Corporate Social Responsibility: A Profitable Alternative

Wai Ping Kan

University at Albany, State University of New York

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Corporate Social Responsibility: A Profitable Alternative

Wai Ping Kan

Corporate social responsibility has been very popular amongst companies and top corporations. However, the exact definition and the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility is often very vague and confusing to others. This paper will explore in depth of what exactly is corporate social responsibility, how companies are motivated to incorporating CSR into their ideals, business strategies and what actions do these companies take in order to become a socially responsible corporation.

Honors thesis advisor:
Dr. Raymond K. Van Ness
University at Albany, State University of New York
# Table of Contents

I. Introduction – What is Corporate Social Responsibility? ................................................. 1

II. Motivating Corporations toward becoming Responsible Corporations ........... 3

  “What is Assumed to Motivate Senior Managers to Engage in CSR” ..................... 9

  “What Should Motivate Senior Managers to Engage in CSR” ................................. 10

  Implementing and Managing CSR ........................................................................... 11

III. Actions of Socially Responsible Corporations .............................................................. 15

  J. Crew Group, Inc. ....................................................................................................... 15

  The Estee Lauder Companies Inc. ............................................ ................................. 20

  Johnson & Johnson ..................................................................................................... 25

IV. Summary and Conclusions ......................................................................................... 35

Notes ................................................................................................................................... 37

Works Cited ...................................................................................................................... 39
I. Introduction – What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

Corporate social responsibility has been very popular amongst companies and top corporations. Especially in the 21st century when environmental concerns, human rights, labor rights, fair trade and many other concerns are becoming increasingly important to consumers, stakeholders and companies alike. However the exact definition and the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility is often very vague and confusing to others. This paper will explore in depth of what exactly is corporate social responsibility, how companies are motivated to incorporating CSR into their ideals, business strategies and what actions do these companies take in order to become a socially responsible corporation.

Corporate social responsibility is not something that is required by the law for businesses to follow and implement. Companies who want to practice business more responsibly and contribute for the better of society often choose to implement CSR strategies. Many companies are incorporating CSR into their organizational ideals because they are looking to improve their performance and company image. Some see CSR as a marketing gimmick where companies try to get the attention of consumers and improve performance and sales. Often companies do decide to incorporate CSR into their business strategies because it will eventually help improve financial performance and improve the company image.¹ Many believe that success with corporate social responsibility strategies within a company will also lead to success in financial performance too.

There are various factors that contribute to the success and failures of CSR ideals and values within a company. Consumers and employees of the companies also play an important
role in shaping CSR polices within an organization. Some companies are more socially responsible than others. During this time of recession there are also companies who decide that it is too costly to maintain and continue with their CSR initiatives. It is difficult to define corporate social responsibility as there are multiple dimensions to this complex matter.

Carroll (1979) created a three dimensional model to help define corporate social responsibility. This model categorizes CSR into 4 components: economic, legal, ethical and discretionary. Economically, companies are supposed to perform well financially and meet consumption needs. Companies place economic responsibility as a top priority since they have to produce goods and services to meet the needs of society. By producing and meeting the needs of society they will also be able to make a profit. Then there is the legal component in which companies are required to conduct businesses that comply with the law. In order to stay in business and to have a high performance companies are expected to abide to the laws and regulations. The ethical component – companies should conduct their business ethically and follow society’s moral rules. They can go beyond the minimum legal requirements and simply want to conduct businesses ethically and morally. Lastly companies should be benevolent and philanthropic in nature – doing good causes, serving and helping communities and the society, etc. It is at their own discretion and completely voluntary for companies to contribute and engage in social activities. These four expectations of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary are part of corporate social responsibility.²

The Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship (BCCC) also has a similar definition of CSR where they defined corporate citizenship as “the commitment of companies to minimize risks, maximize benefits, be accountable and responsive to stakeholders and support financial results”.³ The BCCC’s definition of corporate citizenship equates corporate citizenship
with corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, sustainability are often used interchangeably (i.e. at the Business for Social Responsibility, World Business Council for Sustainable Development).\textsuperscript{4}

II. Motivating Corporations toward becoming Responsible Corporations

There are many organizations and guidelines developed and provided for businesses to follow. The UN Global Compact is an example of a non-profit organization that is created to focus on corporate social responsibility. In 2000 the United Nations launched the Global Impact – a voluntary association that includes 10 principles that corporate companies are supposed to follow in order to become socially responsible. The UN Global Compact creates a network of companies and organizations that are socially responsible. They have also created guidelines that concerns practicing business in a socially responsible way and encourage corporations to join. The UN Global Compact has written 10 principles that outline the expectations of corporate social responsibility. These 10 principles focused on human rights, labor, environment and anticorruption.
Most importantly the Global Compact focuses on how to create and share ideas of being socially responsible and overall become a better corporate citizen. The United Nations’ involvement has certainly given it a boost and helped promote corporate social responsibility among businesses. But organizations like the UN Global Compact do not have any power to enforce these regulations. They can create guidelines and promote CSR but ultimately it is up to the businesses to decide whether to comply with the CSR guidelines. Therefore many US corporations are skeptical of joining the Global Compact network of socially responsible companies because there is no accountability on whether a business is actually following the guidelines even when they claim that they are following it. Therefore many suggested for a legal framework to be developed so that it can be possible to determine whether a company is adhering to the guidelines.\(^5\)

Wai Ping Kan
Another international organization that develops and publishes guidelines for social responsibility is the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The ISO comprises of a network of guidelines that is developed by institutes of 162 countries around the world. Public and privates sectors come together to develop this social responsibility guideline (ISO 26000) that helps organizations of all sizes around the world to practice corporate social responsibility strategies. Though there are organizations and guidelines that are created to help manage and evaluate corporate social responsibility it is extremely difficult for businesses to achieve a certain level of CSR without working together with the public – both the government and non-profit organizations. The combined effort and work of all sectors might be able to make a big impact and help everyone achieve a degree of CSR that is efficient on the ISO 26000 guideline or the UN Global Compact guideline. There are also many other guidelines and references that scholars use to measure corporate social responsibility.  

