

BSR/GlobeScan State of Sustainable Business Poll 2009 Fact Sheet

Key Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)/Sustainability Issues

Climate change and human rights are the most significant priorities for business' sustainability efforts in the year ahead.

Climate change	41%
Human rights	32%
Workers' rights	29%
Water availability/quality	26%
Public policy frameworks promoting sustainability	22%
Sustainable consumption	22%
Poverty reduction	18%

Percentage of respondents who selected 5 on a 5-point scale where 1 is "not at all a priority" and 5 is "a very significant priority."

Respondents consistently focused on two important actions companies should take to improve public trust in business.

Create innovative products and business models designed for sustainability	39%
Measure and demonstrate positive social and environmental impacts	38%
Improve efforts to engage stakeholders	15%
Better align lobbying efforts and sustainability goals	4%
Reform executive compensation	4%

Only 8 percent of respondents expect that their companies' budgets for sustainability initiatives will decrease as a result of the current economic situation, compared to 31 percent who said they expected a decrease in 2008.

	2009	2008
Budget will decrease	8%	31%
Budget will not decrease	72%	43%
Too early to determine	19%	26%

Majorities said they expect an increase in several key areas of their companies' and organizations' sustainability programs in the year ahead.

	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Stay the same</i>
Amount of external CSR/sustainability communications	66%	1%	30%
Amount of internal CSR/sustainability communications	66%	0%	30%
CEO-level engagement on CSR/sustainability	50%	2%	45%
Demonstrable return on investment from CSR/sustainability	48%	3%	45%
Board-level engagement on CSR/sustainability	41%	2%	54%
Level of staff in CSR/sustainability function	38%	4%	54%
Budget for CSR/sustainability	37%	8%	52%

Return on Investment (ROI) of CSR/Sustainability

Most respondents agree that reputational benefits of CSR/sustainability are increasingly important and that stakeholder demands are increasing.

	2009	2008
Reputational benefits are increasingly important	86%	84%
Stakeholder demands are increasing	79%	80%
Long-term cost savings or efficiencies are a major driver	69%	75%
There is increased pressure to show an ROI	67%	76%
CSR/sustainability is increasingly seen as a driver of innovation	66%	57%
Our CSR/sustainability initiatives are driven more by company values and mission than by bottom-line impacts or other factors	59%	59%
CSR/sustainability initiatives are less of a priority today	5%	12%

Percentage of respondents who selected "strongly agree (5)" plus "somewhat agree (4)" on a 5-point scale, where 1 is "strongly disagree," 2 is "somewhat disagree," 3 is "neither agree nor disagree," 4 is "somewhat agree," and 5 is "strongly agree."

Most respondents (61 percent) said their company/organization either measures the ROI for its CSR/sustainability efforts or expects to do so soon.

Company measures ROI	30%
Company does not measure ROI, but will soon	31%
Company does not measure ROI	37%

The ROI of CSR/sustainability initiatives is currently measured mostly through reputational benefits, short-term cost savings, and employee morale and satisfaction.

	<i>Used to measure ROI</i>	<i>Not used to measure ROI</i>
Reputational benefits	88%	12%
Short-term cost savings/efficiencies	81%	19%
Employee morale and satisfaction	81%	19%
Long-term cost savings/efficiencies	79%	21%
Brand equity	58%	42%
Increased revenue	56%	44%
Innovation	52%	48%
Influence on policy and regulatory debates	48%	52%
Market share	31%	69%

Among a subsample of respondents who currently measure the return on investment ROI for any of their CSR/sustainability efforts (n=80).

Performance and Leadership

Nine out of 10 respondents (90 percent) are somewhat or very optimistic that global businesses will embrace sustainability as part of their core strategies and operations in the next five years, which is a jump from the 77 percent who felt that way in 2008. Within that group, the increase in the number of respondents who are very optimistic was even more dramatic, up from 11 percent in 2008 to 26 percent this year.

