instruments, which support the activities leading to increased efficiency of the organization (Brzozowska, Szymczyk 2017, p. 377).

The concept of interest groups is a competitive concept for the concept of enterprise's value growth. It assumes that the enterprises are not only for shareholders, but also for other interest groups, which include, among others, customers, employees, suppliers, media, public administration and the local community. According to this concept, business is treated as an integral part of society, not a separated field of a purely economic nature. The company's goal should therefore be to provide the value to all stakeholders, i.e. to balance the goals of all stakeholders and act in the interest of all groups.

Generally, groups of interest was divided into: internal ones, which can occur in particular departments, in various geographical locations, on different stages of hierarchy etc. and external ones, which are for example: customers, tradesmen, banks, professional relationships, state departments. We can also note division within groups of business into basic and secondary ones, with their social and beyond-social influence on the organization (Marcinkowska 2000, p. 20).

Taking into account above classifications, we can accept that the environment of firm consists of such groups of business as (Howaniec 2016a, p. 30).

- customers, who look on the enterprises by the prism of its market activities, brands, products, services, prices, promotion, publicities etc.,
- workers, who are interested in a work's conditions and facilities,
- suppliers, who are interested in honesty in cooperation and possibilities of common development of business – first of all they are interested in the rate of profits of cooperation, coming certainty from orders,
- media, which evaluate the firms by the prism of social business and administration personnel activities,
- public administration, which perceives the firms as a subjects creating work places and paying taxes,
- local community, which expects the responsibility in practise, regarding not only economic area, but social and charitable as well.

### **CSR vs. stakeholders**

The beginnings of the concept of social responsibility can be seen in the academic works of the 80s and 90s of the last century (Preston, Post 1975; Ackerman, Bauer 1976; Carroll 1979; Freeman 1984; Wartick, Cochran 1985;

Miles 1987). This concept is also the subject of research by Polish authors (Rok 2001; Rybak 2004; Korpus 2006; Żemigala 2007; Geryk 2010; and Bartkowiak 2011; Skowron-Grabowska et al. 2016). Regardless of the degree of popularization, this concept has become the norm that determines the way companies behave on the market not only in developed but also in developing countries (Howaniec 2016b, p. 32).

Corporate social responsibility, also known as a corporate conscience, a corporate citizenship, a sustainable corporate business or, finally, a Responsible Business (Wood 1991, p. 691-718), is understood as a voluntary consideration of social and environmental aspects in a business strategies and operations. However, it does not mean only meeting formal and legal requirements, but investing in a human resources, protecting the environment and maintaining a good relations with the broadly understood enterprise environment.

The stakeholders' aspect is the second (beyond the social and environmental aspect) emphasized in the definitions of corporate social responsibility.

The role of the business is not only generating a profits, but is a duty to meet the expectations of the business environment and balancing the interests of the groups that operate in it. In addition to achieving business objectives, the company should also take into account the social and environmental goals in its strategy. Only this activity allows to take responsibility for the effects of industry (Howaniec 2015, p. 222). But the environmental awareness of management staff is unfortunately weak and insignificant correlated with the eco-effectiveness of environmental practices (Seroka-Stolka, Nowakowska-Grunt 2012).

Therefore, the implementation of the CSR concept in the practice of an enterprise should be associated not only with the provide of value to clients, but also to other stakeholders of the company.

## Data and research methodology

Empirical studies were conducted in 2013-2015 on a sample of 180 enterprises from Silesia and Lesser provinces. The study was conducted in the form of a structured interview. Given the subject of the research used a convenient choice. After rejecting of invalid responses, the basis for the calculation were: 150 questionnaires. The sample characteristic is presented in *Table 1*.