Many organizations also create corporate social responsibility reports where they rank businesses and corporations based on their CSR performances in multiple dimensions. By ranking these businesses it may motivate them to perform better and attempt to become even more socially responsible since no one wants to be at the bottom of the list. The Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship and the Reputation Institute has been evaluating and ranking American companies on their level of corporate social responsibility for the past four years. The rankings and ratings are based on three factors: 1) citizenship – is the company socially responsible, 2) governance – transparency and 3) ethical business standards – employee satisfaction and paid a decent wage, and workplace. For 2011, Publix Super Markets Inc., Google, UPS, Kellogg’s, and Amazon.com have been ranked as the top five companies. Corporate social responsibility ratings and reports that are compiled yearly by organizations and
groups is also a motivator for businesses to follow up on their CSR policies. Since these businesses know that they will be evaluated and monitored at the end of the year they will be more motivated to follow the guidelines. This would push corporations to put in their best effort because in a list of top 50 companies for CSR, no company would like to be the last one on the list or even worse – not be on the list at all.

We will attempt to explore what drives companies to practice business in a socially responsible way. Some of the possible motives might be pressures and expectations from external sources such as consumers and society as a whole for business to be socially responsible. They are also more likely to act responsibly if these standards are widely accepted and supported by the society – kind of like society’s standards and expectation for all business to follow it. On top of that community leaders and stakeholders plays an important part in influencing a company’s decision to act socially responsible. In a study by Babiak and Trendafilova (2010), (Campbell (2007) pointed out that corporations are more likely to act socially responsible and follow CSR behaviors if there is strong and well enforced regulation in place to monitor and guide the company.8

Other possibilities to consider a company’s motive for adopting socially responsible strategies are that they want to be recognized by the public as a legitimate company. Besides receiving recognition many companies think that social performance and financial performance is linked together. If a company is socially responsible then they will also be able to perform well financially. Since CSR is becoming a trend in the business world many businesses are trying to catch up and be socially responsible. Not only is it an “expected requirement by society” but also many are eyeing CSR as an essential component in the company’s portfolio as it will bring a good reputation and attract more investments and resources for the company. Waddell (2000);
Waddock and Smith (2000); Vidaver-Cohen and Simcic Brønn (2008) all agreed that most companies that decide to adopt CSR will focus on activities that highlights their company strength in the industry and at the same time strengthen their relationship with the local community including partnership with various non-profit and governmental organizations. Then there is the moral and ethical reason for behaving socially responsible – companies are simply practicing CSR strategies and incorporating it into their business strategies because they want to contribute to society.

It is impossible to see immediate results from corporate social responsibility practice however most businesses know that CSR practice will help them in the long run. Ditlev-Simonsen and Midttun (2011) conducted a study and survey with the question of “What Motivates Managers to Pursue Corporate Responsibility”? They have summed up ten perspectives that motivate managers to practice CSR.

**Figure 2** (What Motivates Managers to Pursue Corporate Responsibility? A Survey among Key Stakeholders)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives on Corporate Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In our study we have grouped the pragmatic CR theories in the business literature under the following ten headings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Profit maxim: solely to increase profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Value maxim: to create long-term value for shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Stakeholdership: to satisfy different stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cluster-building: to build a strong cluster to provide a favorable business context for the company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Branding: to build a positive reputation and brand image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Innovation: to develop new products and business concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CopyingIMITATING: to resemble other companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ethics/morals: to do the ‘right thing’ (a moral issue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Managerial discretion: to fulfil the personal preferences and interests of the manager or person in charge of CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sustainability: to contribute to long-term sustainable development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most widely believed reason for engaging in CSR is often profit and value maximization in which companies hopes to improve and increase in profit for both short term and long term. Then there is stakeholdership – where the company has to satisfy stakeholders and therefore have
to practice CSR. Cluster building refers to the fact that businesses come together and contribute to the development of the local area/neighborhood. By forming a cluster of companies and contributing locally these companies can build a strong network to help each other out. Another major motivator of CSR engagement is branding and innovation. Many companies focus on building their brand and creating a good reputation because that is the core in maintaining and ensuring the well-being of the company in the long run. A company with a strong brand reputation will have better performance, attract more resources and have a competitive advantage over other companies. Also companies decide to become involved with CSR practice because they want to be placed in a new environment where they can come up with new ideas and create innovative products/services. Also since they are in a new market they will be the first one to test the water and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to develop new products.

Many companies that are trying to achieve corporate social responsibility are also trying to improve their corporate and brand image. These companies tend to look for ways of advertisement and promote to customers about their new and improved company image so they often incorporate cause-related marketing in their CSR practice. Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a method that companies use to inform consumers about how corporate social responsibility plays a role in the management and company overall. When a message for a certain cause or event is promoted to the audience it will influence consumers’ preference and buying decision.

When people think of corporate social responsibility they will almost always associate it with supporting a charitable cause or donating to charities. There is much more to corporate social responsibility than donating to charities. In fact corporate social responsibility is a very complex issue/matter than entails much more than charities. A company can be performing very well financially and decides to use cause-related marketing to support charitable causes. This
promotes their corporate image and at the same time they are marketing the product or service towards their audiences.

Cause related marketing (CRM) is often a method for companies to promote their image and show consumers their values and commitment to corporate social responsibility. Companies who are socially responsible tend to perform better than others as they have the consumers’ trust and support. Also these companies stand out more to consumers because the product/service is often associated with a social cause or shows the company’s devotion to corporate social responsibility.¹¹

In order to gain more insight as to what motivates managers to pursue CSR in their company a panel of corporate leaders, NGO employees and business students in Norway were surveyed unanimously to collect their opinions on what they think motivates and what should motivate managers to pursue CSR. 79 surveys were received from the corporate leaders’ panel, 300 surveys were received from the students’ panel and 35 surveys were received from the NGO panel. Based on the surveys across the 3 panels branding/marketing is assumed to be the most important for motivating businesses to engage in CSR.

