

THE SHIFT

CSR AMBASSADORS

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Shift CSR Boosters Project

Introducing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in an organisation represents a first step in the journey towards becoming a company that performs in a more socially- and environmentally responsible manner. However, designing a CSR programme with a mission, vision, strategy and policies is only the top of the iceberg. The fundamental ability to deliver a strong sustainable business strategy must be endorsed by an organisational culture that enables and drives sustainability initiatives.

The CSR Boosters project aims to raise employees' awareness of their company's CSR policy to actively engage them in achieving sustainability objectives. As part of the programme, The Shift organised several workshops to support CSR managers in the creation of an ambassadors' network. This brochure results from a combination of the outcomes of the CSR Boosters workshops, interviews with involved CSR managers, relevant desk research and the experiences of CSR managers.

2. Sustainability and Organisational change for sustainability

Employees are the stakeholders most directly linked to business performance and it is crucial to engage them in the process to pro-actively advance the sustainability agenda. When people are engaged - and the CSR strategy resonates with their own values - they become more passionately committed to the company and their job.

Transformational strategies are often needed to move everybody in the same direction. Transforming an organisation takes time and effort. Moreover, it requires changes in the organisational culture. It is all about engaging fellow employees in CSR initiatives, which in some organisations requires more transformational adjustments than in others.

“We find it very important to involve our young professionals in sustainable business and give them the opportunity to speak up and share ideas about strategic topics such as Inclusion & Diversity, Mobility, and Environmental Impact.”

(T. Devalck, KPMG)

A 2017 McKinsey survey indicates that employee engagement is crucial for organisational transformations to succeed. Essential requirements for successful employee engagement are:

- employee buy-in at all levels
- consistent communication
- better people strategies

This brochure presents a framework for CSR-related employee engagement within an organisation. In addition to the employee engagement framework, this brochure has a specific focus on how a CSR ambassadors' network can be established within your organisation. The CSR ambassadors' network is an ideal bottom-up tool to connect to the broader spectrum of CSR employee engagement.

The presented framework identifies four stages of employee engagement. It includes focal areas that the CSR-team can use to foster CSR engagement as well as tips and tricks.



THE DIFFERENT ROLES OF THE CSR MANAGER

A CSR manager plays different roles at the same time. Some of these roles are more focussed on shaping strategy, structuring and monitoring. Others focus on creating the right culture for a sustainable organisation, and an important aspect of this work is engaging employees.

Dutch Railways CSR manager Carola Wijdoogen describes seven roles that a CSR manager plays in an organisation:

She explains that employee engagement in a CSR programme ensures that CSR is embedded in the organisation and fosters the outcome of the CSR strategy.

It is the stimulating & connecting role that creates engagement. In this role, the CSR manager (or the team) builds bridges, acts as ambassador for CSR, and motivates and inspires employees to join forces with the organisation's CSR mission.



NETWORKER

(Engage and grow the network)



STRATEGIST

(Lead for strategy)



COORDINATOR AND INITIATOR

(Support implementation)



STIMULATOR AND CONNECTOR

(Challenge to inspire and connect)



MENTOR

(Empower others for success)



INNOVATOR

(Innovate for continuous renewal)



MONITOR

(Learn from reporting)

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND THE CSR AMBASSADORS' NETWORK

1. Introduction

We can distinguish four stages in the cycle of engaging employees within an organisation. These are: (1) awareness, (2) individual engagement, (3) functional engagement and (4) full CSR engagement.



The four stages of employee engagement including focus of the CSR manager (TRG 2018)

These stages are not comprehensive in the sense that within an organisation, the level of engagement can vary, depending on the issue and the employee to be 'engaged'. People are typically more engaged on one topic than another. This is more often than not a topic to which they can easily relate on a personal or professional level. This can also differ between departmental colleagues.

"Employee engagement in CSR activity can have the positive side-effect of giving employees a sense of pride and meaning in their professional lives – which may turn them into true ambassadors for the organisation."

(A-F. Simon, BNP Paribas Fortis)

Some employees are very easily engaged in CSR-related matters, others will never see the purpose of sustainability at all. That does not matter; it is important that a CSR-team works on engaging as many people as possible while acknowledging that it is not possible to do so for the whole organisation. For example, so far, out of all 6000 BNP Paribas Fortis employees, 50% participated in one or more CSR activities.

The CSR ambassadors' network is a good tool for a CSR manager to increase his or her outreach within the organisation. It is key in the individual engagement of employees to have an ambassadors' network on CSR in place. It is a bottom-up method to support in building employee engagement throughout the organisation. Employees taking part in the network are always intrinsically motivated to work on CSR and can affect others with their passion and enthusiasm for the subject.

