



This is the first gazette of the Design for All Foundation. Our purpose is to disseminate good practices examples, knowledge and abilities for managers who have the mission to bring social responsibility elements into their companies.

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Design for All is bringing CSR actions through innovations, so instead of making donations or similar actions, you can incorporate social benefits through the design and redesign of products, services and company's facilities.

Please, re-send this email to a friend.

How to put into practice CSR actions at your company without burnt yourself out. The manager burnt out syndrome due to the application of the CSR principles.

Not a long time ago, an important service company manager explained me his difficulties to introduce social responsibility changes into the wide net of departments of his company.

The problems he explained me were basically those five:

1. **The changes I propose affect all the design of services offered by my company** and this makes me becoming an interesting exchange agent but a fearsome one as well.
2. When I propose changes to other managers, we **get stuck** in a discussion based on values and believes.
3. **The general management hasn't assumed all the leadership regarding these changes**, so the weight of the question stays in my hands.
4. Even having a clear idea about the changes my company hast to do, **I do not have neither the knowledge neither a professional and external view**; I just have some ideas and the feedback from the clients reclamacion office.
5. **The changes we have carried out till the moment don't have much credibility**, because they are disseminated by my own company.

Some clues to avoid difficulties

Although definitive solutions to these problems don't exist, it is interesting to know some of the solutions that the ['23 companies'](#) coordinators that take part in the Commitment to Design for All have reached; the Commitment is a permanent project of the [Design for All Foundation](#).

Write the ethic code of your company

In the article, [¿Are companies empty?](#) , Ángel Castañeira and Josep M. Lozano La Vanguardia, (26/08/2005), the authors emphasize that responsibility is not just a question of practices and corporative indicators, it is also necessary a personal commitment of the work

force. And this commitment might be the greater barrier for the change into a social reorientation of companies.

Who is affected by this barrier is usually the manager, who is also the responsible for this reorientation. They don't only have the weight of changes on the company's activity; they also have to deal with their colleague's attitudes and mentalities.

The first step to achieve this change in a team would be the fact that **the high status leader assumes it, he would have to announce the commitment and he would have to give example from the very first day**. The second step is **defining an ethic code as a guide and inspiration for all the managers of the company**. It is not necessary that the concepts are very specific, because the situations the managers have to deal with when taking decisions are very diverse. The most important thing is this document is respected, has a daily use, as a manual for making decisions, and is used as a reference to those who want to get into the company, as workers or as suppliers. One of the companies that have recently written an ethic code is [Mutua Intercomarcal](#).

Practice the benchmarking and establish collaborations

Starting a route alone is always complicated. Planning and implementing social responsibility politics is not an exception, on the contrary. When a company decides not just patronizing and proposes the assumption of social responsibility in the environment, takes the risk that this decision will affect its business strategy and the relation with the environment. That is why, **is always wiser to count on a network of contacts that are "on your same route"** and, if it is possible, that go a step forward.

On the other hand, inside a network you can usually find opportunities to collaborate with other companies in some projects, achieving better results, on social objectives and on the communication of the actions carried out. A good example, where our Foundation participates with other companies, is [Equipara](#), who aims to promote equal labour opportunities for disable people.

Carry out Certifications

Certifications are a good way to ensure the route. If we imagine that the route towards a better relation company-society is a hill, **certifications prevent retrocession and guarantee we have arrived where we are**. They are also a way to disseminate our social commitment. A good example is [Applus + Accessibility](#), thought to certificate accessibility of products, services and environments through the concept of Design for All. Applus + Accessibility certifies all those things that are essential for people's autonomy, in order to achieve an increasingly quality of life and more independence. Nowadays, they work in four big areas: transports, machinery and equipment, building and town planning and information systems.

Start improving your communication

External communication developed by the company's marketing department **is a visible element in constant updating**, that is why is easy to introduce social responsibility improvements. It is a good point of departure.

As a result of the law that bound public administrations to have an accessible webpage ([Web Accessibility Initiative](#)), loads of companies have implemented, on a voluntary basis, this type of improvement. PDF documents can also be accessible.

Stationery, professional leaflets and personal cards can be improved avoiding a point size inferior than 10 and a determinate colour combination.

Conclusions

Making our company more responsible every day with social environment is not an easy task. **To face a mentality change and a change on the services, products and facilities design, we don't want to be alone, we are interested in having an external support and, indeed, in having access to colleagues of other companies who are working in the same issue.** This type of alliance will provide us internal change strategies and will open us the opportunity to carry out actions with other companies. The alliance with foundations and associations will give us an external vision and perception.

It is evident that every point I have referred in this article can be longley extended, in ideas, practical examples and resources. **It is our intention to extent these points on the next publications, taking into account your comments.** You are invited to collaborate and evaluate this gazette proposing subjects, contributing with good practices and other contents. I hope this material is useful for you.

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This gazette is published monthly. Its distribution is free of charge. We rest open to your comments in pguillen@designforall.org .