“What is Assumed to Motivate Senior Managers to Engage in CSR”

Based on the surveys from the three panels branding, value maximization, stakeholdership and profit maximization are ranked as top priority for motivating managers to engage in CSR. Companies are mostly investing in CSR because they want to build their brand image and reputation. Many believe that they will benefit in the long run – increase profit and value for shareholders. Also satisfying the stakeholders and ensuring that they are happy with the company’s business strategies is very important. Meanwhile cluster-building and innovation are
ranked somewhere in the middle by all three panels. Ethics/morals were ranked lowest on the bottom of the list across the three panels. This suggests that many businesses are engaging in CSR for practical reasons such as profit, branding, innovation instead of thinking about morals and ethics.

Figure 3  (What Motivates Managers to Pursue Corporate Responsibility? A Survey among Key Stakeholders)

“What Should Motivate Senior Managers to Engage in CSR”

The results for what should motivate managers to engage in CSR are slightly different from what is assumed to motivate managers in CSR. Previously branding was ranked as the number assumed motivator that engages managers to practice CSR. Across the three panels surprisingly sustainability is ranked as the number one motivator that should engage managers. Another interesting note is that ethics/moral went from the bottom of the list to the top as a high priority factor that motivates managers. Also profit maximization moved down the list to low priority.
Value maximization and stakeholdership has consistently stayed at the top of the list and this reflects how the three panels value long term value and the satisfaction of stakeholders.

Moreover they know that CSR does not yield immediate results and payoffs. Overall branding and reputation building is viewed as a high priority motivator for managers to engage in CSR. Ditlev-Simonsen and Midttun (2011) pointed out the reason for branding to be ranked as a top motivator is probably due to the “strong brand orientation in western business practice” and how in the present day – media and communication are so important and are on the rise.  

**Implementing and Managing CSR**

Most companies do not have the correct tools and skills to management and incorporate CSR so they often struggle with managing CSR. In order for CSR to be successfully practiced in a company measurement tools, communication and recognition is needed. Companies often struggle with communication, as they have to communicate both internally and externally. Most of the time companies focus on external communication and neglect internal communication with their own employees.
When businesses decide to engage in CSR practices many top management teams should start with implementing CSR values and ideals within the company first. By focusing internally, companies are able to change the internal structure of the organization and the corporate identity overall. When implementing corporate social responsibility policies and values in a company the employees play a very important role in whether the implementation will be a success or failure. If the employees does not support or understand the decisions then it will be very difficult to make any changes even though it is ultimately the top management team who makes the final decisions. There is a difference between the ideals of CSR and actual practice of CSR. The company has to coordinate the changes slowly and it is best for the employees to take part in the discussion.

If a company states that they are socially responsible but fail to first implement CSR strategies from within the organization then they will be criticized by the public. A reason for fail might be due to the top-down management system where employees are often given orders to follow without having a chance to ask questions or voice out their opinions. During the time of implementation employees might not agree with the values or perhaps have misunderstandings. When the company is identifying CSR strategies it should be a participative process instead of top-down system. Only through communication and value feedbacks from the employees then the company can make progress with corporate social responsibility values within the organization. Communication helps solve any misunderstandings and ensure efficiency. Without these two factors it will be difficult and hard to attain high standards of corporate social responsibility.

To ensure that everyone in a company is on the same page and has the same views of corporate social responsibility the stakeholders and employees should take part in the CSR
planning process. By collecting ideas and feedback internally and externally it would be easier to engage and implement CSR. This will bring in multiple perspectives and concerns, which will address all aspects of CSR standards. Besides developing CSR strategies it is also difficult for the company to successfully use CSR strategies along with their business strategies.  

(Pinney, 2009) developed a Corporate Citizenship Management Framework (CCMF) to help companies understand more about CSR. There are four domains for managing CSR:

1. Values, Mission, Principles, and Policies: making sure CSR is aligned with the company’s management structure.
2. Community Support – Addressing Social Challenges: take part in the community by helping out social issues and supporting them.
3. Operations – Responsible Business Practices: operate your business responsibly. (Health and safety, sustainable environmental practices, human rights, employees, etc.)
4. Products and Services – Marketing Strategy: changing products/services and adapting to societal needs. (I.e. marketing the product to be socially beneficial or eco-efficient.)

The Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship has developed a Corporate Citizenship Assessment Tool that is based off from the Corporate Citizenship Management Framework (CCMF) to help companies determine their current state of CSR. This tool is an online platform where companies will answer 79 questions about their CSR management and practices to figure out their strengths and weaknesses. The questions developed by BCCCC were based on the four dimensions of Corporate Citizenship Management Framework. This provides companies with a
more accurate assessment of where to focus on and what areas need to be managed in order to engage in CSR successfully.

More than 70 large and small, public, private companies and NGOs have used this assessment tool to determine their strengths and weaknesses with corporate social responsibility. While using this assessment tool many managers have come to realize that they need the help of many departments and employees to complete all the questions. This helps with internal communication as the manager realizes that employees are a critical part of the company; they are necessary in ensuring the success of CSR practice. Since this tool provides feedback for companies it also helps them identify new opportunities to further advance their CSR engagement. Some of the companies that have used the assessment tool are: Adobe Systems Inc., Best Buy Co., Burger King Corp., Intel Corp., Expedia, Exxon Mobil Corp., Wells Fargo, Verizon Communication and General Mills.16

There are many organizations and assessment tools available to companies to help them and motivate them towards becoming more socially responsible. More than often companies are attracted to become socially responsible but they lack the necessary tools and assistance to practice CSR. Now with so many resources and organizations for CSR, companies can easily find the right method to assess their level of CSR and strengths and weaknesses to work on.
III. Actions of Socially Responsible Corporations

There are so many companies that are currently practicing corporate social responsibility. For some companies their vision and mission statement are centered on practicing business in a socially responsible way. Then there are other companies whose goal is to become more socially responsible and more profitable. Every company is different as they have different structures, cultures and as a result are in different stages of corporate social responsibility. In this part of the paper we will analyze various companies and their actions of becoming a socially responsible company. The four components of corporate social responsibility as defined by Carroll (1976) will be used as the basis to analyze these companies. These four components are economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary.

