

DHL...the next step



Much has happened since we last reported on DHL's approach to achieving its corporate citizenship goals. In particular, we are pleased that our co-CEO, Uwe Doerken, established the Corporate Citizenship Unit, a dedicated department within his own office.

Also, in January, he chaired a meeting of Governors (CEOs and Presidents) of the Logistics and Transportation sector at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

As a result, a Logistics & Transportation Corporate Citizenship Initiative (L&TCCI) was formed, bringing together major companies in the sector to work on key corporate citizenship and sustainable development issues. Issues like building infrastructure in developing countries through partnerships, humanitarian assistance, and local concerns about airport noise and pollution.

Sector representatives will draw on the experience of other industries this year and then work

To structure our approach, we are using the WEF Framework for Action, through four steps:

on programmes such as key performance indicator development and reporting protocols, reporting back at the next Davos meeting in January 2004.

We have also been engaged in initiatives to develop a more systematic approach to Corporate Citizenship. DHL takes its responsibilities as a global corporate citizen seriously as we operate in over 220 countries, from the poorest to major business centres.

Our approach has been to employ local managers and staff to ensure DHL is part of the local community, driving much of our Corporate Citizenship work at grass roots level. We are now working hard to overlay a global approach without taking away local initiative and responsibility.

Step One...Provide leadership

Leadership is provided internally and externally. At DHL, our CEOs, Uwe Doerken and Peter Kruse, are committed to good corporate citizenship. Externally, they will participate in forthcoming events, including the WEF meeting in Davos. Internally, they created a Corporate Citizenship Unit within the Office of the Chief Executive, which is involving functional directors and senior managers who have important roles to play in empowering staff to make a difference.

Step Two...What does it all mean for us?

This can be specified through Principles and Policies. The Principles are based on those of the UN Global Compact, referencing guidelines from OECD, the Conventions of ILO and other international bodies. One aim of the L&TCCI is to shape Sector Principles for adoption. We aim to build on these, making them DHL-specific.

The Policies establish what actions we expect DHL countries and functions to take on key issues. The strategy is not to impose developed policy, rather to use policy advisory notes to alert senior management to issues, identifying areas of risk, then suggesting policy options and best practice.

Based on feedback and an internal risks review process, policies will then be developed with the relevant function, together with expert input, the end product going to consultation.

Ultimately, we will develop the criteria to measure performance in managing these issues. Since Corporate Citizenship must be embedded within the organisation wherever possible, the relevant functional area owns the Policies. For example, Human Resources

owns policies associated with our Internal Corporate Citizenship work stream.

Cross-functional policies are owned by the Corporate Citizenship Unit, which facilitates dialogue with all stakeholders.

Step Three...Make it happen

Principles need to be communicated effectively to employees, while policies need to be implemented with results monitored, reported and verified.

With more than 150,000 employees worldwide, communicating is a big task. We constantly overcome challenges of language and culture. But it is not enough to translate a paper into 27 different languages. Our approach is to use various media, appropriate for a courier in Mexico or a senior manager in Tibet.

Policies are being implemented, driven through line management, with reporting mechanisms monitoring results.

Step Four...Be transparent

We follow the Global Reporting Initiative closely and employ the principle of transparency throughout reporting. We are open about what we do, progress made, issues we face and how we are tackling them.

Our journey continues...

We feel we have made significant progress. In particular, learning a great deal from the people and organisations we have met who shared their experience and knowledge.

There will always be more we can do, new challenges to meet. But, on our journey, we will ensure that the work we do today

will provide a strong foundation for the challenges of tomorrow and that Corporate Citizenship becomes a way of being at DHL.

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