**Table 1. The sample characteristic [%]**

Organizational position	Chief executive officer / Managing Director / Company owner	Chief marketing officer / Marketing department manager	Sales director / Sales manager	CSR specialist	Other
%	48,7	10,7	22,7	0,7	17,3
Formal status and structure of the company	Enterprise branch	One-company enterprise	Multi-company enterprise	Capital group	

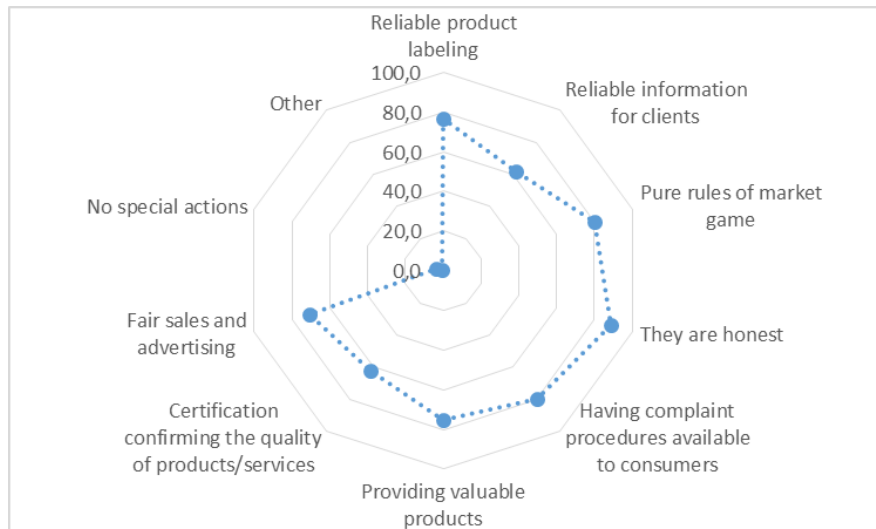
%	10,7	70,0	12,7	6,7
Financial condition	Very favorable	Favorable	Average	Difficult
%	7,3	57,3	29,3	6,0
Number of brands	One	From 2 to 3	From 4 to 6	7 or more
%	52,0	22,7	14,0	11,3
The employment	Below 10 people	10 - 49 people	50 - 249 people	More than 250 people
%	48,0	29,3	10,0	12,7
Company's size	Micro-enterprise	Small enterprise	Medium-sized enterprise	Large enterprise
%	44,0	35,3	10,0	10,7
The form of company ownership	Private	The state	Cooperative	
%	93,3	4,7	2,0	
Ownership supervision	Domestic	Foreign	Mixed	
%	86,0	6,0	8,0	

Source: Own study based on empirical research. N = 150

### Creation of value for stakeholders in the light of research

In the course of the research, the respondents were asked about the activity towards various groups of stakeholders. Analyzing the responses defining the actions taken by the companies for the benefit of clients, it can be clearly confirmed that clients constitute a special group for enterprises operating in Poland. In practice, this means, among others taking into account their expectations in planning and implementing marketing strategy.

The vast majority (almost 90% of asked) believe that they are honest to customers. A large group, because about three-quarters of respondents declare that they reliably mark their products (77%). A comparable number replied that they use a pure rules of market play (80%) and have complaint procedures available to consumers (80%). The respondents also believe that their products are valuable (75%) and apply the principles of fair sales and advertising (71%). Relatively many of the respondents apply certification confirming the quality of the products and services offered (63%) and as many as 62% believe that they reliably inform the customers. A very small number of respondents do not take special actions towards the clients, but this is only 4% of answerer (*Figure 1*).