J. Crew Group, Inc.

A company that will be analyzed in this paper is J. Crew Group, Inc. as they have been very successful with their business. The company’s social behaviors, core values and actions will be analyzed to see how they are working towards becoming more socially responsible in different aspects. J. Crew’s social responsibility mission statement is:

“We believe that we have a responsibility to operate our business with sensitivity to the world around us. We seek to incorporate sustainable business practices into all of our operations, improve our environmental impact and support social responsibility and community involvement. As part of our long-standing commitment to service, we hope to inspire our associates, customers and partners to protect the environment and promote social responsibility.”

Wai Ping Kan
J. Crew is an American apparel retailer headquartered in New York City that debuted in 1983 with the mailing of its first catalog. After six years since their debut in the clothing retail industry J. Crew opened a flagship store at New York South Street Seaport. They are a multi-brand, multi-channel specialty retailer. J. Crew has been selling upscale high-quality clothing to men, women and children. They use high quality and luxurious material such as cashmere, wool, leather along with the finest global fabric mills and craftsmen creating classic clothing styles and accessories with a twist. J. Crew also offers unique, vintage and limited edition item collection items to its customers. They have also launched other lines such as crewcuts (for children), J. Crew Weddings & Parties and Italian Cashmere Collection. J. Crew introduced Madewell in 2006, a women’s casual modern day clothing store targeting women ages 18-40. J. Crew is still continuously expanding its business through retail stores, factory stores, online and catalog business. Today, there are 248 retail stores – including 9 crewcuts and 20 Madewells stores, 85 factory stores, and 3 clearance stores nationwide. They have also expanded its international e-commerce in 2011 to include shipping to select international destinations. 18 19

As of January 2011 J. Crew has about 12,700 employees, where 3,800 were full time employees and 8,900 were part-time employees. Approximate 1,000 employees work at the customer call center and direct order fulfillment operations facilities. There are 260 employees who work at the store distribution center. During peak seasons during the holidays approximately 3,200 employees are hired due to store demand. Even though employees are not represented by a union, J. Crew still has a good relationship with its employees as they have had no labor-related work stoppages.

Wai Ping Kan
J. Crew offers a comprehensive benefits package with competitive salary, a bonus potential and a store discount. J. Crew is an Equal Opportunity Employer as they embrace diversity and this value is reflected through the actions of the company and work environment. J. Crew states that they are committed to affirmatively providing equal opportunity to all associates and qualified applicants without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, legally protected physical or mental disability or any other basis protected under applicable law. Currently the average salary for working at J. Crew full time is $51,000. Employees are offered medical, life and dental insurance along with 25 paid vacation days and a 30% store discount. Starting from 2009 the company has been trying to implement cost reduction plan due to the tough economy – to reduce workforce by about 95 positions in the New York offices and support functions in the field and distribution centers (about 10% reduction in staffing for the departments included). The employees who were affected were offered severance packages along with transition assistance. Also J. Crew suspended the 401(k) Plan Company matching contributions though the balance of 2009. Thought J. Crew has announced the cost reduction of company workforce there have not been any labor strikes or uprisings of any sort.

Customer satisfaction is a top priority for J. Crew as they offer a wide array of services and promotions specifically for its customers. J. Crew offers perks for its frequent customers such as exclusive pre-sale and promotions allowing them to get a firsthand look of the new line for the season. Also they offer personal shopper services to customers so they can seek professional advice and opinions on J. Crew products. The J. Crew customer service phone line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A live chat feature is offered on the J. Crew website if customers are uncomfortable with calling into the customer service line.
who shop at J. Crew stores are entitled to a 15% discount by showing a college ID. Price adjustments can be made on merchandise within 7 days of a purchase if the price of the item drops due to sales. The company distributes their merchandise through several different sales channels: retail stores, catalogs and e-commerce so this allows for customers to make purchases in the most comfortable and convenient way that they prefer.

J. Crew emphasizes that their suppliers must also be socially responsible. Backed in 2000, J. Crew was part of the $20 million dollar settlement for violations of labor laws and international human rights. The workers of the island of Saipan that is part of the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Marina Islands brought upon a lawsuit on J. Crew and many retailers for forced labor. They were working 12 hours a day and 7 days a week making less than $3.05 an hour. J. Crew was required to hire a non-profit organization in Massachusetts to act as an independent monitor to ensure that the factories in Saipan are being socially responsible. J. Crew established a Responsible Sourcing Program to clearly communicate with their suppliers. The J. Crew Code of Vendor Conduct is the basis of this Responsibility Sourcing Program. This Code of Vendor Conduct contains the principles that all suppliers are expected to adhere to. The Code of Vendor Conduct includes 14 principles that cover child labor, forced labor, discrimination, harassment and abuse, wage and benefits, hours of work, freedom of association, health and safety, laws and regulations, customs and security, environmental standards, subcontracting, transparency and monitoring and compliance.

This company constantly monitors its suppliers to ensure that they are following the rules. There were about 150 vendors representing about 215 authorized factories in 18 countries in the fiscal year 2010. J. Crew inspected 80% of the existing authorized companies and 100% of the new factories. In 2004, one of J. Crew’s merchandise – the men’s barn coat was found to
contain a toxin Teflon which is synthetic material composed of chemicals that contaminate human blood and can cause polymer fume fever when burnt at relatively low temperatures. J. Crew shortly removed the coat after the discovery of Teflon was found in the men’s barn coat. In 2006 a Chinese textile company, Xinhua that is a supplier of J. Crew was said to have released over 10 million tons of waste through an underground pipe over the last two years. As a result Xinhua was fined $1.4 million for the discharge of illegal sewage for the last two years. J. Crew is not using Xinhua as a supplier anymore due to them violating the Code of Vendor Conduct.

J. Crew has many suppliers outside of the U.S. such as manufacturers in Europe and Asia so they are subject to the regulations of federal and state agencies such as the U.S. Custom Service and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. An example would be that the company monitors closely on import and export operations that ensure that they are adhering to the regulations of the U.S Custom Service. The catalogs, labeling and packaging of merchandise along with advertisement must meet the standards of the Federal Trade Commission. J. Crew has a good relationship with its suppliers, as there are usually no problems with the import of merchandise.

