

# Your Gen or Mine?

OPINION PAGE

WE ASKED...

What exactly is social responsibility? The American Society for Quality defines it 'as people and organizations behaving and conducting business ethically and with sensitivity towards social, cultural, economic and environmental issues.' Milton Friedman has said 'there is one and only one social responsibility of business—to use it[s] resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.' Which side of the coin does (should) social responsibility land on? Can we have it both ways?



Pastor, St. John's Presbyterian Church & Dean, Florida Christian University

## the Traditional view - Rev. Bruce W.H. Urich, PhD

As an old-timer (77), I want to have it all; these days people want to choose up sides and only do or be PART of the answer. We older people want to have our cake and eat it too; so I believe that we, who are in business, (and we are all in business,) should do both of these tasks. How can we do that? Well, we set out to do BOTH things from the beginning of our plans.

We decide from the beginning BOTH to be ethical and sensitive towards social, cultural, economic and environmental issues AND to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.

This, to me, is very simple; we intend to

do both tasks and do not stress one above the other. Even those of us who are in non-profit organizations need to be responsible economically—or we will soon be "out of business!"

This all means that the planning process is designed to cover BOTH areas. I can see no other way to be responsible. This means that we look up from our "bean counting" and are sure that we also stress ethical concerns; and at the same time, we are concerned to be responsible economically. This seems so logical to me. Either of the two sides is not enough by itself. Let us lift up our eyes to God, and fulfill both sides at the same time!

## a Baby Boomer Viewpoint - Alejandra Lorenzo

What is social responsibility?

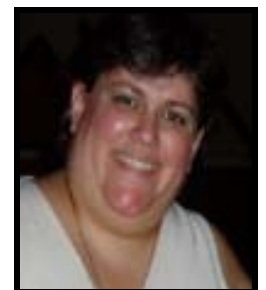
Would it not be safe to say that social responsibility is like respect? When one has respect for self then everything else starts to fall into place. When I respect myself, I respect the community around me. If I see that they are in need of a resource, that I as a business person am able to provide, then it follows that I attempt to fill the need. When I respect myself, I respect my shareholders and stakeholders

which leads to doing a job that will provide us both with a good return on the investment that we have all made in the enterprise. When I respect myself, I respect the people that make my business work. By providing them with the wages and services that recompense them for their labor, they are able to provide for themselves.

Would it not be safe to say then that social responsibility is all about responsibility? To suggest

that social responsibility is not a part of doing good business is deviating from what has made the mom and pop businesses grow - respect the customer and run the business in a responsible manner. We conduct business with the same entities time and again not because they are socially responsible but because they respect our business and are responsible in the way they conduct their business.

Respect + Responsibility = Profit.



MBA, Entrepreneur

# Bridging the Gap

OPINION PAGE

## ...YOU RESPONDED!

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### Generation X points of view

Danielle Griffin

Autumn Cavin



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The decline of the American economy over the past few years is a clear example of what happens when businesses do all they can within the limit of the law to increase profits without regard to the long-term impact on society at large. The carmakers that refuse to invest in fuel efficient vehicles, the banking institutions that engage in subprime lending, and the health insurance companies which drop sick patients from their roles or deny legitimate health care claims to increase profits are just a few of the many issues that negatively impacted our society. Every individual and/or company has the right to pursue their entrepreneurial goals however, that right comes with a responsibility to make sure their decisions do not negatively impact society at large.

Try to imagine for a moment where America would be if our corporations invested in educating and training our workforce rather than importing foreign labor or opening factories overseas. Would we have a healthcare crisis if treatment options were based on wellness and prevention rather than profit? If America is ever to live up to its ideals and become "One nation under God", we need to rethink the way we do business.

"It's not personal. It's business." This quote from The Godfather is a great way to sum up Friedman's view of "social responsibility." If we agree that the purpose of commerce is to make a profit, then social responsibility becomes an option; almost a luxury. Industry is not the appropriate venue to attempt to further causes, correct social wrongs, or make a political statement. The beauty of Capitalism is that corrupt, injurious, and abusive businesses eventually meet their end at the hands of Americans. We will only stand for corruption and social abuse from a company for so long, and then we insist on equality in the workplace, high quality products at a reasonable price, and good environmental practices. Yes, a successful, prosperous business can afford to use some of their profits to "give back" so to speak, but this is a perk, and should not be expected, or required of any for-profit company.



Sales Associate

### the Millennial perspective - Jasmine Fowlkes

Social responsibility can be simply defined as "the responsibility of an organization or individual to participate in activities that contribute to the wellbeing of society in addition to the organization and individual itself." Therefore, I believe that both the Milton Friedman and the American Society for Quality definition are both valid in most cases.

It is just as important that a company make a profit, as it is to give back to the community

and stand for a societal concern or issue. Several companies make an effort to participate in philanthropic events, charities and environmental concerns in order to be socially responsible.

Although an individual can straddle the fence, he or she will sometimes be faced with the moral question of doing what is beneficial for the company, or what's socially responsible. Like the saying goes, "A good manager does

things right, while a good leader does the right things."

My Millennial Generation are the future business leaders of America. Thus, we must be socially responsible in all that we do in order to set the standards for generations to come. Whether it is a company or a citizen, both should be socially responsible—none is greater than the other.



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