**Figure 1. The activities of the enterprises directed to the clients [%]**

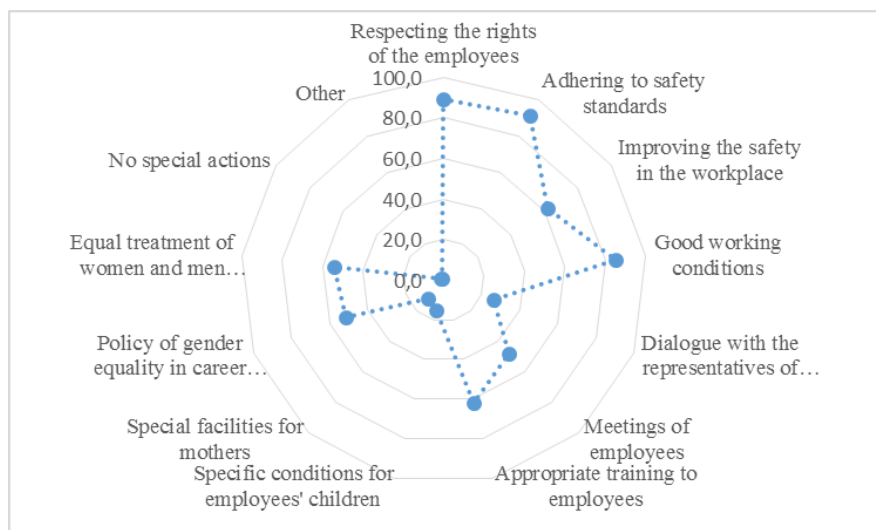
Source: Own study based on empirical research. N = 150

The enterprises operating in Poland pay large attention to employees. As many as 98% of respondents believe that they undertake additional activities for employees. Only 2% of responders indicated that they did not take specific actions in relation to this group.

According to the respondents entrepreneurs respect employees' rights - almost 90% of answers. They also highly assess compliance with health and safety standards and care for health and safety at work - 91.3% and improving safety in the workplace - 62%. Slightly less surveyed, but still very much - about 85%, think that good working conditions are provided. However, this group of activities is strongly related to the applicable provisions of law in the area of health and safety.

Almost half of the surveyed enterprises (48%) organize employee meetings (festivities, picnics). We can positive evaluate of the activity of enterprises in the area of employee training - as many as 62% declare that they provide appropriate training to employees. The respondents relatively high also assess the observance of the gender equality policy in access to promotion and professional development - more than half declare its use in decisions regarding the promotion of employees. A little more declares equal treatment of women and men when making decisions on redundancies - 54% of respondents.

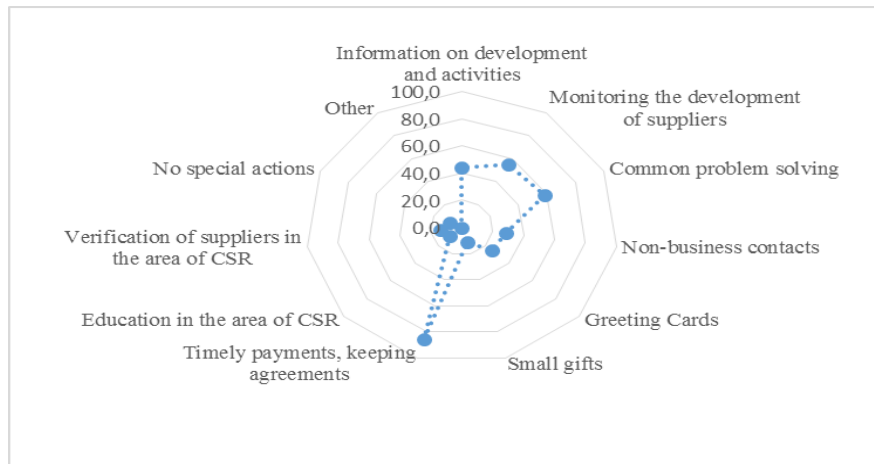
Definitely below should be assessed employers' openness to dialogue with the representatives of employees (e.g. trade unions, works councils). Such actions was undertaken by only 26% of respondents. The care of employers for special conditions for children of employees is also evaluate low. Only 15% of employers declare taking up any activity in this area. The facilities for mothers are even worse. Only 12% of respondents take such actions (*Figure 2*).