They are also working towards become socially responsible in the environmental aspect by developing programs in five key areas: energy efficiency, paper/natural resources, waste minimization, supply chain and engagement. J. Crew aims to become more earth-friendly by developing and implementing strategies to reduce the effects that their operations have on the environment. By developing programs and policies to help the environment at the same time J. Crew also hopes to improve their performance. The three main goals that guides J. Crew’s social responsibility program are: “reduce, environmental impact of our facilities and products”,

Wai Ping Kan
“improve the environmental performance of our supply chain” and “engage associates, customers and suppliers in our efforts”. When J. Crew purchases paper for their catalogs they prefer to use paper that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to ensure that the paper comes from responsibly harvested and verified sources. Also shopping bags are made from 100% recycled paper. When sending out packages J. Crew also makes sure that they are optimizing their packaging to eliminate any unnecessary waste.

J. Crew seems to be fairly socially responsible as they are committed to working towards the goal of being a responsible company. They had lawsuits and violations before but they are very transparent with their company information and have a dedicated social responsibility page on their website. There are many fans of J. Crew who praises the company’s products and excellent customer service. J. Crew also participates in philanthropic events to help those in need and fundraise for causes.

**The Estee Lauder Companies Inc.**

Another company that will be analyzed is The Estee Lauder Companies, Inc. Estee Lauder is a well-known prestigious cosmetic company that is headquartered in New York City. Estee Lauder was founded in 1946 by Estee Lauder and her husband Joseph Lauder with four cosmetics products and has grown to manufacture and market prestigious skincare, makeup, fragrance and hair care products for men and women. The company’s mission statement is “Bringing the Best to Everyone We Touch and Being the Best in Everything We Do”. The vision statement is “The global leader in prestige beauty; a well-diversified, brand-building powerhouse of unrivaled creativity and innovation”. Currently there are 28 brands that are managed by The Estee Lauder Companies, Inc. Some of these brands are Bobbi Brown, Bumble and bumble,
Clinique, Coach, Donna Karen, La Mer, M.A.C, Tom Ford and many others. Estee Lauder products ranges from entry-level prestige to ultra-premium luxury and are sold in more than 150 countries around the world. The Estee Lauder Companies also has a page dedicated to corporate social responsibility on their website. The company’s employee relations, customer relations, government relations, environmental relations, community relations and many other factors that contribute to corporate social responsibility will be analyzed.

The company has about 32,300 employees operating in 150 countries. Estee Lauder embraces diversity and takes pride in providing a work environment to people of different races, sexual orientations, genders, ethnicities, religions and background. The company also empowers women in the company to be leaders and innovators. There are six women on the Board of Directors and three of the Executive Officers are women.

Estee Lauder values its employees and believes that they bring unique approaches and innovative ideas to the company. The success of the company is the result of all the talents, efforts and passions that employees contributed to and the company values them. The Chairman Emeritus of the company, Leonard A. Lauder said, “The wealth of a company is its people. By that standard, we are a very wealthy company”. There are many professional development and training opportunities available at Estee Lauder for its employees. The company’s education and development program offers tuition reimbursement, global executive development, executive training, brand training, sustainability training, workshops and other perks for employees. Estee Lauder aspires to have a workplace with zero incidents so they have 27 full-time employees to monitor environmental, health and safety concerns at their manufacturing, distribution and retail facilities.
A global based-behavior safety program was introduced in 2010 to promote safe behavior between employees by encouraging them to positively influence one another through observation, coaching and communication. The company also allows employees to communicate effectively and efficiently with each other and the senior leadership team by offering an enhanced intranet. As a result senior leaders can get direct feedback from employees and keep in touch despite of being in another country. There is an anonymous Code of Conduct telephone hotline that allows employees to call in when they complaints regarding discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment.29

Customer relation is another factor that is greatly valued at Estee Lauder. There are many channels and ways for offered by Estee Lauder to communicate and promote awareness with its customers. Estee Lauder is known for the technique of gift-with-purchase offer that has become a norm in the cosmetics industry. Estee Lauder has 6 global Consumer Care Centers and toll-free hotlines to assist customers. Also customers are given individualized attention at Estee Lauder stores. The company’s various channels of distribution: upscale department stores, specialty retailers, upscale perfumeries and pharmacies, prestige hair salons and spas, freestanding company stores, direct response TV, stores on cruise ships, in-flight, duty-free shops and the Internet allow consumers to purchase Estee Lauder brands cosmetics products whenever and wherever they are. Estee Lauder products are luxuriously priced but consumers are also getting quality cosmetics, top-notch service along with a prestigious reputation for the brand. They strive to be a responsible company through eliminating waste and reducing inefficiencies so that customers can receive the maximum value for the products they purchase. Though they strive for customer satisfaction there are complaints made by customers stating that they have allergic reactions to the cosmetics products. Customers found it extremely difficult to return products and
were even treated terribly. Some customers also reported that the customer service hotline was not helpful and they were treated rudely.\textsuperscript{30, 31}

Since Estee Lauder is a cosmetics company they are subject to the laws and regulations related to cosmetics and the safety of consumers. There are two laws that are related to cosmetics and in the U.S. – the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act. Then there is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that ensures the safety of the consumer and the environment. The FDA has been conducting studies on the level of lead that are in lipsticks. 400 lipsticks brands and companies have been tested and were all found to contain various levels of lead. Clinique, M.A.C and Estee Lauder lipstick brands have been tested and determined to contain lead. The level of lead found in these lipsticks are below the hazardous level, as the FDA does not consider the lead levels found in the lipsticks to be a safety concern. Though the level of lead in the lipsticks are not a safety concern Estee Lauder will continuously monitor the FDA regulations for possible changes in the future so that they will be able to comply with the regulations.\textsuperscript{32}

Estee Lauder tries to minimize its environmental impact by focusing on sustainable packaging, energy conservation, biodiversity, green chemistry and return/recycle. There is a Corporate Environmental Affairs and Safety (EAS) Committee that develops and oversees the company’s environmental policies and strategies. The top priorities of the EAS Committee is to: recycle and reuse as many resources as possible, conserve water and to reduce contribution to global climate change by conserving energy and reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with their operations. Meanwhile the Global Environmental Affairs and Safety Department reviews the company’s safety, health and environmental performance and risks every year. Some of the company’s achievements are: 6 of Estee Lauder’s suppliers have

