

The Future of CSR? Back to the Past

Caroline Jawad*, Stephen Griffiths

University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea, Wales, United Kingdom

*Corresponding author's email: caroline.jawad@uwtsd.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The pandemic, global warming, economic recession, political and military strife have created uncertainty in all cultures, but especially in business spheres. Goddard's cartoon suggests that CSR adoption is ubiquitous, however the reality of CSR performance is nebulous. The cartoon was created before the current crisis of confidence and security. Even then critics of business maintained the need to continually campaign for business CSR adoption, beyond simple PR cosmetic effect or compliance with regulation. In crisis businesses as a priority may seek to reduce risk, secure future resources and protect profits. In the face of current threats to business sustainability, environmental/ecological sustainability may appear a luxury that they cannot afford. Understandably most accept the need for government intervention. Yet governments themselves find it difficult to respond, already committed to high debt as a result of pandemic management. Governments also are tempted to soften or abandon current (often inadequate) CSR regulation frameworks, in the interest of supporting economic growth and protection of living standards at home. It is the belief of the authors that CSR policies will be "postponed" by most, with no definite readoption date. Superficial CSR policies will be the new paradigm (unless an obvious business payback is evident). However without development of sustainable policies (attempting to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals), many of which do not promise immediate payback, the crisis is likely to continue and worsen. Goddard's cartoon may be sadly redundant as organisations may not even feel driven to adopt a cosmetic level of CSR.

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