2. Description of the four stages

1. Awareness

- Employees have been informed about the organisational CSR programme including strategy, vision and goals
- Employees are unconsciously reactive; They know their organisation has a developing CSR strategy, understand it and - to a certain extent - understand its relevance
- A CSR ambassadors' network can endorse the CSR programme and guide others towards the CSR manager

2. Individual engagement

- Employees have basic knowledge of the important CSR topics at team and individual level but are less aware of how to use this knowledge in their function
- Employees are consciously reactive; on formal and informal occasions, they discuss CSR-related topics and feel increasingly responsible for sustainable behaviour: this starts with small and simple things like turning off the lights and addressing the (un)sustainable behaviour of colleagues/managers
- Employees like to be involved in all kinds of – general – sustainability activity and dialogue
- The CSR ambassadors' network function as a key promotor for all activities on CSR

3. Functional engagement

- Employee knowledge is increasingly aimed at implementing CSR in daily departmental work
- Employees are sufficiently engaged to contribute to organisational CSR ambitions in their own function
- Employees are consciously pro-active. They internalise CSR ambitions and develop specific knowledge to contribute to organisational CSR goals
- The CSR ambassadors' network is at this stage often more formalised and functions as a contact point in addition to promoting the program

4. Full CSR engagement


- Employees feel accountable for CSR elements and KPIs in their own function
- Employees feel responsible for actively contributing to organisational CSR ambitions
- Employees are “unconsciously pro-active”. They do not need extrinsic motivation to work on CSR topics
- CSR ambassadors can guide others in the organisation, either in creating enthusiasm for the topic or serve as contact point for colleagues to learn and be directed towards the CSR manager

How to use the framework:

A CSR manager can use this framework to pinpoint the current state of engagement within the organisation. The framework can help to determine the status of CSR engagement (and hence to decide on the relevant steps to take) on several levels:

- CSR engagement in general
- Engagement on specific CSR topics (employees can be more engaged with respect to some topics than to others)
- Incorporating new topics (when new issues arise, the process of engagement starts all over again)
- Individual engagement (some employees can be more engaged than others because they have reached a deeper stage of engagement)

This framework can help the CSR team to decide on how to communicate CSR-related issues and to increase engagement in a manner that suits the status quo.

A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a meeting room. One person is pointing at a tablet that displays various business charts, including a line graph, a bar chart, and a circular diagram. Another person is holding a pen over the tablet. In the background, other people are working on laptops. The scene is lit with soft, blue-toned light, suggesting an evening or indoor lighting. A calendar with the number '25' is visible on the table.

"From the moment that VDAB wanted to start implementing its newly formulated sustainability policy, the organisation knew that there was a lot already going on in the largely decentralised organisation. For many years, employees had expressed solidarity through their enthusiasm for and participation in a large number of activities for a good cause. But knowing that people in your organisation are individually engaged in good causes does not equal support for the implementation of a sustainability policy.

VDAB started to set up CSR steering committees in each province. The tasks of committee members (CSR ambassadors) is quite diverse and ranges from supporting concrete CSR activities to helping the organisation to think through addressing specific challenges, working on ISO 14001, and supporting projects with organisations as widely varying as Oxfam and the scouts."

(Els De Bie, VDAB)

A CSR AMBASSADORS' NETWORK

A CSR ambassadors' network is a good example of how a CSR manager can increase his or her outreach in the organisation. It is key in the individual engagement of employees to have an ambassadors' network on CSR in place. It is a bottom-up method to support in building employee engagement throughout the organisation.

In all the four stages of the employee engagement framework outlined in this brochure, you can improve internal knowledge of your company's CSR initiatives by selecting CSR ambassadors who promote CSR policy. In turn an ambassador network can boost know-how and acceptance. Together, this advances your company's CSR strategy.

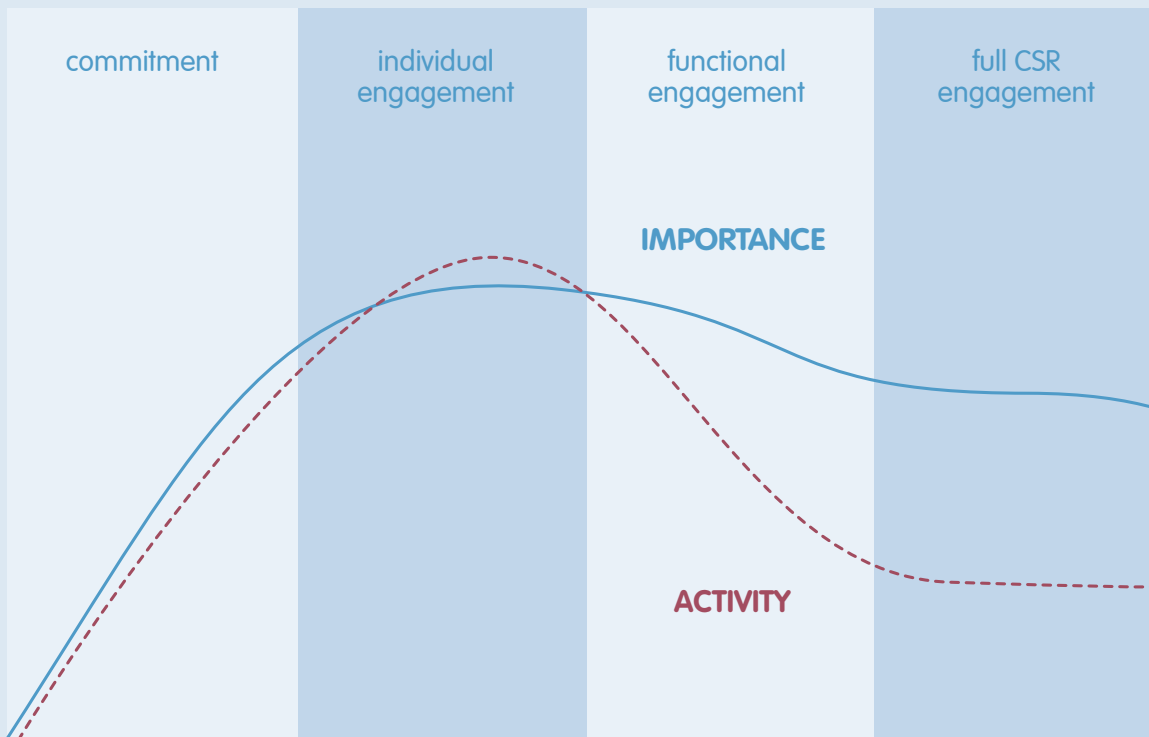
We generally see a peak in both activity and importance of the CSR ambassador framework in stage two of the Employee Engagement framework. Once engagement is at a functional level, the informal activity of the ambassadors' network tends to diminish due to the more formal structure to engage and motivate other colleagues to step in. However, the CSR team could continuously engage their networks, often slightly adapted in form and

