



Irish Aid

An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT



The Asia Foundation



COMMUNICATING CSR THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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Why should businesses use social media to share their CSR activities?

Social media is at the forefront of modern communication and increasingly it is giving businesses the opportunity to talk to their customers and engage with stakeholders that traditional marketing failed to capture. Asia is home to the second largest population of Facebook users in India.¹ With multiple platforms (that are increasing every year) hosting a variety of forms of media, social media can be used strategically by businesses to promote their brand, sell their product and protect their reputation instantly as social media never sleeps and is a 24/7 operation. Social media plays a crucial part in how the world perceives a business which is why using it to share CSR activities is a great way to maintain/improve reputation. Increasingly there is the notion that there is a strong link between a business's CSR activities and improvements in traditional key performance drivers, such as competitiveness, profitability and relationships with investors. People want organizations that reflect their views and values so it is important for businesses to share that they are committed to causes that their customers care about. Through video, photos, blogs and making CSR activities accessible to customers by having public and real time conversations businesses can not only help their public image, but increase awareness of local issues and NGOs that help tackle them. Larger businesses also tend to have a greater presence on social media across different channels, so by sharing CSR activities the work that they help fund will be seen and shared by more people.

Case Studies

India: SAP

India has a rich history of Corporate Social Responsibility and has now become the first and only country in the world to legislate CSR as of 1 April 2014. Under the Companies Act, 2013, any company having a net worth of rupees 500 crore or more or a turnover of rupees 1,000 crore or more or a net profit of rupees 5 crore or more should mandatorily spend 2% of their net profits per fiscal on CSR activities.²

Some larger businesses are now beginning to share their acts of CSR through social media to share with their audience and promote their product competitively. However these tend to be the Indian departments of international firms.

The Indian branch of SAP has been a philanthropy partner with the HOPE Foundation, an NGO focusing on quality of life improvement for the poorest in Indian society, since 2000. In February 2014 they donated INR 3,567,500 to integrate SAP technology to help improve the systems and infrastructure of the foundation.³

SAP has numerous Twitter feeds for different aspects of their business worldwide. They have a dedicated feed for sustainability @sustainableSAP and Corporate Social Responsibility

¹ <http://businesstoday.intoday.in/story/facebook-india-second-largest-number-users-world/1/23859.html>

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution_of_corporate_social_responsibility_in_India

³ <http://global.sap.com/india/news-reader/index.epx?articleId=22365>

@sapcsr. These feeds are constantly updated with stories of their philanthropy works and the recent technology grant for the HOPE Foundation was tweeted as soon as it was announced:



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Comment: The information is about SAP India funding an Indian NGO however the tweet may not have come from the Indian team, instead from headquarter in the USA. However the principle remains the same and can be transferred to Vietnam. It would have been a more beneficial tweet if the HOPE Foundation had a twitter account too to be tagged to so that followers could then click on their feed and follow them.

SAP also has an active YouTube channel where they promote how their donations and grants have helped NGOs and people in need. Video is a powerful form of media for philanthropy as it is often more relatable to the viewer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oRmxQFhh1A>

On the flipside the HOPE Foundation has a great Facebook page where they regularly thank corporate partners and promote how much their donations have helped their NGO. Here is an example for SAP, although they do have many other corporate partnerships that get mentioned.

⁴ <https://twitter.com/sapcsr>

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Comment: For social media, this post is too long. The nature of social media means that there is a constant battle for attention on a users newsfeed, and users spend merely seconds scanning posts. This means that posts need to be well planned and written to maximize attention and beat competition. This post would benefit more from:

- Tagging the SAP Facebook page so that it appears on their newsfeed too.
- Fewer words getting straight to the point.
- A link to an article on their website covering the event in more detail for those interested.

What the followers need to know is who donated to who and what for; the detail needs to be linked to their website.

Singapore: NTUC Fairprice

NTHUC Fairprice is a range of supermarket chains in Singapore. Founded in 1973 by the labour movement it has always had a social mission at its core to provide moderate and fair cost of living for the people. In line with its values it has set up the Fair Price Foundation, an NGO started in 2008 with the mission of providing a better life for the community.

“As a social enterprise, our aim is to do well in order to do more good. NTUC FairPrice Foundation is a milestone achievement towards our vision to be a world-class retailer with a heart.”

– Chairman of NTUC FairPrice Foundation Mr Ng Ser Miang ⁶

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/hope.foundation.india>

⁶ <http://www.fairpricefoundation.org/index.html>

The Fair Price Foundation works with other NGOs to aid their 3 strategic thrusts: the poor and needy, nation building and community bonding and workers' welfare. NTHUC Fairprice has an excellent blog that focuses specifically on their CSR efforts. Regularly updated posts tell the story of where their donations have helped and they link this back to their core founding purpose of helping provide a better life for the local community. With images and videos the blog is a great platform to promote the work that they have been doing and the NGOs that benefit from their foundation.



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The layout of the blog is simple to use and looks great and at the top of the page they have links to their numerous other social media sites so that readers can find out more and get involved in their CSR conversation. The NTUC Fairprice Facebook page posts updates on their CSR projects for their 145,000 followers to see.



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⁷ <http://csr.fairprice.com.sg/blog/>

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/thatsmyfairprice>

This photo album is particularly useful as it includes the logos of the NGOs that they support, making it easier for people to find out more and demonstrating their commitment, partnership and growing relationships with these organizations. NTUC also have a YouTube channel dedicated to their CSR where they have videos of the CEO and real employees demonstrating their CSR philosophy.

Comment: This channel has not been updated for 2 years and it only has 3 videos on there. In order to maintain a professional reputation on social media sites it is vital to be current. It would be better for them to have a main channel and upload videos of all aspects of their work, sharing the specific CSR ones on their CSR blog and in Facebook posts about their CSR work.

How can businesses communicate CSR activities through social media?

1. **Choose the right platform for the right audience:** Share CSR news updates with links to a more detailed website article/blog post on Twitter, tagging relevant NGOs and campaign hashtags. Share photos and more detail (but not too much) on Facebook. Upload promotional videos on YouTube to show visually how your business has helped NGOs. Write the full story (highs and lows) of your CSR story and integrate photos and YouTube videos. Ensure that the images and videos are of real NGO staff/volunteers and real people who have been helped by the project.
2. **Be transparent and don't exaggerate:** Be truthful and clear in exactly how you have contributed and what CSR activities you do. Opening up your work on social media means that anyone can contribute (positively or negatively) to what you have shared. Being transparent can help reduce any negativity. It is also important not to delete and negative comments and answer them truthfully, openly and promptly so that the rest of the public can see how you have responded to the criticism. If comments escalate it is important to try and take the conversation offline by asking them to email or private message you. Failing to publicly try and address concerns by deleting comments can do more damage than leaving them there with an honest answer.
3. **Engage don't broadcast:** Posting news about CSR efforts will not be rewarding unless you engage with followers in the post by asking and responding to questions. Remember that a post is an ongoing dialogue and not a static statement.

Examples of CSR promotional video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxxLuBNhwMU>
