

Crowdsourcing Adds Value To Corporate Responsibility Efforts

Contributed by eMarketer
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In addition to offering new perspectives, crowdsourcing can build engagement and find nontraditional sources for opinions

Crowdsourcing is a valuable tactic for corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, though only about half of companies use it.

In October, PR agency Weber Shandwick and KRC Research surveyed more than 200 corporate executives who have oversight for corporate philanthropy, social responsibility and community relations within their organizations.

While only 55% of these executives reported that their companies had used crowdsourcing as part of CSR programs, 95% of those who had reported that the tactic was at least somewhat valuable to the company's CSR efforts.

Crowdsourcing, or asking customers for opinions and ideas on how to tackle certain issues, has several valuable aspects. When asked about the most valuable aspect of crowdsourcing, 36% of the executives who used it said crowdsourcing provides new and diverse perspectives and opinions.

Additionally, 25% noted that the most valuable aspect was that it can build engagement and relationships with key audiences, 22% said it invites input from nontraditional sources and 16% highlighted how it brings a new energy to the idea-generating process.

Social media has made it easier for companies to experiment with crowdsourcing and getting perspectives from consumers. And overall, social media still benefits CSR programs as more consumers use it to interact with companies online.

According to the study, 38% of respondents said the primary value of social media to CSR programs is the opportunity to reach broad and diverse audiences. Additionally, 29% said the primary value of social media for CSR efforts is that it allows companies to connect with consumers in a low-cost way.

Corporate social responsibility is about connecting with consumers and the issues that matter to them. Both social media and crowdsourcing are ways to build relationships with a wide range of consumers and provide consumers unique ways to get involved with these programs and companies.

Going beyond marketing, CSR efforts should reach consumers through the social media platforms they are visiting on a regular basis. Companies can use these channels to educate consumers about their causes, offer entertaining experiences and listen to consumers' opinions and perspectives, making crowdsourcing easier.

This doesn't just work to sell products or services, but can really build brand affinity and support for a company's CSR work.

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