composition. The manager can use them as ears, eyes and mouth on upcoming themes and to be aware of any developments potentially related to sustainability within the organisation; the importance of the network remains. In some organisations the formalized contact points for CSR are still referred to as the CSR ambassadors' network; in other ones the CSR ambassadors' network is made up of the intrinsically motivated crowd that revolves around the CSR team and its divisional contact points.

What is a CSR Ambassadors' Network?

A CSR ambassadors' network is a company-wide network of employees from different professional backgrounds and functions with an individual passion for sustainability. The network supports and co-creates activities with the CSR manager, especially in the early phases of CSR engagement (when there is little formalisation of CSR in a company).





Activity and importance of an ambassadors' network per stage of the employee engagement framework.

“Creating a Board of Young Professionals was the ideal way to give our young professionals an opportunity to make them real ambassadors within our firm - helping us to deliver on our strategy for sustainable business within the organisation and beyond”

(T. Devalck, KPMG)

What should and shouldn't you expect from an ambassador?

An ambassador is a volunteer. What we can expect is active participation in the ambassadors' network, a contribution to spreading the CSR strategy within the organisation. Ambassadors have a signal and an activation function with regard to CSR. This implies that they signal specific examples about what is already happening in the world of CSR and that they motivate colleagues to work on CSR initiatives as well. Ambassadors can be active in brainstorming sessions, provide input to the CSR strategy, bring passion for and enthusiasm about sustainability to the workplace, and initiate excursions and volunteer activities.

What we cannot always expect from ambassadors is that they take responsibility for implementing CSR in the business processes, as ambassadors do not necessarily have the level, role or influencing ability required to push things through within the organisation, nor do they always have the budget to action CSR activities. In some organisations however, CSR ambassadors' network are evolving into more diverse, formalised and influential groups with implementation and decision-making roles and responsibilities.



UNROLLING A CSR AMBASSADORS' NETWORK

1. RECRUIT

Be informal in the recruitment of ambassadors. Especially in the early stages, the key expectation from ambassadors should be that they have an intrinsic motivation regarding sustainability and that they are willing to translate this passion into their work environment. Selection criteria and a selection process are less relevant at first, but these can gain importance as the organisation's sustainability profile matures. Try to find a balance in diversity between the young & experienced, male & female, operational & strategic, headquarters & local units. The more diverse the ambassadors' network, the more value it will add.

Communication tips

- Ensure that in all communication outings your tone of voice is motivational, both across the organisation as in direct contact with (potential) ambassadors
- Make sure to inform the direct managers of (potential) ambassadors on their voluntary activities

2. ROLL OUT

To roll out the CSR ambassadors' network organise frequent meetings, balanced between content and time to network and exchange experience. Plan meetings with the ambassadors' network far in advance. Make sure the meetings are appealing for the ambassadors and ensure there is plenty of time for an exchange of views and input from the ambassadors. Ways to enhance the appeal of the meetings are: invite an external speaker on a given subject, update ambassadors on the company's progress related to one of the topics of sustainability, or organise a visit to an external –socially or ecologically engaged project the organisation is committed to. Use WhatsApp groups and social media to stimulate communication amongst ambassadors. In general, network meetings without content tend to attract fewer participants over time and lose strength.

