

Corporate Citizenship: challenges of an evolving agenda

by Richard Corriette, Vice President, Corporate Citizenship Unit, DHL

Over the last few years, there has been a growth in stakeholder expectations for business to demonstrate that it is a positive force in society. The drivers behind these demands include a number of widely reported scandals, involving multinationals in respect of business ethics, as well as concerns about the unequal distribution of the benefits that globalisation can bring. This is particularly the case where multinationals work in some of the poorer regions of the world or in countries with a record of human rights violations. Today, more than ever, global business must give full consideration to the viewpoints of its stakeholders and demonstrate that it is paying attention to their concerns, some of which would previously have been considered outside the realm of business responsibility. This responsibility is over and above the running of businesses that are legal, make money, pay taxes and provide quality services, products and employment.

Being a good Corporate Citizen challenges companies to work in ways that benefit society while also maintaining their competitive strengths. There are also business advantages associated with good Corporate Citizenship, which include:

- The contribution through capacity building to enhanced skills of managers and educators.
- Support for community projects that improve the reputation and standing of the business within that community, supporting business relationships and recruitment.
- Dialogue with stakeholders helps companies re-visit their policies and activities, including risk review procedures.
- Increasingly, customer choice is influenced by a supplier's ability to demonstrate commitment to Corporate Citizenship.

DHL as a corporate citizen

The pioneering spirit of DHL influences the way we approach corporate citizenship. Our people are proud of the work we have done in developing countries, particularly in respect of



One of the ways DHL is trying to minimise its environmental impact.

humanitarian assistance and the progress we have made in limiting our environmental impacts.

However, we recognise the need for a more structured approach that demonstrates continuous improvement towards addressing a range of challenges – for example, fuel emissions, night time noise, security and tracking, packaging, community investment, delivery of humanitarian assistance, to name but a few.

At DHL we are tackling these through ISO 14001 accreditation, through our security strategy including the development new tagging technology (Radio Frequency Identification), and in partnership with other companies – for example, as part of the World Economic Forum's Disaster Resource Network and Global Health Initiative. DHL is also a signatory of the UN Global Compact's Nine Principles on human rights, labour standards and environmental protection and is committed to report on its performance.

An important issue for all businesses

Supply chain issues are coming to the fore. Companies now ask their suppliers for evidence of their commitment to corporate citizenship, often in the form of

policies or statements covering such areas as the environment and human rights.

DHL's reputation as a good corporate citizen, as well as the competitiveness of our services, will increasingly be the basis upon which customers decide whether or not to do business with us.



Information on Corporate Citizenship at DHL can be found on www.dhl.com.