**Figure 2. The activities of the enterprises directed to the employees [%]**

Source: own study based on empirical research. N = 150

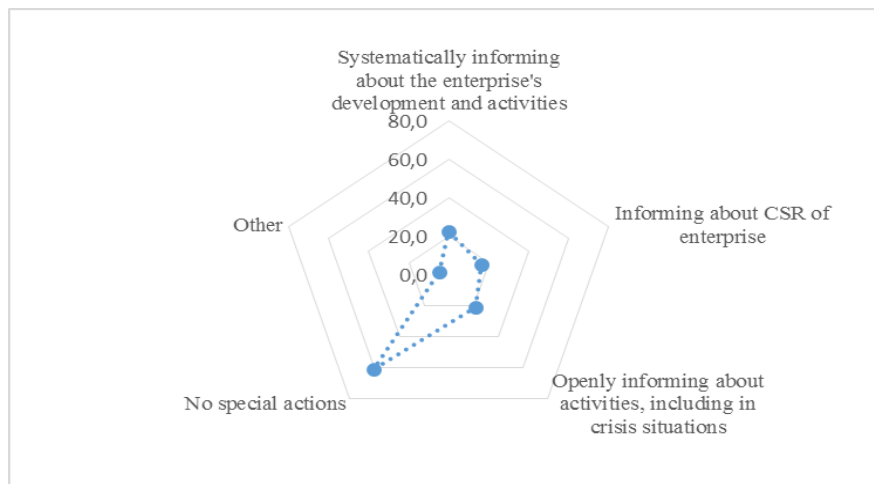
In relation to suppliers we can observe primarily compliance with formal or legal obligations. In the vast majority the respondents emphasized that they made payments on time and kept the contractual terms (85%). A much smaller part, because less than two thirds of the respondents together with the supplier solve problems related to deliveries or its development (58%) or monitor the growth of suppliers (55%). However, such actions should be very positively evaluated. It confirm the durability of the relations of the surveyed enterprises with this group of stakeholders. A large part of the answerers systematically contacts with the suppliers, informing them, among others, about development and activities undertaken in the company (44%), for some these are formal contacts, but a significant part declares maintaining non-business contacts (29%). To sustain positive relationships they often send greeting cards (25%) or passed small gifts (11%). A small number of respondents also indicated that they verify subcontractors in terms of corporate social responsibility (14%) or conduct educational activity in this area addressed to suppliers (10%) – *Figure 3*.



**Figure 3. The activities of the enterprises directed to the suppliers [%]**

Source: Own study based on empirical research. N = 150

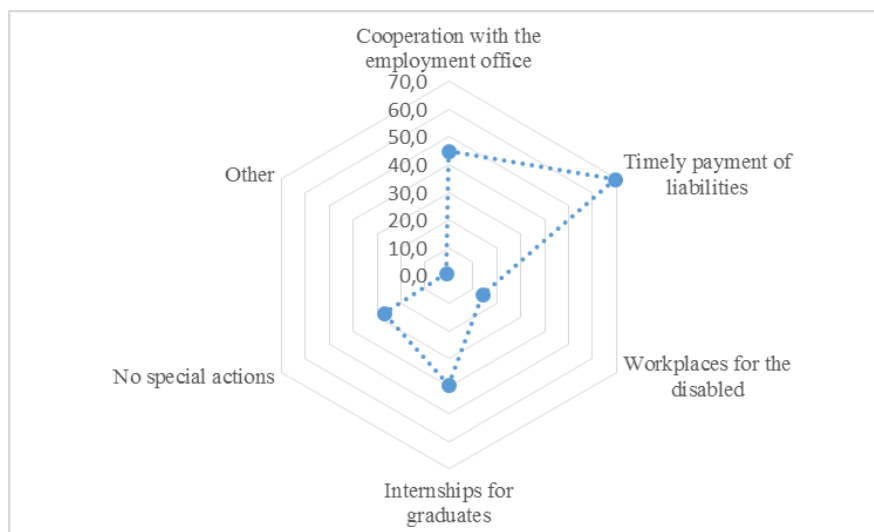
Media are the less perceived group. As many as 61% of the respondents do not take any actions directed to this group of stakeholders. However, it should be emphasized, that the vast majority of respondents are small and medium-sized enterprises that do not creation PR in their everyday practice. What would seem surprising, about one fifth of the respondents are trying to systematically inform the media about the development and activities undertaken in the company (23%), a similar number informs about their activities, including in crisis situations (21%) and only 16% of respondents report on corporate social responsibility activities (*Figure 4*).