Communication tips

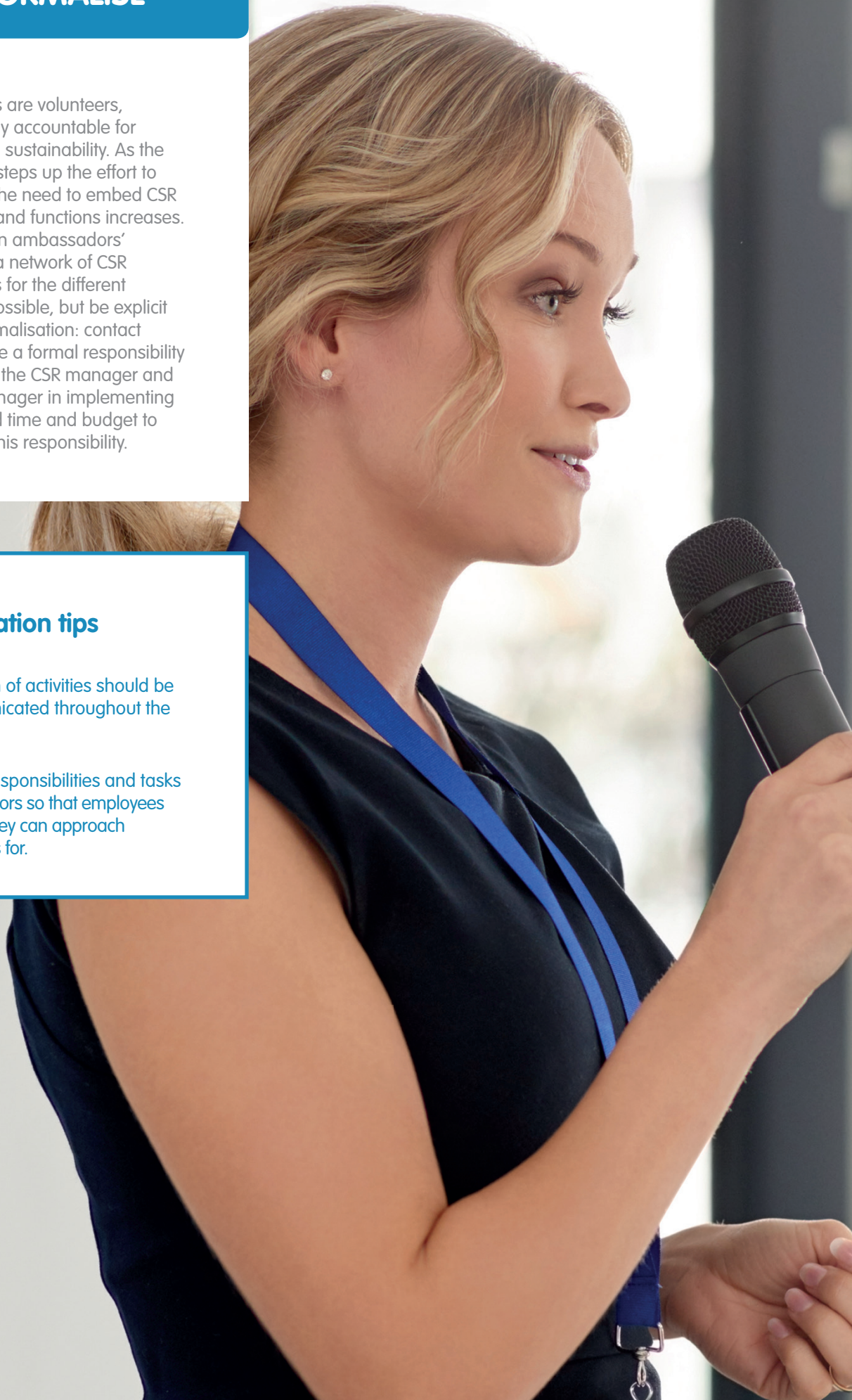
- Make sure to well communicate across the organisation about appointing the ambassadors, so others know who the ambassadors are
- Give the floor to the ambassadors whenever possible to give them the credits for their hard (and voluntary) work

3. FORMALISE

Ambassadors are volunteers, not necessarily accountable for implementing sustainability. As the organisation steps up the effort to embed CSR, the need to embed CSR in processes and functions increases. Formalising an ambassadors' network into a network of CSR contact points for the different functions is possible, but be explicit about the formalisation: contact points do have a formal responsibility towards both the CSR manager and their own manager in implementing CSR and need time and budget to comply with this responsibility.

Communication tips

- Formalisation of activities should be well communicated throughout the organisation
- Specify the responsibilities and tasks of ambassadors so that employees know what they can approach ambassadors for.



 **TIPS**

- Managing expectations when recruiting ambassadors is crucial: What is expected from the ambassadors and what time commitment is called for? Ambassadors in general do not have time nor specific responsibilities allocated to their ambassador role and function as volunteers.
- Be open to organic growth. Since network participation is on a voluntary basis, individuals will sometimes leave the network while others step up to fill the vacancies.
- Be clear on what is expected from the network. Various options are possible; a network with a focus on the sharing of experience amongst the ambassadors, a group of ambassadors responsible for the voluntary activities of an organisation, ambassadors communicating the CSR strategy further in their organisational entity, both internally and externally. An ambassadors' network evolves over time and may well decrease in strength as CSR becomes more formalised. In some cases, the network evolves and becomes (one of) the organisation's formal CSR implementation arms.
- Ask what ambassadors need in order to be an ambassador; this can range from communication materials to more content on certain sustainability topics, inspiring examples from other companies or arguments with which to engage in dialogue with colleagues.
- The CSR network will evolve from a CSR manager with volunteer ambassadors, to CSR managers with CSR contact persons in the different divisions of the organisation. Be aware that the ambassador network is not necessarily a representation of all relevant functions in an organisation.
- An ambassador is a volunteer active in CSR-related activities – often without time allocated by the company to do so. This implies that an ambassador cannot be held accountable for certain CSR initiatives and their respective outcomes.

Supporting the CSR ambassadors' network: interaction top-down and bottom-up approach

The ambassadors' network, like any other network, cannot function without proper support. Communication support is needed to create a network amongst the ambassadors, online and offline. In addition, using a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches to engage employees often does the trick; CEO commitment is one example to provide encouragement for employees to engage on CSR.

“There has to be a link between management committee and CSR committee – if not there is no vigor and ability to act and change. This is also important to keep CSR ambassadors motivated. Early enthusiasm can turn into frustration if management is perceived to not care about the ambassadors' activities and recommendations.”