Wai Ping Kan
committed to using renewable energy, 100% PCR plastic contents are used in promotional bottles and Clinique uses 80% recycled aluminum in their skincare caps.\textsuperscript{33}

Besides aiming to improve company performance and becoming more sustainable Estee Lauder has also been contributing a lot to the community. Estee Lauder is involved with many philanthropic activities and causes. They have Corporate Charitable Contributions Committee comprised of senior executives that are focused on funding local and global organizations that reflects the interests and concerns of their employees, partners and consumers. Estee Lauder’s largest philanthropic campaigns are The Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign, the M.A.C AIDS Fund and the AVEDA Earth Fund. The Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign that started in 1992 also created the Pink Ribbon as a symbol for breast health and breast cancer awareness. The M.A.C AIDS Fund allows M.A.C employees to volunteer and help those affected by HIV/AIDS throughout the world. Their mission is to help and serve people of all ages, all races and all sexes affected by HV/AIDS. The AVEDA Earth Fund is committed to earth and community care by supporting projects that protects communities; preserve natural resources and ecosystems, and bringing various environmental, economic and social benefits to local communities.\textsuperscript{34}

The type of suppliers that Estee Lauder uses for its cosmetics products plays an important role in social responsibility. Estee Lauder is committed to sourcing products and services responsibly as they have high standards for their suppliers. In 2010 they have spent around $1 billion within about 100 countries. They try to purchase from suppliers that close to their manufacturing plants in order to reduces carbon dioxide emission from transport. Also Estee Lauder has a Supplier Code of Conduct, which all suppliers must adhere to in addition to the local regulations. Natural ingredients are used to create many of the Estee Lauder brands products. The company partners with institutions such as the United Nation and NGOs to
identify sustainable sources for the creation of their products. The Estee Lauder Global Operations Department monitors and ensures that the companies are adhering to the necessary international, national, local standards and regulations. Regular inspections and internal audits are conducted at the company.\textsuperscript{35}

**Johnson & Johnson**

Besides analyzing clothing and cosmetics companies we will also look into a pharmaceuticals company – Johnson & Johnson. Johnson & Johnson the pioneer of medical devices and products that was founded in 1886 has 126 years of history. They are headquartered in Brunswick, New Jersey. Originally a medical supplies company Johnson & Johnson has expanded to three business segments of consumer, pharmaceutical and medical devices and diagnostics. The company’s products are sold in over 275 countries. There are over 250 subsidiary companies under Johnson & Johnson operating in 60 countries. Some the brands under Johnson & Johnson are Band-Aid, Neutrogena, Acuvue, Tylenol and many more.

Johnson & Johnson is considered one of the top companies to work at in many countries. They are the 8\textsuperscript{th} largest pharmaceuticals company in the world. Currently the company has about 117,900 employees around the world who are working on research and development, manufacturing and sales. Johnson & Johnson values its employees as they are known for their high level of commitment and care towards their employees. This can be seen in Johnson & Johnson’s credo where they show value and responsibility towards their employees. The credo states:
“We are responsible to our employees, the men and women who work with us throughout the world. Everyone must be considered as an individual. We must respect their dignity and recognize their merit. They must have a sense of security in their jobs. Compensation must be fair and adequate, and working conditions clean, orderly and safe. We must be mindful of ways to help our employees fulfill their family responsibilities. Employees must feel free to make suggestions and complaints. There must be equal opportunity for employment, development and advancement for those qualified. We must provide competent management, and their actions must be just and ethical”.

Employees are highly valued by the company as they provided with opportunities to develop and advance their careers, well-regarded compensation, benefits and employee programs. Johnson & Johnson has a School of Personal and Professional Development and e-University for employees to take classes. Training and development are accessible globally and are available at the individual, team and organizational levels. To ensure the success and growth of employees Johnson & Johnson provides many opportunities and a unique environment for career development and performance management. Employees also get to develop a personal customized development plan and receive personal coaching from senior executives so that they can learn more about the company and understand how they contribute to the overall success of the company.

Johnson & Johnson are committed to bringing diversity to the workplace as they believe that it is the key success as it would help create innovative ideas, develop talents, gives the company a diverse insight on health products and needs. Johnson & Johnson has a global office of Diversity and Inclusion, which includes Equal Opportunity and Work/Life practices. Then
they also have the Johnson & Johnson Diversity University that provides online resource to employees to help them understand and value diversity and the benefits of working together.\textsuperscript{38}

The company also has many guidelines such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, Harassment Policy, Policy on the Employment of Young Persons and Guide for Resolving Employee Disagreements to assure that their employees are treated fairly and equally.

As a health care company, employees’ health and wellness is very important to Johnson & Johnson. Employees are given a comprehensive benefits plan – Choices Benefits Program that allows them to design their own personalized benefits package for themselves and family members. These benefits includes: medical, dental, vision, tobacco cessation, HealthAccount, CareAccount, a basic level of life insurance, accident insurance, disability coverage, long-term care insurance, group legal insurance, auto and home insurance and commuter benefits program. These benefits are available to employees who are active salaried and also to non-union hourly employees as well as regular and part-time employees who works 19 hours or more per week yearly.\textsuperscript{39} The company believes that by promoting the health and wellness of employees, health care costs would decrease and productivity and engagement would increase. There is the Healthy People program that is available globally and provides Employee Assistance, Occupational Health and Wellness and Health Promotion services. Johnson & Johnson believes that a balance in the work, home and personal life is very important so they offer employees many comprehensive programs such as flexible work arrangements, child care, adoption, education and elder care. Some of the programs offered at Johnson & Johnson are Employee Assistance and Work/Life Resource & Referral Services, Proactive Health Assessment & Health Counseling, Workplace Health Programs and Wellness and Fitness Services.\textsuperscript{40}
Johnson & Johnson has a powerful and strong relationship with its customers as they have been building their brand for more than a century. The Johnson & Johnson credo also states their vision and responsibilities towards their customers. It states:

“We believe our first responsibility is to the doctors, nurses and patients, to mothers and fathers and all others who use our products and services. In meeting their needs everything we do must be of high quality. We must constantly strive to reduce our costs in order to maintain reasonable prices. Customers’ orders must be serviced promptly and accurately. Our suppliers and distributors must have an opportunity to make a fair profit”.