	2009	2008
Very optimistic	26%	11%
Somewhat optimistic	64%	66%
Neither pessimistic nor optimistic	6%	11%
Somewhat pessimistic	3%	12%
Very pessimistic	0%	1%

The two industries that have acted most responsibly in terms of their sustainability efforts in the past few years are “consumer products/retail” (56 percent) and “information and communications technology” (32 percent), up from 50 percent and 18 percent, respectively, in 2007. At the bottom of the list in 2009: “financial services” (1 percent) and “media and entertainment” (2 percent).

	2009
Consumer products/retail	56%
Information and communications technology	32%
Energy and extractives	22%
Agriculture, food, and beverage	19%
Pharmaceuticals/biotechnology	10%
Transportation and logistics	9%
Construction/real estate	6%
Media and entertainment	2%
Financial services	1%

Because respondents were allowed to name two industries, table sums to more than 100%.

Climate Change

Most respondents (44 percent) said “energy efficiency” is the most significant element of their climate strategy, up from 31 percent in 2007.

	2009
Energy efficiency	44%
Technological innovation	11%
Educating customers or the public	11%
Working with suppliers	9%
Use of renewable energy	7%
Carbon offsets	5%
Influencing public policy	5%

The largest barriers to addressing climate change are competing strategic priorities and short-term financial pressures/recession, followed by complexity of implementation, and uncertain or insufficient policy frameworks.

Competing strategic priorities	49%
Short-term financial pressures/recession	46%
Complexity of implementation	44%
Uncertain or insufficient policy frameworks	40%
Lack of internal expertise	34%
Uncertain ROI	33%
Lack of recognition from financial markets	30%
Lack of models or best practice case studies	22%
Lack of senior executive support	19%

Percentage of respondents who selected “a very significant barrier (5)” plus “(4)” on a 5-point scale, where 1 is “not at all a barrier” and 5 is “a very significant barrier.”

Lowering costs and/or other efficiencies is considered the principal business opportunity of addressing climate change, followed by improving stakeholder relationships, driving innovation, and strengthening credibility with consumers.

Lowering energy costs and/or other efficiencies	70%
Improving stakeholder relationships	67%
Driving innovation	65%
Strengthening credibility with consumers	65%
Improving employee engagement	63%
Improving the bottom line	54%
Improving value chain efficiency	54%
Creating revenue opportunities from new products and services	53%
Increasing credibility with policymakers	49%

Percentage of respondents who selected “a very significant opportunity (5)” plus “(4)” on a 5-point scale, where 1 is “no opportunity” and 5 is “a very significant opportunity.”

Demographics

Sector

Business/corporation	66%
Non-governmental organization (e.g. environmental, social justice NGOs, etc.)	15%
Service organization (including consultants, journalists, lawyers)	12%
Government	4%
Academic	3%
Other	1%

Industry

Consumer products/retail	29%
Information and communications technology	16%
Energy and extractives	12%
Agriculture, food, and beverage	10%
Pharmaceuticals/biotechnology	8%
Transportation and logistics	7%
Financial services	5%
Media and entertainment	3%
Construction/real estate	1%
Other	10%

CSR/sustainability experience

More than 10 years	24%
5 to 10 years	31%
3 to 4 years	23%
1 to 2 years	17%

Job title

Vice president or above	20%
Director	32%
Manager or below	39%
Other	6%

About the Research

The “BSR/GlobeScan State of Sustainable Business Poll 2009” was conducted from October 5 to 15, and on October 21, 2009, among a sample of 274 corporate responsibility professionals from 15 countries who attended the BSR Conference 2009. The “[BSR/Cone Corporate Responsibility in a New World Survey 2008](#)” was conducted November 5, 2008, among a sample of 424 corporate responsibility professionals from 28 countries who attended the BSR Conference 2008. The “[BSR/Fleishman-Hillard Corporate Responsibility Survey 2007](#)” was conducted from October 23 to 24, 2007, among a sample of 331 corporate responsibility professionals who attended the BSR Conference 2007.

About BSR

A leader in corporate responsibility since 1992, BSR works with its global network of more than 250 member companies to develop sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration. With six offices in Asia, Europe, and North America, BSR uses its expertise in the environment, human rights, economic development, and governance and accountability to guide global companies toward creating a just and sustainable world. Visit www.bsr.org for more information.

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