(E. De Bie, VDAB)

A bottom-up approach engages employees to act on their intrinsic motivation for sustainability. Conversely, a top-down approach provides direction, resources, motivation and encouragement to go beyond engagement alone. Both have their advantages and disadvantages. A combination of a top-down and bottom-up approach is likely to be most successful in advancing CSR within the organisation.

Employee engagement, especially the CSR ambassadors' network, focuses in particular on taking a bottom-up approach. The aim is to engage individuals, consolidate the efforts, raise awareness and achieve long-lasting change. However, CSR can never become an organisational priority without top-down decision-making authority. In the absence of this, lack of resources and lack of clear structures to facilitate initiatives complicate the process. It also requires a continuous and typically voluntary commitment from engaged employees and the CSR-team. Without top-down decision-making authority, initiatives die, little by little, every day.

CEO and Board support is indispensable during every phase of employee engagement. It is essential because Board members can help you demonstrate the importance of CSR for the organisation, and push through certain decisions (and thereby deal to a certain extent with resistance or practical delays).

In order to engage the Board in general and the CEO in particular in organisational CSR ambitions, it is vital to ensure that they are aware of the strategic relevance and business opportunities that CSR can bring to the company.

Example: In 2018, KPMG Belgium established a Board of Young Professionals with the active support of senior management. To show this support, the CEO not only welcomed participants to the launch meeting but also stressed the importance of the Board of Young Professionals for the achievement of KPMG's overall sustainable business strategy. He stayed throughout the meeting.

TIPS TO ENGAGE TOP LEVEL EXECUTIVES FOR CSR OBJECTIVES

- Decide the goal for CEO engagement
- Do not aim too high at the start, every step counts
- Accept a CEO's motivation for sustainability, even when it differs from yours
- Have the CEO learn from peers
- Speak the CEO's language
- Understand a CEO's conflicting priorities, CSR is only part of the job
- Organise an "experience", to get a "feel" for sustainability/CSR
- Facilitate (and draft) a public speech on CSR/Sustainability
- Facilitate celebration of a CEO's CSR successes



"We have made the deliberate choice of not just imposing CSR on our employees. The CSR ambassador's' network proves to be an excellent bottom-up way to make our CSR implementation much more effective – and our employees more engaged."

(C. Athas, Infrabel)

STAGE 1: AWARENESS

1. Activities of the CSR manager

Core activities of the CSR manager

- Develop/adjust the CSR strategy
- Select relevant internal communication channels
- Use these channels to communicate about the CSR strategy
- Identify knowledge levels of employees
- Make sure that people know how and where to find you (for all CSR-related matters)
- Identify ambassadors (volunteers who endorse CSR in a company) to support you in the CSR programme

The CSR team formulates (new or adjusted) CSR strategies and goals in this initial phase. This phase, just as the three ahead, reoccurs at the moment that new CSR risks call for an adjusted CSR strategy and goals. Both individuals and teams within an organisation can be at different levels of engagement, irrespective of their engagement on a wide range of issues. To create organisational leverage for CSR strategy or initiatives, the CSR team is working on “telling the story”: What is our CSR strategy, why is it important to the company, what are our values? Employees are unconsciously reactive at this stage. They know their organisation has some sort of a CSR strategy, they understand this strategy and, to a certain extent, they know the importance of this strategy.

At an individual level, the CSR team focusses on informing employees: making sure that employees are aware of the CSR strategy (the call to endorse the strategy or contribute to it takes place at a later stage).

2. Drivers & Barriers

2.1 Drivers

- Find intrinsically motivated employees
- Quick wins: low-hanging fruit
- Specific projects or visible and tangible interventions

When implementing a CSR strategy, start with the low-hanging fruit: see what steps can create a perceptible impact with minimum effort (for example the use of fair-trade coffee and tea and switching to green energy sources). In this way, the CSR team endorses communication about their ambitions with the help of specific examples. The CSR manager needs to ensure that it is clear how all the initiatives, KPIs and other goals fit within the overall CSR strategy.

2.2 Barrier

A lack of knowledge can lead to employee indifference and reluctance, employees might not feel the importance to the organisation. Informing employees about important CSR topics and discussing with them how they can contribute to both the overall CSR strategy and CSR as part of their own daily operations is absolutely fundamental to success. This phase gives employees the leverage and accountability to become engaged, and is repeated in subsequent phases too. Barriers that occur in this phase:

- Some employees might be disappointed if the sustainability strategy is not ambitious enough in their opinion
- Employees might consider CSR as just another hype that will fade in due course
- Some employees will never feel any affection for or affinity with sustainability
- Employees do not become engaged due to a simple gain of knowledge

TIPS

Communication is key: tell the CSR story, make sure that employees know what the specific strategy and important goals are, but also why CSR matters to the organisation. As more and more employees get involved, this has a knock-on effect with others, who see that the company is operating in line with their own values.

- Focus on those who are motivated
- Involve key figures/internal stakeholders in strategy formulation
- Focus on incremental change
- Make sure that people know and understand the CSR mission/vision
- Create and use one language
- Use examples to communicate the CSR strategy
- Link sustainability in the organisation with sustainability at home or CSR goals at an individual level
- Make sure the CSR strategy is part of the onboarding process of every new employee

3. CSR Ambassadors' Network

At this stage, it is recommendable to identify endorsement opportunities and set up a network of ambassadors. CSR ambassadors should enthusiastically endorse and guide any CSR activity. Seek promoters within the organisation who regard CSR as a personal driver. Employees must know how to reach the CSR team and make contact. So look for people who are willing to work on this alongside their regular activities, because contributing to CSR is not yet formalised at this stage.

