CSR 2.0 as a new approach to corporate social responsibility

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an increasingly popular management concept. It is worth noting that changes in the business environment, especially the rapid development of information and communication technologies and the emergence of social media, influence the development of this concept. In recent years, there appeared a new concept of corporate social responsibility – CSR 2.0. – which was suggested by Visser. This idea assumes, among other things, the use of social media in CSR practices. Unfortunately, few Polish companies are present in social media which seem to be an ideal instrument to communicate socially responsible activities.

The article analyses and evaluates CSR 2.0, and also shows basic differences between the classic and new approach to the strategy discussed. In order to prepare the article, the author conducted a critical analysis of Polish and foreign literature, reports and studies prepared by various institutions, the descriptive and comparative method.

Paper type: review article

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, CSR 2.0, Information and Communication Technologies, management, strategy

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Introduction

Modern economy is constantly changing, which is reflected in different areas of business. The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) forces companies to use new solutions, also within Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The availability of different ICT tools enables easier communication in real time. Today the Internet allows users to interact and involve in the creation of content portals. A special role is played by social networks, blogs, and special software which allow for changing the content of the website by each Internet user at any time (Wiki). These tools are called social media. Social media are often the only source from which stakeholders derive information about the company and its activity. Furthermore, the use of social media is a chance for instant contact and drawing attention of consumers. It should be noted that the stakeholder profile and methods of communication and collaboration with stakeholders are subject to change. As a consequence, CSR is evolving. An expression of this change is the creation of the concept of CSR 2.0, suggested by Visser (2010a), an important element of which is the active involvement of stakeholders, and the use of social software, i.e. websites for creating and modifying content.

The aim of the article is to show the differences between the classic and the new approach to CSR and the analysis of the concept of CSR 2.0 when it comes to its usefulness for entrepreneurs.

The critical analysis of the literature and reports was conducted in order to pursue the goal of the study.

1. The importance of the Internet for Polish enterprises in the context of the concept of corporate social responsibility

Today, the Internet has become an indispensable part of life for many people. This also applies to businesses, among which a significant part uses ICT when conducting business activity. Surveys conducted by the Central Statistical Office in Poland show that in 2014 computers were used by 94% of companies, including nearly all large entities. What is also increasing is the number of households with a computer with Internet access. In 2014, 74.8% of households had access to the Internet. This percentage was higher by 2.9% than in 2013 (*Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce w 2014 r.*, 2014, p. 12).

When analysing the importance of the Internet it is worth noting the purposes of using it. One of the main objectives of the use of the Internet by households is to participate in chat rooms, groups or discussion forums, use of instant messaging,

creating and reading blogs and using social networking sites. In the case of people aged 16–74 this aim is declared by 41.1% of users, while in the case of the age group of 12–15 years, as much as 85.2% (*Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce w 2014 r.*, 2014, p. 16).

There are many social networking sites among the most visited websites in Poland. In 2014, Facebook was used by 19,804,795 people, YouTube by 18,433,337, and nk.pl had 5 million users (Gemius Audience, n.d.).

It seems that no company should ignore such a large number of potential customers. In this case one can talk about a new customer profile, or stakeholder, for whom communication and interaction via the Internet is an integral part of everyday life. A new kind of stakeholder is defined as stakeholder 2.0 (Roszkowska-Śliż, 2012, p. 91) who:

– is part of the network, is connected with others,
– is curious about the world and is better informed,
– trusts friends rather than advertising,
– likes to share, collaborate and take collective action,
– appreciates freedom and is active,
– does not separate work from play, and spends free time on creative activities on the Internet,
– is a prosumer,
– is always online, reacts in real time and expects that from others,
– is able to self-organize and influence the actions of companies.

