

ADVISER Q+A

Preparing a CSR report

My CEO has asked me to contribute to the company's annual CSR report, explaining the procurement team's (and our suppliers') commitments and achievements. How much detail should I provide, what areas should I concentrate on and what's the best way to present our results? *Head of procurement, Basingstoke*

LUCA GUZZABOCCA You have to avoid generic statements like "we engage our suppliers to sign off on our code of ethics" or "we consider environmental aspects in our purchasing process". Those kind of statements do not represent the concrete effort of your procurement organisation.

You should show facts and data in a structured format. A good approach is to describe your initiatives, projects and plans with key numbers.

For the environment, this could include the percentage and type of green purchasing against total spend and your objective to increase that value and extend to other products and services. Or number and spend with certified suppliers against the total supply base and your target to grow that.

In terms of social responsibility this could be the number and spend of SMEs and large suppliers against the total supply base. Or your efforts to monitor suppliers to check workers' conditions.

Economically you can link savings to sustainability projects with suppliers, and to cost-optimisation projects or local supplier business development.

COLLAN MURRAY It is better to focus on a small number of key projects rather than try to cover all of the initiatives you are undertaking. Give each one some

context, explain the procurement intervention you have undertaken but highlight the outcomes and the difference they are making.

It is better to say how many workers your ethical sourcing practices are benefitting, than how many suppliers are signed up. It is positive outcomes that will add brand and reputational value.

Quantify the outcomes of your work wherever possible, whether it is the amount of CO₂ saved, or the amount of money you spend with local firms. It is worth discussing which numbers to use with your marketing or press team as they will know what your stakeholders are interested in. Making the right numbers stand out will draw readers into the detail and help with recall.

Avoid technical language or jargon and incorporate photographs from your supply chain work. A picture can tell a thousand words.

JORDAN SAMPIETRO The main source of your CSR reporting guidance should come from a complete alignment with your organisation's stated strategic goals. Look at your company's wider CSR and sustainability objectives to prioritise which of your team's efforts should be

included. If this is your company's first CSR report you might look for stated CSR goals within your company's business plan.

You then need to quantify your activities. If your company has a stated commitment to meet a "zero-landfill target by 2012", tailor your reporting towards demonstrating this goal.

I suggest contacting your organisation's sustainability leader to find out how reporting has been carried out so far, and seek expertise from peers, professional associations, or consultants if you are unsure of the reporting 'norm' for your industry.

KEY POINTS

- Don't just make statements - show facts and figures.
- Focus on a small number of key projects in detail, rather than covering them all.
- Make sure the projects you highlight are aligned to the company's business plan.



SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO:

adviser@supplymanagement.com

* Please note: responses can only be given on this page, represent writers' personal views and should be regarded as general guidance only. The adviser panel includes experts from a range of disciplines

OUR EXPERTS THIS ISSUE



LUCA GUZZABOCCA

Procurement director, Banca Monte Dei Paschi Di Siena



COLLAN MURRAY

Head of responsible procurement (interim), GLA Group



JORDAN SAMPIETRO

CEO, Sustainable Procurement Strategies