Dealing with challenges on the ambassadors' network journey – an example:

A company planning to create a CSR ambassadors' network sent out emails to all employees asking for CSR volunteers to come forward. Many volunteers turned up for a meeting that generated a large variety of ideas and resulted in a network of people who implemented the ideas that were not too hard to implement – the low hanging fruit. Most of these ideas were unrelated to the company's core business. The enthusiasm is there – but now people are finding the activities take a lot of their time and commitment. Since there also is no formal recognition for this within the company, nor a link with strategy, action is stalled. The CSR team is trying to pick things up again but realizes it will be key to embed these activities in the context of its overall CSR strategy. Also, the team is thinking about giving the network a more clear role, recognised by management, and to give it some kind of governance and a link to decision-making. This move is key to avoid losing committed CSR ambassadors and credibility as a CSR team, spending too much time on non-strategic issues. This 'evolving over time' is quite typical for moving through the different stages of employee engagement.



STAGE 2: INDIVIDUAL ENGAGEMENT

1. Activities of the CSR manager

Core activities of the CSR team:

- Organise workshops or other events to inform employees about new topics
- Encourage individual initiatives related to CSR (even though they might not directly contribute to the overall CSR strategy)
- Work on understanding, cooperation and engagement at management level/Identify knowledge levels of employees

The CSR team is working on increasing employee know-how. To engage people in the CSR story, it is important that it is clear how and why CSR is important to the organisation as well as the impact and leverage of the organisation (and the difference you as employee can make).

Once this stage has been reached, employees have gained basic knowledge of relevant CSR topics at team and individual level but are less aware of how to translate this know-how into their day-to-day activities. For many employees, CSR is becoming a subject that matters. Employees are consciously reactive. On formal and informal occasions, people discuss CSR-related topics and feel increasingly responsible for sustainable behaviour: this starts with small and simple things like turning off the lights and addressing the (un)sustainable behaviour of colleagues/managers.

"[...] in getting employees involved and active in CSR, there is a mix between working on material CSR issues with specific people in specific roles & responsibilities on the one hand and getting everyone (interested) involved by tapping into their individual passions and interests."

(C. Athas, Infrabel)

2. Drivers & Barriers

2.1 Drivers

Organising events, meetings and news focused on increasing knowledge about CSR in general and about specific CSR-related topics in particular can serve as a 'trojan horse' for developing leaders at all levels of the organisation. These events empower employees to take initiative at their level, enable them to develop a vision and specific CSR ambitions, communicate these in a simple and compelling manner, engage in structured dialogue and work towards further engagement on CSR-related topics (this happens in stage 3).

2.2 Barriers

Bear in mind that some employees might be more engaged than others. The CSR manager should be aware that for some the CSR-related activities are not always perceived as ambitious enough. Others, however, need these events to trigger their subconscious sense of sustainability engagement. The CSR team should also be aware of perceptions such as: "My minor contribution cannot possibly make a difference in the resolution of these large and complex problems."

TIPS

So how can these issues best be addressed? The CSR team now needs to actively interact with fellow employees. On the one hand to gather more information (and start dialogues) about what is happening in the organisation and how people perceive CSR, on the other hand to tell the CSR story and convince people of its relevance. Organise 'road shows': pay a visit to all departments with a team of ambassadors, or staff a stand explaining the CSR strategy at lunchtime. This way, you pro-actively start a dialogue with employees.

It is important to keep an optimistic mindset in this phase: your glass is always half-full, never half-empty. CSR is not a destination, but a journey and all the steps along the way count. Keep employee communication "light", use fun exercises like quizzes, or join international sustainability celebrations like Earth Overshoot Day, organise themed workshops and share practical tips. Don't focus on engaging the entire organisation and remember that the drive and commitment of 15-20% of employees is all that is needed to change the organisation's CSR perspective and make a difference.

- Invite employees to come up with initiatives in their day-to-day work that boost participation. This can be organised in various ways: by events, workshops, videos, games and even by developing a brand book.
- Link sustainability to individual passion. Passion might be demonstrated or experienced for a specific sustainability topic such as biodiversity or the environment.
- Invite external speakers to showcase how other companies have approached sustainability and how they are dealing with their dilemmas.
- Use volunteer programmes. A corporate volunteer programme with a sustainability purpose creates action in itself and provides an opportunity to create a community around sustainability. The company might recognise volunteer effort by putting employees in the spotlight through internal media or by organising an annual contest with a financial contribution to the selected volunteer programme.
- Use existing networks to promote sustainability speaking opportunities. For example: employee associations, young professional unions, female employee networks, ... Make sure that the sustainability strategy you present also covers the specific interests of that association, union or network.



3. CSR Ambassadors' Network

When engaging employees individually, a body such as a CSR ambassadors' network can be key to achieving success. The ambassadors are your eyes, mouth and ears within the organisation. Therefore, make sure to value your network of ambassadors, all of whom at this stage are likely to be volunteers.

"There needs to be an overall strategy and goals – do not start a CSR ambassador network in isolation or as a stand-alone activity."