Internet users present in social media have the option of delivering opinions and, therefore, these media can be a tool for the company's communication with stakeholders. Social networking sites are a great spot for placing social reports by companies. The company present in social media does not bear any costs, because the use of such sites is free. Moreover, these portals give easy access to people who are or may be interested in a particular company. Therefore, companies using the concept of corporate social responsibility must pay particular attention to social media and stakeholders operating in them. They can become a key instrument in the construction of an effective CSR strategy of the XXI century. It is worth noting that a significant number of people chooses to interact with companies and brands on social networks, as early as in 2010, 43% of Internet users added comments on the profiles of companies, 16% commented on materials posted by the company on the website (*Konsument w mediach społecznościowych*, 2010, p. 13).

It is worth asking whether Polish companies recognize potential benefits brought by the Internet, especially social media? The data on the use of social media by households and companies in Poland were used for this purpose (Figure 1).

The data show that social media are tools that are not often used in business, especially by the smallest businesses in Poland. One will notice that the popularity
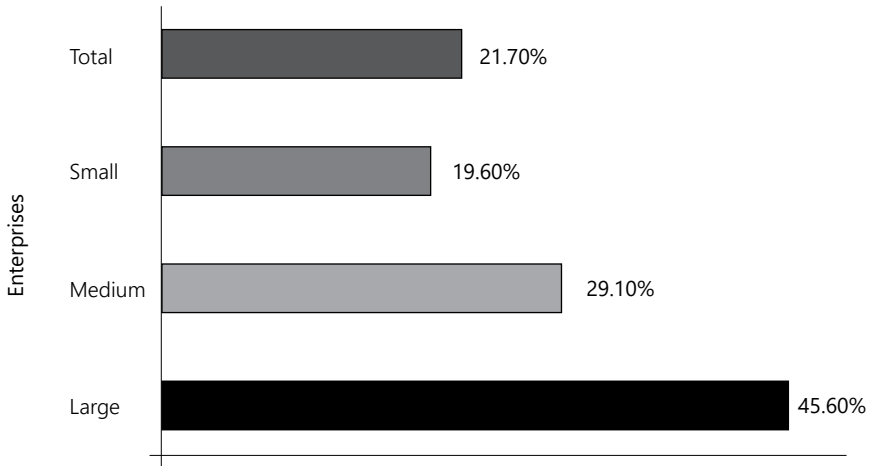
Figure 1. *The use of social media in Polish enterprises.*

Source: based on *Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce w 2014 r.,* 2014, p. 10.

of the use of social media increases with the size of the company. The advantage of large entities over the medium and small ones may be due to the fact that they often have qualified managerial staff, and use the team of advisors and professionals who recognize the importance of social media. In addition, large companies generally use modern management methods and techniques. The use of social media can be extensive and cover marketing issues and cooperation as well as building relations with internal and external stakeholders. Comprehensive identification and monitoring of the objectives of using the Internet by stakeholders, who are, inter alia, households, may help the company build effective CSR tools. Thanks to social media, more stakeholders may become interested in the activities of the company. In addition, the cost of presence in social media is much lower than the cost of using traditional media. Furthermore, drawing the attention of stakeholders to the idea of CSR through social media is possible when it is considered authentic and compatible with the value system of users of a social networking site on which a given campaign is run (Proszowska, 2013, p. 64).

Undoubtedly, technologies are changing the space in which a given enterprise operates. Thanks to them, companies can gain new business contacts as well as the information necessary for effective business operations. This information may relate to, among other things, new markets, customers and suppliers. Enterprises using the Internet can also make immediate payment for transactions. The Internet is a source of knowledge, examples, solutions and tools that can enable companies to adapt and respond to changes in the environment. It can enhance increasing the level of innovation and, thus, competitiveness (Leoński, 2014, p. 188).

2. CSR and changes between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Corporate Social Responsibility of the second generation (2.0) is associated with a model of creating internet solutions – Web 2.0. In the initial phase of development (Web 1.0) Internet networks consisted of websites that allowed users to receive specific content. The Internet was a tool used for one-way communication. Users could not modify and create new content within the network. The Internet was only a "virtual newspaper" (Tapscott & Williams, 2008, p. 64). Currently, the Internet gives much greater opportunities for its users. First of all, Internet users can communicate, interact and create content for websites. The most popular sites and Web 2.0 services include (Kaznowski, 2008, pp. 95–114):

- social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, nk.pl, MySpace),
- thematic blogs,
- social media (including citizen journalism services),
- knowledge base (e.g. Wikipedia),
- social sharing (e.g. YouTube, Wrzuta.pl),
- virtual worlds (e.g. Secondlife).

