



How Startups Develop CSR Practices to Achieve Brand Reputation

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Abstract

This paper examines the application of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in achieving brand reputation and competitive advantage of SME startups. It seeks to explore best practice applications of CSR practices by startups. It further analyzes customers' impressions of startup sustainability and CSR practices and the firm's reputation. The study adopted an interpretive study design, focused on a sample of CSR specialists, advertisers, and startup owners, and revealed a reflection of the theoretical dimension of CSR in the study results. Specifically, the social intensity of CSR implementation and the adoption of practices that focus on human resources, the environment, and society at large, were captured in the data. CSR principles, such as the need for the development and implementation of environmental awareness programs, volunteering, and labor, were commonly agreed by the participants as relevant emerging themes of the study. The results pointed out the importance of company ethics in shaping a healthy employee work environment and highlighted the critical role of the firm's purpose in building the brand. The emphasis on building relationships with society as a whole and specifically with the community in which the company operates seems to be the key to appropriate implementation of CSR regarding brand reputation.

Keywords: Competitive Advantage, Ethics, New Enterprises, Social Responsibility, Sustainability