(C. Athas, Infrabel)

STAGE 3: FUNCTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

1. Activities of the CSR manager

Core activities of the CSR manager

- Organise workshops for specific functional groups to give them tools and tips to incorporate CSR in their function
- Provide assistance to employees looking for processes and methods that can help them with incorporating CSR in their function (examples of certifications and guidelines to assist employees in incorporating CSR include ISO 14001, BREEAM, LEED, GRI and IIRC)
- Work on the development of KPIs and other review mechanisms to give employees more time for and recognition of their CSR efforts within their own function
- Acknowledge motivated employees for their efforts (in a simple but genuine email, an article in a newsletter, a periodic award)

The ground work of sustainability should be in place by now. Strategy and policy should have been digested, particularly by engaged employees but at least to the level that people are aware of a CSR team within the organisation spearheading the CSR strategy and vision. The phase has now been reached in which employees are aware of CSR and start acting accordingly. However, they lack the knowledge to link CSR to their own function. Many may still think that by using less paper and banning plastic coffee cups, sustainability is only yet embedded in their function and way of working up until a certain extend.

Full engagement requires in-depth knowledge of CSR. Because individual functioning is at issue: people have to adjust their daily way of working and this can cause resistance and anxiety. The CSR-team should focus on showcasing employees who are sufficiently enthusiastic to start integrating CSR in their own role. Provide them with the tools and guidance they need to further develop the knowledge that can propel them to undertake action. Once they are on this path, they will move towards the next stage of engagement in which they feel personally responsible for CSR and start acting as an ambassador for this cause. A step-up could be to make CSR an integral part of an employee's job description, evaluation and personal development plan.

“Now that employees started to be engaged, the next step was to activate this commitment and link these individual actions and interest to a more strategic level, showing how CSR action can help the bank contribute to society in a meaningful and material way, while at the same time achieving business goals.”

(A-F. Simon, BNP Paribas Fortis)

2. Drivers & Barriers

2.1 Drivers

Provide motivated employees with the information they need to take beginner's steps, such as limiting paper use and being thoughtful in regard to energy use, a step further by showing them how to incorporate CSR in their role. Their enthusiasm will ultimately fuel that of others.

- Individual professional interest that links to sustainability
- Interaction between senior and junior level professionals to work on sustainability and enhance motivation and to spark new ideas
- Existing structures and platforms can save time and resources

2.2 Barriers

The pitfall at this stage is not fully recognising and/or acknowledging engaged employees. Often, highly-engaged employees who do not feel they have a voice can become frustrated, and this can negatively impact the CSR programme. In addition, some employees may well feel their job, their very functioning – their professional existence – is being challenged, or at stake.

- Middle management might object to time being spent embedding sustainability in the job
- Employees might encounter time constraints by being drawn into daily operational problems
- Staff might wait for management directives to embed sustainability in their function, although these may not be forthcoming
- Dilemmas of balancing between short term profit-oriented goals and longer-term objectives such as value creation
- Conflicting targets
- New managers entering the organisation might be only at the first stage of engagement and could disrupt the process
- New upcoming relevant CSR topics might be overlooked due to the execution of day to day activities



Taking leadership for CSR at all levels of the organisation helps to embed sustainability throughout the organisation. Involving people from different backgrounds and from all layers of the organisation can also provide input for new ideas. Avoid becoming a 'talking shop' and establish decision-making links to management.

- Use words such as 'embedding in the workplace' and 'embedding in the function' in order to overcome endless discussions regarding use of paper and plastic cups regarding use of paper and plastic cups understand the CSR mission/vision

- Use departmental off-sites for knowledge transfer on how to embed sustainability in a specific function
- Learn from business partners
- For commercially-minded staff, review client sustainability reports to understand where they can add relevant value
- Find examples of how competitors are using sustainability in their marketing and as an innovation source
- Share actions related to embedding sustainability in the function within and outside the department to inspire others
- Spotlight individuals who have embedded sustainability in their daily work
- Discuss with HR how sustainability in the function can be included and acknowledged in professional development plans

2.3 The Ambassadors' Network

If well thought through, an ambassadors' network will have supported awareness creation and development of CSR strategy throughout the organisation. Ideally, this results in activating employees with an intrinsic motivation for CSR. Employees start wanting to contribute through their job to the sustainability goals of the organisation.

"At the beginning of September 2018, the Board of Young Professionals had their first board meeting. Topics on the agenda included defining the mission and vision of the board, the structure, the level of operation activities and a communication strategy. Along with the 25 young professionals, the CEO and the CSR Manager, provided guidance and support during the meeting, demonstrating the importance of this initiative within the firm."

(T. Devalck, KPMG)

STAGE 4: FULL CSR ENGAGEMENT

1. Activities of the CSR manager/team

Core activities of the CSR manager

- Act as sounding board and inspiration to assist people in their CSR activities
- Act as mentor to people engaged in CSR programmes
- Coordinate new and existing CSR initiatives
- Identify knowledge levels of employees
- Create platforms for engaged employees to share their knowledge and experience about applying CSR in their daily roles
- Acknowledge motivated employees for their ideas and efforts

Fully-engaged employees will now be undergoing a mind-shift in which they feel responsible for CSR within their position and focus on continuous development of their tasks and activities. Employees seeking new opportunities within their reach to enhance CSR actively feed and fuel discussions. Employees have taken ownership of the process adjustments made in support of CSR and consider these as the new standard.

From this point on, sustainability is indeed the new standard. The point of no return has been reached. However, a dilemma at this stage can be how to deal with employee turnover in maintaining the same level of knowledge. What happens if an engaged team leader leaves the company?