**Figure 4. The activities of the enterprises directed to the media [%]**

Source: Own study based on empirical research. N = 150

In relation to the administration can be also observed compliance with obligations imposed by law, i.e. timely payment of liabilities (69% of respondents). Although almost one third of respondents replied that they did not undertake any special actions in relation to public administration (27%), almost half declare cooperation with labour offices (45%), and two fifths employ graduate students for internships (39%). A small number also indicated job creation for the disabled



(14%) - Figure 5.

**Figure 5. The activities of the enterprises directed to the public administration [%]**

Source: own study based on empirical research. N = 150

Much more attention is paid by the entrepreneurs to the local community. As many as two-fifths declare that it takes into account the needs and opinions of the local community (42%), a similar amount uses sponsorship (39%). A quarter engages in charity (24%). For a significant part of the respondents, care for the local community is synonymous with limiting the negative impact of the company's activities on the natural environment (43%). In addition, the surveyed enterprises promote a pro-ecological behaviour (32%), conduct dialogue with the local community (18%), support employee involvement in social activities (18%) and run social or educational projects (15%). Unfortunately, these activities are not very popular. As many as a quarter of respondents do not take specific actions towards this group (Figure 6).





**Figure 6. The activities of the enterprises directed to the local community [%]**

Source: own study based on empirical research. N = 150

## Conclusions

Changing the conditions of competition forces much more responsible approach of enterprises to all factors of production, i.e. human, natural and even capital resources. The CSR's concept assumes that the company should participate in the care of broadly understood human resources, including the local community, indirectly related to the enterprise, the environment and maintain positive, value-based relationships with all stakeholders.

The results of the research show that entrepreneurs operating in Poland also see the need to improve relations in all interest groups:

1. The vast majority of the enterprises declares that they are honest with their customers, reliably label products and apply pure market game rules.
2. The enterprises believe that they undertake additional activities for employees. They respect employees' rights, highly assess compliance with health and safety standards and care for health and safety at work.
3. The enterprises not only settle payments on time and keep contract terms with suppliers, but also try to create value-based relationships with suppliers, i.e. jointly solve problems, they sometimes monitor suppliers' development.
4. The enterprises devote a lot of attention to the local community, which means providing support through sponsorship or charity activities, but also trying to care for the natural environment, take pro-ecological actions, and even social projects.
5. The media and the public administration are less visible groups. Only a small part maintain contact with the media and inform them about the development and activities undertaken in the company. In the second case, cooperation is limited to cooperation with the labour offices.

To sum up, in the area of economic practice, Poland still catching up a developed countries of Western Europe or the USA. Much later there was also the popularization of the CSR's concept in Poland. However, today we can talk about a clear improvement in the responsibility of enterprises in relation to all stakeholders. Enterprises change attitudes towards clients, but take also additional initiatives for employees, suppliers or the local community.

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## **CSR A KSZTAŁTOWANIE WARTOŚCI DLA INTERESARIUSZY**

**Streszczenie:** Pojęcie grup interesu jest silnie podkreślane przy definiowaniu koncepcji społecznej odpowiedzialności biznesu (CSR - od ang. Corporate Social Responsibility). Trudno jednak nie zgodzić się z tezą, że przedsiębiorstwa, jako podmioty działające w otoczeniu innych podmiotów, które korzystają z dóbr, powinny służyć interesom szerokiego grona interesariuszy. W artykule przedstawiono koncepcję CSR ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem potrzeb interesariuszy i sposobów ich zaspokojenia na przykładzie polskiej praktyki gospodarczej. Jak wskazują dane uzyskane z badań, firmy w Polsce zwracają uwagę na inne grupy interesariuszy (oprócz klientów) i biorą je pod uwagę w praktykach biznesowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** CSR, interesariusze, wartość dla interesariuszy, dane badawcze