Ensuring Social Responsibility in Entrepreneurial Ventures

Stephen I. Locke

Alliance University

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Professor J. Reid

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Whilst the practice or execution of Entrepreneurship has been around for over 200 years, “social responsibility” or “Corporate Social Responsibility” (CSR) is a fairly new implementation in the business space. Forbes describes CSR as: *a business’s obligation to pursue achievable and good long-term goals for its people and the world at large.* Now you may be thinking what exactly is “ achievable & good long-term goals”, how does achieving these goals quantify into our current society?

Jeffrey Robinso defines social entrepreneurship in a very simple and straightfoward way, which in some ways is even more clarifying then previous definitions. Robinson explains social entrepreneurship as “ a process that identifies a specific social problem and the specific social solution (or solutions) to resolve it” Many of our social problems can be seen in a range of different categories, these include but are not limited to: wage gaps, local or nationwide hunger, college education accessibility, and business and leadership development.

Whilst many corporations and companies that we see enact these solutions to their local or nationwide communities are non-forprofit. There are a range of emerging for-profit companies that engage in giving back to the community on a local and grand scale. When executing solutions to socio-economic issues, businesses wether profit or non, must be cued into the very market in which consumes their product or service.

Good common practice of social responsibility can be seen in forms of benefits or perks for employees, such as a free college education or health insurance coverage for part time

employees; businesses are not limited in how they provide a value to their employees and the communities that a majority of their workforce come from.

This movement into the huminization of our workforce, and the social responsibility that our businesses and employees have is proving to be effective. Some companies of course promote an air of social responsibility, but have executed poor practice in the public eye when it came time for rubber to meet the road. Social Responsibility drives more than just sales and increased investment, it fosters an environment of community support and customer loyalty, an intentional effort to the local and global community increases the rate of impact felt by those that actively participate in our economy and society.

Starbucks: When Rubber meets The Roast

As we look to the future in terms of the bureaucracy of businesses and the arena's they exist in, it is important to understand what truly ensuring social responsibility looks like in the real world. Starbucks Coffee Company is a publicy traded, for-profit business. They are in every facet of the business, considered to be a traditional frame of business practice. Though profit is their reason for going into business, starbucks made strides to give back to their craft, and those they employee.

How exactly did Starbucks as a commercial chain, manage to give back to the artisan craft of brewing & roasting coffee? Before we can answer that question, we must first understand the core values and intent of the Starbucks company. Simply visiting the Starbucks website will provide you with the access to their "culture & values". Starbucks culture and values are stated as such:

> "Creating a culture of warmth and belonging, where everyone is welcome.
> Acting with courage, challenging the status quo and finding new ways to grow our company and each other.
> Being present, connecting with transparency, dignity and respect.

> Delivering our very best in all we do, holding ourselves accountable for results.
> We are performance driven, through the lens of humanity."

In the height of the pandemic, Starbucks was one of the few companies still operating a majority of their stores with available & willing employees. Starbucks not only offered to pay their employees their wages at the start of shutdown, but also increased their pay to employees working over a certain amount of hours. As a 3 year shift supervisor at Starbucks Co., I could attest to the value of "being performance driven, through a lens of humanity. Starbucks believed in cultivating a "third place" for it's guests. As an employee I was able to continue this cultivation of culture, and really impact the lives of our guests. Community and relationships were built with a multitude of staff members and local members of the town.

If we bring our intention to Amazon, on the surface we can see that in terms of metrics it is a company that excels. Jeff Bezo's is categorized as a billionaire. Amazon is known for their quick deliveries and an array of access to most if not all products in the public market. Though these amenities are commonly known and benefited from, reports from workers in within the company do not match. Many of the employees, wether it be through social media or news outlets, have spoken openly about working conditions. The conversation is always centered around working conditions less than the payment for labor. Workers from amazon warehouses' and delivery report conditions such as " limited bathroom breaks" workers are monitored by a camera system wherein which a timer of 5 minutes is set for them to use the restroom. The time for their break in a regular 8-12 hour shift is that of two 15 minute breaks. We as the consumer receive packages at an early or quick rate, meanwhile the workers must sacrifice legitimate restbits for increased productivity. If an employee does not abide by their time limit, immediately they are given a warning and then a demerit, or in some cases termination. Drivers for amazon report having anywhere between 150-250 stops a day, with the inability to turn off the vehicle, or

be slowed down by any particular stop or drop off. These drivers report having to even pee in bottles in order to avoid breaking the rules of their route and monitoring. Ethically society has decided that this is not something that is acceptable for any human being, but Amazon has yet to change the state of their conditions.

Ultimately we are in a business world in general where we experience and witness both ethical and unethical business practices. The true step to social responsibility can only be seen if the company or business is intentional in matching their core values with the treatment of both their consumer market and their employees. Though not always black & white, it is a balance that must be pursued in order to truly see a change in our world when it comes to business.