There are two crucial aspects to support continuation of the process:

1. Top-down mechanisms such as KPIs, corporate processes and development programmes to more or less standardise sustainability-related choices
2. Embedding sustainability throughout all corporate processes

Examples are:

- Criteria for sustainable procurement
- HR development or hiring criteria related to CSR

To minimise the dilution of knowledge due to employee turnover, it is just as important to embed and develop CSR within the organisation and in particular at HR as embedding and developing CSR within the minds and hearts of individual employees.

1.1 Drivers

The CSR manager must now give employees the freedom they need to undertake their own activities within their function. This drives CSR to the next level and embeds it even deeper in the organisation.

- Dialogue with employees can bring upcoming topics to your team's attention to further develop the CSR programme
- Open-mindedness and curiosity within the organisational culture can provide input for new CSR ideas and leads to pick up on

1.2 Barriers

Employees who are highly enthusiastic about CSR can start acting as CSR managers themselves. It can take up all your time to manage these people. Seek the balance between encouraging people to show initiative and having people walk around the organisation feeling as if they are a CSR manager.

- Fully-engaged employees can get demotivated by more philanthropic or promotional events
- Dilemmas include balancing between short term profit-oriented goals and longer-term value-creation objectives



- Conflicting targets
- New managers entering the organisation might be at the first stage of engagement and could disrupt the process
- Upcoming, relevant CSR topics might be overlooked due to execution of day-to-day activities

TIPS

As CSR evolves into a more structured and integrated part of the organisation, philanthropic and promotional initiatives may well decrease in value. These are important drivers for less-engaged employees to do more with CSR, and have high communicative value. Continue to organise these activities and engage employees with regard to their purpose and value.

- Link the sustainable core of the organisation to the core of the individual
- Lead by example and walk the talk
- Take responsibility for sustainability within and outside the function
- Recognise that sustainability is a journey – and review progress on a regular basis
- Pro-actively include new management in sustainability initiatives; do not presume they are 'already' fully engaged
- Connect different worlds, like planet and people-related aspects, by demonstrating their interconnectivity
- Share dilemmas
- Integrate sustainability in all business metrics
- Link to sustainability initiatives
- Communicate sustainability strategy, as practically as possible
- Illustrate the sustainability strategy with examples
- Create and use one language



APPENDIX: CASES



Exemplary case 1:

Unilever and Treemagotchi, 2014

Internal employee support and engagement is crucial for successfully implementing sustainability programmes. As engaging employees can be quite a challenge, Unilever Benelux has taken a relatively new approach. The company uses an interactive, web based gamification tool developed by Snowballs & Flywheels enabling employees to start working with sustainability in a playful and fun way.

- **Use of gamification:** the tool is aimed at changing behaviour by using gamification. Gamification stands for using intrinsic motivations such as status, performance, competitions and altruism in a game, with the goal of activating people and triggering change. Inviting employees to playfully discover a theme such as corporate responsibility has proven to be an effective means to get them interested and involved. They discover that their actions lead to instant results.
- **How it works:** the tool is an employee campaign consisting of friendly competitions between departments, with specific and measurable results. This campaign lasts for about six weeks. Colleagues gather points by undertaking online CSR-related activities every week, varying from quick wins to more complex initiatives. In addition, input is provided on how CSR in the workplace could be conducted even more effectively. This will trigger a dialogue between colleagues.

Unilever Benelux has is using the tool now for several years and has rolled it out in several other European markets and functions For Unilever it is a way to involve its employees in it's Sustainable Living Programme, Unilever's ambitious sustainability programme. Setting targets and having dedicated roles is not enough, participation of all employees is crucial and useful to help achieve goals.

For more information about the tool see:
<https://snowfly.nl/en/home-2/>

Exemplary case 2:

KPMG and the Board of Young Professionals

KPMG set up a young professionals board in order to work on creating sustainable business engagement. In a first phase, they defined the role of the Board of Young Professionals, the profile of the board members and what KPMG has to offer.

In a second phase, KPMG recruited the young professionals. The CEO, Koen Maerevoet, sent an internal communication to all employees younger than 32 years old asking them if they were interested in participating, to submit a short video answering the following questions:

- What does sustainable business mean for you?
- What kinds of projects interest you most and why?
- How would you like to make a difference at KPMG and beyond?

The final selection was made by a selection committee, led by the CEO.

At their first board meeting, KPMG's young professional discussed priority topics on the agenda including defining the mission and vision of the board, the structure, the level of operation activities and a communication strategy. Along with the 25 young professionals, the CEO and the CR Manager, Tina Devalck, provided guidance and support during the meeting, demonstrating the importance of this initiative within the firm.

Since, the members of the Board of Young Professionals have been working on several projects (e.g. partnerships/sponsorships like Enactus Belgium and Kom op Tegen Kanker, Inclusion & Diversity, Mobility, Bizidee, etc.) and are brainstorming on new projects linked to sustainable business.



The Shift asbl/vzw



The Shift vzw/asbl



@WeMakeTheShift



The Shift



Interviews held in december 2018 with :

- Tina Devalck, CSR Manager and Proposal Manager, KPMG Belgium
- Corine Athas, CSR Advisor, Infrabel
- Anne-France Simon, Head of CSR Experience, BNP Paribas Fortis
- Els De Bie, CSR Manager, VDAB

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