It can be argued that the difference between Web 1.0 and 2.0 is the same as between the passive and active use of the media, between consumption and creativity (creation). In addition, no expensive software and in-depth knowledge is needed for this active creation. All that is needed is free and easy-to-use applications widely available on the Internet (Jung, 2010, p. 7). It is reasonable to present similarities occurring between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, and the classical approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR 1.0) and the approach proposed by Visser (Table 1).

In summary, it can be noticed that the conditions of the use of the concept of corporate social responsibility are being changed by the growing importance and use of Web 2.0 tools by stakeholders and companies. Web 1.0 was characterized by the constant nature of websites and one-way communication. In Web 2.0 there appeared their dynamism and a wide dialogue between many parties. A similar situation occurs in the case of CSR 1.0 and CSR 2.0, where new technologies resulted in more active contacts with stakeholders. Internet users can obtain information about a company, product, service from various sources and, most importantly, can verify it. In addition, Internet users can engage in the creation of CSR initiatives. These factors make it possible to talk about the second generation of corporate social responsibility.

Table 1 *Similarities between Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and CSR 1.0 and CSR 2.0*

Web 1.0	CSR 1.0
The flat world is just beginning to connect and is looking for a medium capable of sending information and adding advertising	It is a way for companies to establish relationships with communities, conduct philanthropic activity and manage their image
The emergence of important innovations, such as Netscape, which was quickly crushed by giants like Microsoft and Internet Explorer	It contains many pioneering start-ups, such as Traidcraft, which later became a product for international corporations, such as, Shell
Focusing mainly on standardized hardware and software dedicated for PCs, bypassing the multi-level applications	Using the same standards, codes, norms, guide-lines
Web 2.0	**CSR 2.0**
Defined with slogans: "Collective intelligence," "networking," "participation of users"	Defined with slogans: "Global communities," "innovative partnerships," "stakeholder engagement"
Among the tools used there appeared social media, notifications channels and beta testing New tools include stakeholder panels, transparent reporting and a new wave of social entrepreneurship	
It is both the development of technology and a new way of perceiving the world	It perceives decentralization of power, as well as changes in the context: from few large ones to many small ones and from exclusivity to sharing

Source: based on Visser, 2010a, p. 317.

3. Corporate Social Responsibility of the second generation – CSR 2.0

The first issue to note when analysing CSR 2.0 is its name. In the classic notion, CSR stands for Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR 2.0 stands for Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility. The very naming of CSR 2.0 indicates great importance: sustainability and responsibility. The concept of sustainable development talks about a kind of compromise between economic development and the environment and society, so it concerns mainly the area associated with ecology and environmental protection. In contrast, the concept of responsibility is related to prosocial activities.

CSR 2.0 can be defined as a combination of Web 2.0 technology with socially responsible activities. The effectiveness of CSR 2.0 in this case largely depends on the ability of the company to use new technologies, networks and media in order to win the favour of stakeholders. Of course, the actions of the company must be sincere and in line with the values that characterize the users of the website. A new approach to CSR is an exchange of opinions and knowledge, widely understood dialogue and building stakeholder engagement through modern communication tools.

The DNA of CSR 2.0, according to Visser, is two strands that are intertwined with each other and complement each other. One strand is sustainability treated as: objectives, mission, vision, strategy. The second strand is responsibility manifested by: solutions, answers, management, actions. In this case one can say that sustainable development is an objective and responsible way to reach a specific goal (Visser, 2010b). The CSR 2.0 is about creating and implementing sustainable and responsible business model which, supported by a reformed financial system and the economy, will make the creation of a better world easier, more natural and cost-effective (Visser, 2010a, p. 317). Visser distinguishes 5 key features of CSR 2.0, as shown in Figure 2.