As a medical company it is very important for Johnson & Johnson to provide high quality products and services to its customers. Also they understand that they have responsibility to the doctors, nurses and patients, to mothers and fathers and all others who uses their products and services. They are dedicated to their customers and want to provide high quality products with a low cost.

There has been a few recalls for Johnson & Johnson as they believe that the customers safety at the number one priority. The most well-known recall was the 1982 Tylenol recall due to seven deaths in Chicago. Several bottles of Tylenol Extra-Strength capsules were tampered and laced with potassium cyanide that killed seven people. Johnson & Johnson recalled the products and changed the designs of the product with tamper proof bottles. They also replaced the product with tablets that were safer for consumers. Instead of withdrawing the brand Johnson & Johnson worked very hard to win back the trust of customers. They started a coupon campaign that offered customers with free Tylenol capsules or pills to gain back their confidence.
In 2008 Johnson & Johnson-Merck Consumer Pharmaceuticals Company voluntarily recalled about 12,000 units of 1 ounce bottles Infant’s Mylicon® Gas Relief Dye Free Drops that was distributed across the country. It was discovered that they might be metal fragments inside the bottles however the potential for harm was low. The company decided to issue a recall for all of the 12,000 units of products right away, as they are more concerned about the safety of their customers.\(^\text{43}\)

In 2010 Johnson & Johnson received a federal warning letter for mishandling quality control problems with Tylenol. There were consumer complaints of Tylenol Arthritis Relief Caplets that had moldy odors. The company failed to respond and thoroughly investigate the complaints. In 2008 consumers complaint about having temporary digestive problems after taking the product however Johnson & Johnson failed to conduct determine the cause of the musty smell. Johnson & Johnson responded by issuing a recall of Tylenol arthritis products along with more than 500 product lots of Tylenol, Benadryl, Rolaids, St. Joseph’s Aspirin, Motrin and Simply Sleep. The cause for the musty smell of pills was due to the breakdown of a preservative from the company plant in Puerto Rico. This preservative was used to treat wooden transport pallets and had leached into the products. Though the company has stumbled they have decided to change the ways it reviews consumer complaints so that they can identify the problems quicker and solve it. In addition the company announced that all products in the future would have to be preservative-free so that this kind of situation would not happen again.\(^\text{44}\)

Johnson & Johnson has a set of Global labor and Employment Guidelines that clearly states their expectations and policies. This is to ensure that Johnson & Johnson companies around the world are following environmental, labor and employment regulations and laws relative to the country that the company is located in. The company has to adhere to any
regulations and laws set by the U.S. and other countries that they operate in. An example would be the regulations of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the U.S.\textsuperscript{45}

The company has a Johnson & Johnson Political Action Committee (JJPAC) that helps fund men and women who are interested in serving the public by seeking elected office. The company supports those who understand the importance of medical innovations and the health industry. The Political Action Committee is funded by voluntary employee contributions. This offers eligible employees to volunteer and voice out their views on issues related to the health industry and also helps shape public policies.\textsuperscript{46}

Johnson & Johnson is a supporter of sustainable sourcing of palm oil. Palm oil and other ingredients from palm oil are widely used in personal care products such as lotions, shampoos and soaps. The wide usage threatened the environments of endangered species and damaged many rainforests. In 2006 the company decided to join the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) will allowed them to source all palm oil and palm oil derivatives from certified sustainable sources.\textsuperscript{47}

The company has also received numerous awards and recognitions around the world for its contribution and efforts to the environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has listed Johnson & Johnson as a Performance Track Corporate Leader for showing their superior commitment to the environment on the corporate level. Then in 2006 the EPA awarded Johnson & Johnson the Climate Protection Award for their commitment to use cleaner sources of energy and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2009 they were ranked number 3 out of 500 for the first Newsweek’s Green Ranking List. Besides being recognized for their commitment in the U.S. Johnson & Johnson were also recognized internationally.
Johnson & Johnson have also received numerous award and recognitions abroad. In Brazil they were named as one of the best ISO 14001 certified companies. Groundwork UK, a federation of the local environmental trusts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland recognized a Johnson & Johnson facility in Leeds, United Kingdom with two awards. These two awards were given for the facility’s waste minimization projects and excellence in environmental management. Then in Shanghai Johnson & Johnson was recognized by the Shanghai Economics Committee, Shanghai Construction Committee and Water Shanghai Administration as the Shanghai Best Performer Water Conservation Corporation.\textsuperscript{48}

In 2006 the company has created Healthy Planet 2010 Goals where they hope to reduce waste and protect the environment. These goals are based off the company’s credo, which states that they must “maintain in good order the property we are privileged to use, protecting the environment and natural resources”.\textsuperscript{49} Some of the company’s goals are:

- To be transparent in that the company can provide environmental sustainability information to the public.
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 7%.
- Reduce water usage.
- Absolute reduction of hazardous and non-hazardous waste.
- Eliminate PVC in primary, secondary and tertiary packaging in the Consumer sector.
- Increase employee awareness and understanding of global environmental issues.\textsuperscript{50}

Johnson & Johnson’s credo also mentioned the responsibility that they have to the community. In their credo they stated: “We are responsible to the communities in which we live and work to the world community as well. We must be good citizens – support good works and
charities and bear our fair share of taxes. We must encourage civic improvements and better health and education.” Johnson & Johnson are dedicated to helping people by making their lives better and healthier. In 2010 the company has contributed more than $603.3 million in cash and products to over 700 programs in more than 53 countries. When the Sichuan earthquake happened Johnson & Johnson collaborated with China’s Ministry of Health and Huaxi Hospital Mental Health Center to provide help to the children who are recovering from the earthquake. Also they had another collaboration with the Chinese Ministry of Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics creating the China’s Neonatal Resuscitation Program that helped saved the lives of many children. Some of other Johnson & Johnson’s initiatives and collaborations are: the support of doctors, nurses and local leaders by partnering with organizations to provide training in countries such as Vietnam, the Children Free From Worms Program by donating medicines and the INMED Healthy Children, Healthy Future program that promotes healthy growth and development.

