

Climate protection and its significance for companies

Corporate social responsibility in the area of climate protection is crucially important. Companies in all industry sectors need to face up to the challenges posed by climate change and help to minimize its negative effects.

The main contribution they can make relates to the greenhouse gas emissions from their operations.

With industry a major focus of the public debate over climate change, statutory controls on greenhouse gas emissions are a key factor. Cement and steel manufacturers, for example, have to make great efforts to reduce their CO₂ emissions. But even service providers like banks and insurance companies can help to protect the climate, whether through direct action or through their own product portfolios. Companies such as UBS and the German postal service Deutsche Post report on ecological achievements related to their operations and products in terms of

environmental performance indicators. The effectiveness of their efforts varies greatly, yet the trend is for all market participants to assume the necessary degree of corporate social responsibility.

In addition to conventional stakeholder groups such as government agencies, environmental protection organizations and sensitized consumers, employees too are increasingly demanding higher levels of corporate commitment in the area of climate protection.

Today, forward-looking companies not only acknowledge the risks inherent in climate change; they also recognize its potential to create new business opportunities. A high level of awareness of climate change issues opens up new markets for products and services. The advent of climate-neutral travel, Green IT, green electricity and hybrid vehicles testifies to this trend. A company must have a climate strategy if it is to do justice to the importance of climate protection and address the complex challenges involved. Such a strategy starts with the development of an initial scenario tailored to the company and its environment. Greenhouse gas emissions are then documented and the results interpreted. After that, measures to cut emissions must be designed, implemented and evaluated.

In the medium to long term, a climate strategy will save the company money and help to make processes more efficient. The corporate climate strategy can be effectively and convincingly presented to stakeholders in a report. The aim must always be to present climate protection and its significance from the company's point of view in a clear and understandable way.

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