C	– creativity
S	– scalability
R	– responsiveness
2	– glocality
0	– circularity

Figure 2.   *Features of CSR 2.0.*

Source: Visser, 2011, p. 153.

Socially responsible firms should be creative. Social and environmental problems are complex and their solution requires a creative approach and going beyond the existing CSR standards. Unusual and effective solving of tasks and problems in the company and its environment is conducive to the development and growth of employees. Scalability is connected with the scale of current CSR being too small. In the case of CSR 2.0, the scale of socially responsible practices should be much higher and include global problems. One should not focus on PR activities, but on the benefits that can be derived by the environment and society. Another feature of the new concept is responding, including in cases where it is inconvenient for the company and aims to change the business model. Glocality involves the adaptation of global products and services to the requirements of the local market. Circularity, on the other hand, is about designing actions that will be responsible and sustainable from the beginning to the end and will be characterized by the absence of prodigality and concern for stakeholders.

Visser, comparing the organization to the organism, proposed the four bases, which should dominate the organization of CSR 2.0. This concept involves four key DNA codes and the accompanying four strategic objectives (Table 2).

Table 2   *DNA code of CSR 2.0*

Basis of DNA	Strategic objective	Indicator	Description
Creating value	Economic development	Capital investments Profitable products Social inclusion	Economic, social, human and natural capital Responsible goods and products Distribution of wealth
Good management	Institutional effectiveness	Leadership Transparency Ethical practices	Strategic commitment to accountability and sustainable development Social reporting Prevention of corruption and bribes
Social contribution	Focus on stakeholders	Philanthropy Fair work practices Integrity of the supply chain	Donations Working conditions, respect for workers' rights, safety Development of the SME sector, maintaining high standards in contacts
Environmental integration	Sustainable Ecosystems	Protecting ecosystem Renewable resources Production without waste	Protection of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems Renewable energy and materials Elimination of waste

Source: Visser, 2014, p. 3.

The creator of the concept of CSR 2.0 – Visser shows the DNA code of CSR 2.0 which is based on value creation, efficient and effective management, commitment to social action and environmental concerns, it is supposed to enable the achievement of strategic goals which include a balanced ecosystem, economic development, focus on stakeholders and institutional effectiveness.

One of the differences between traditional CSR and CSR 2.0 is the departure from the micro scale, that is, from the perspective of a single company, and looking at the responsibility of companies from the macro perspective (as widely-understood impact on: society, not only the local community, the environment – not only in the immediate neighbourhood, but in the scale of the system formed by nature) (Stefańska, 2013, p. 2007).

Conclusions

Changes in the technical-social environment created new conditions for the formation and implementation of socially responsible activities. These conditions represent both opportunities and threats for many companies. The ability to use ICT and Web 2.0 tools, thanks to which companies can be in active contact with stakeholders and engage them to produce creative solutions, constitutes a real opportunity. However, the threat may be the criticism of business practices contrary to the principles of CSR. This criticism may even lead to boycotts of websites of such companies. The creation of a new profile of a stakeholder, who has a greater impact on the activities of businesses, leads to socially responsible companies being able to more closely involve in the implementation of CSR strategies. Social media in recent years have become an indispensable part of everyday life. Portals such as: Facebook, Youtube, Twitter are visited by millions of Internet users every day. They are the place of interpersonal interaction and a great source of information. Undoubtedly, a great advantage of the discussed media for the company is global reach and ability to reach a wide group of stakeholders. Furthermore, compared to conventional media, social media are much cheaper. They allow for collecting feedback and establishing cooperation with stakeholders and involving them in the CSR activities of the company. Organizations can use socially responsible media on several key levels, i.e. analysis of information, dialogue, creating relationships and cooperation. Unfortunately, studies show that in Poland many companies do not see the benefits of the presence in social media. As a result, only a small part of them uses social media as a communication channel for CSR activities. The popularity of social media continues to grow, and, therefore, it can be assumed that there will be more and more actions that are in line with CSR 2.0 in Poland.

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