On their credo Johnson & Johnson stated their final responsibility as to their stockholders. In the credo they stated,

“Our final responsibility is to our stockholders. Business must make a sound profit. We must experiment with new ideas. Research must be carried on, innovative programs developed and mistakes paid for. New equipment must be purchased, new facilities provided and new products launched. Reserves must be created to provide for adverse times. When we operate according to these principles, the stockholders should realize a fair return”.

Wai Ping Kan
Johnson & Johnson believes that when they operate accordingly stockholders will be satisfied and will receive a fair share of return. The company has been founded in 1886 and was listed on the New York Stock Exchange since 1944. They had 28 consecutive years of adjusted earnings increases and 49 consecutive years of dividend increases. Lastly over the last 10 years Johnson & Johnson’s stocks have generated a 3.6% total return which is higher than the average of 2.9% total return for S&P 500.54

Johnson & Johnson has a relationship that is based on trust and respect with its suppliers. The company relies on thousands of suppliers who provide raw materials, services and goods that is needed to manufacture products, serve its customers and their offices and facilities. Their credo sums up their view on suppliers: “to obtain the highest quality products and services at a cost that represents the best possible value, while maintaining the highest ethical standards, and taking our social and environmental responsibilities seriously”.55 Johnson & Johnson are looking for high quality products and services for the best possible value but they are not going to forsake value for social and environmental responsibilities.

In Johnson & Johnson’s Suppliers Responsibility Standards Report they clearly outlined their expectations and the belief that a good relationship is based on trust, mutual respect and common values. Suppliers are expected to:

- Comply with applicable legal requirements,
- Behave ethically and with integrity,
- Integrate quality into business processes,
- Respect human and employment rights,
- Promote the safety, health and well-being of employees
- Embrace sustainability and operate in an environmentally responsible manner,
- Implement management systems to maintain business continuity, performance governance, and continuous improvement, and
- Disclose information associated with the supplier’s impact on the environment and social issues.\textsuperscript{56}

These standards and requirements are the basis for Johnson & Johnson selecting and choosing their suppliers. Besides targeting big suppliers the company also tries to collaborate with smaller suppliers to create a more diverse environment. Johnson & Johnson created a Suppliers Diversity Program in 1998 that gives small businesses the opportunity to work with Johnson & Johnson.

Some of these small businesses are:
- Certified minority-owned businesses, small and large
- Certified woman-owned businesses, small and large
- Certified Gay/Lesbian-owned businesses, small and large
- Certified small disadvantaged businesses
- Small veteran-owned and service disabled veteran-owned businesses
- Small, certified HUBZone businesses\textsuperscript{57}

Ever since the creation of the program in 1998 Johnson & Johnson has spent almost one billion dollars with small businesses and diverse-owned suppliers. So the company is really trying to diversify its list of suppliers and give as many opportunities as possible.
IV. Summary and Conclusion

Three companies have been analyzed for their actions of being socially responsible: J. Crew Group, Inc., The Estee Lauder Companies Inc. and Johnson & Johnson. These companies all have web pages and reports dedicated to social responsibility concerning employee rights, suppliers’ standards, environmentally sustainable, etc. Based on Carroll (1979)’s definition of corporate social responsibility – there are four components (economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary) and these companies satisfies the definition of becoming more socially responsible. Each of these companies is working towards becoming more socially responsible as they face various struggles and problems. It seems like for these companies the legal and ethical components are slightly more difficult to satisfy as they have had problems with it. Though they are following the laws and have guidelines and policies to ensure that workers and even customers are being treated fairly and they are violating any human rights/labor regulations sometimes it does not work out.

It is very difficult to achieve high standards in all factors of being socially responsible. These companies might succeed in one factor of being socially responsible such as environmentally responsible yet lack in the area of being responsible to its employees. For example J. Crew Group, Inc. was involved in a lawsuit in Saipan for forced labor where workers worked 12 hours a day for 7 days a week. Then The Estee Lauder Companies, Inc. customers complained about the difficulty to return products and that employee are rude. Lastly Johnson & Johnson were faced with many recalls of their products. This shows that assessment tools and frameworks such as the Corporate Citizenship Management Framework (CCMF) are needed to help companies assess their own level of corporate social responsibility. Only by assessing the company and finding the strengths and weaknesses then they will know where to focus on and
can work on improving each areas of social responsibility. As mentioned previously, organizations such as the UN Global Compact and assessments tools along with rankings are important in motivating companies to become successful in all areas of CSR.

Also some other motivators of CSR for companies are branding, sustainability, value maximization, stakeholdership and innovation. We can see that J. Crew, Estee Lauder and Johnson & Johnson are all working towards becoming socially responsible through becoming more sustainable, treating its employees and suppliers fairly, adhering to regulations and laws, etc. As they work on improving and achieving responsibility in all these factors of CSR these companies are building their brand, creating innovative products, becoming more sustainable and become more financially stable. If carried out correctly corporate social responsibility should go hand in hand with the company’s performance and well-being. It is profitable for companies to implement corporate social responsibility strategies as it will only help their businesses. Although it is difficult to receive high ratings in all areas of corporate social responsibility but many companies are working towards becoming more and more responsible as they are motivated. J. Crew, Estee Lauder and Johnson & Johnson are all preparing for the future by focus on corporate social responsibility as it a profitable alternative. It is the way to become stronger and survive amongst competitors, as they know that corporate social responsibility will make a big difference and help the company survive in the tough economy.
Notes

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11 A Strategy to Communicate Corporate Social Responsibility: Cause Related Marketing and its Dark Side
12 What Motivates Managers to Pursue Corporate Responsibility? A Survey among Key Stakeholders
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Wai Ping Kan


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