

Pro-DEENLA

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UNIVERSITY OF LÜNEBURG

Steinbeis Innovation Center
Logistics and Sustainability

“CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)” LEARNING MODULE

NOTES FOR
TRAINERS/TEACHERS



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LEARNING MODULE CONTEXT

The following learning module relating to the topic of “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)” is aligned to the contents of the occupational profile position “Marketing” in the general training plan for vocational education and training in the occupation of freight forwarding and logistics services clerk. Links can also be established with the occupational profile position “Training company”.

Requirements regarding forwarding and logistics services, particularly in the area of production, procurement, and distribution, are identified and evaluated within the scope of the occupational profile position “Marketing”. Example contents of this area include sales campaigns, customer satisfaction analyses, statistics relating to complaints or offers, and product innovations.

One of the focuses of the occupational profile position “Training company” is the area of environmental protection. In order to avoid environmental pollution caused by the company within the occupational sphere of influence, one of the tasks that trainees are required to perform is to use examples to explain possible instances of environmental pollution caused by the training company as well as its contribution to environmental protection.

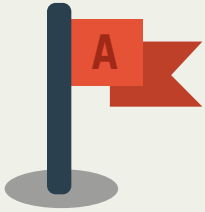
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) forms the thematic core of the following learning modules. Various guidance frameworks provide information on cross-cutting CSR norms, standards, and guidelines with the aim of helping companies to assume social responsibility. Relevant points of orientation include ISO 26000, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, or the Global Compact.

By focusing on the occupational profile position “Marketing”, the learning module can dedicate itself primarily to the central issues of which benefits will accrue for the training company if it implements CSR measures and on how these advantages can be substantiated. However, the overarching topic of CSR – against the background of the occupational profile position “Training company” – is not just considered from a profit-oriented entrepreneurial perspective. Rather, dealing with the learning module is meant to support the process of gaining a holistic understanding of CSR. Three learning sub-modules thus build upon one another as follows:

“RESPONSIBILITY – FROM THE WORKPLACE AND OUT INTO SOCIETY”

“CSR (MEASURES) IN THE TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS SECTOR”

“CSR COMMUNICATION AT THE TRAINING COMPANY”



CONTENTS OF THE LEARNING MODULE

Climate disasters, the scarcity of raw materials, questionable tax practices, child labour, and financial crises are just some of the issues which exert an influence on political and collective debates centring on the economic and social limits to the ways in which we do business. Over the past few years, this has led to a sharp change in how society expects the economy to act. There are growing demands for companies to make profits in an ecologically and socially acceptable manner. One concept that has gained increasing significance as a result is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Companies were already assuming social responsibility for their entrepreneurial environment as early as the turn of the 20th century, for example by introducing healthcare programmes for employees or providing staff housing. The term CSR, which originates from the USA, only came into use in the mid-1950s, though.

Although the idea of CSR has its basis in the social components of company responsibility, current definitions are now set out more broadly. The expectation is that responsibility should not just be shown to employees, shareholders and financiers, but to the whole of society. This is expressed by calling upon decision-makers in the economy to take account of societal needs. CSR may accordingly be viewed as the responsibility a company takes for the impacts of its activities on society and the environment as a whole. The main emphasis is on two specific demands:

- Firstly, companies should avoid all actions that bear an inherent risk of causing damage to society. Or, to put this the other way around, one of the tasks of trade and industry is to protect society.
- Secondly, the economy should serve the common good. Companies are thus encouraged to make a positive contribution to societal well-being rather than merely seeking to avoid creating negative effects from their actions.

The European Commission's view of CSR

The European Commission has also turned its attention to this important topic. It describes CSR as: “The responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society” (European Commission 2011, p. 7) and further stipulates:

“Respect for applicable legislation, and for collective agreements between social partners, is a prerequisite for meeting that responsibility. To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights, and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders.”

CSR in the transport and logistics sector

The transport and logistics sector is gaining in importance in the context of ecological and social global challenges. Although it can be viewed as the backbone for flows of goods across the world, it also uses resources and causes emissions. Pressure on transport and logistics companies from social and political stakeholders is growing, and demands coming from suppliers, associations, and NGOs for sustainable distribution routes and added value processes are also increasing. The new CSR Guidelines issued by the EU (detailed information is available in the “EU disclosure requirements” Pro-DEENLA learning module) tightens up the general legal conditions, meaning that companies will need to pay greater attention to sustainable factors within their added value process. Although the EU's CSR Guidelines primarily address companies with 500 or more employees, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are part of the value chain of these companies. This is why transport and logistics companies are also affected by these new challenges if they wish to retain their customers whilst remaining competitive. Within this framework, the SMEs face specific challenges associated with CSR, as they often have fewer (financial and human)

resources available compared to multinational groups. Transport and logistics is a highly customer-oriented sector. Logistics services are usually easily exchangeable, and the competitive pressure is therefore severe. Hugely conflicting objectives can arise for transport and logistics firms if customers do not share their view of CSR and are not prepared to commit financially to more ecologically friendly services or to fair payment of staff.

Viewed realistically, therefore, many kinds of constraints are placed on the freedom of action of managers at transport and logistics companies. BUT, precisely because the transport and logistics sector performs an interface function, the potential that this offers should be exploited. The “right” service providers at the “right” locations could be chosen and further developed, for example, (more) environmentally friendly modes of transport selected, routes optimised, and resource-efficient packaging material used. For this reason, the transport, warehousing, and packaging management of the firms should be scrutinised and enhanced with regard to sustainability requirements, if necessary.

CSR has already been anchored in the company strategies of many transport and logistics firms. Thus, numerous initiatives, projects, and innovation alliances have formed over recent years (e.g. “Logistikinitiative Hamburg” and “Effizienz Cluster Logistik Ruhr”), which show that CSR also offers multifarious opportunities for the sector.

The stakeholder perspective

A “new” awareness of responsibility on part of the companies also requires a shift of perspective to take place at another level. Company policy decisions are now considered and taken from a stakeholder perspective instead of simply from a shareholder point of view.

The so-called stakeholder approach widens its scope beyond the interests of the shareholders to encompass the interests of all stakeholders within the closer environment of the company: staff, suppliers, and customers – people who are directly affected by the actions of the organisation.



Figure 1: Exemplary stakeholders and their demands on the company (own representation based on Stierl; Lüth 2015, p. 9)

Nevertheless, there is no uniform notion of who should be ascribed to the stakeholders. Groups from further afield are frequently included to the stakeholders (e.g. political parties, associations, local government bodies, churches, the media, NGOs, and individual citizens who experience the indirect impacts of the corporate activity). Within the broadest definition of the term, even nature (in its capacity as a supplier of raw materials and a repository for waste) is counted amongst a company's stakeholder. The state, nature, and the public sphere are referred to as non-market stakeholders.

The relevance of the stakeholder approach within the scope of the CSR concept becomes apparent in the already mentioned CSR definition of the EU Commission, which specifically addresses close collaboration with stakeholders. This is because stakeholders draw the company's attention to relevant topics, thereby highlighting the embedding of the company in society and ultimately influencing the firm's culture and values.

CSR contradictions

For stakeholders to view CSR measures as delivering added value, they will need to begin by gaining cognisance of the existence of such measures. Contradictions which can lead to a severe loss of credibility in the way in which the stakeholders view the company often emerge within this communication process. Loss of credibility and damage to image predominantly occur in circumstances where discrepancies repeatedly arise between the self-commitments a company has signed up to and the way in which its actions are perceived by the stakeholders. This negative public perception of CSR commitment is often occasioned by the fact that companies tend merely to address the symptoms of sustainability rather than drilling down into the actual causes of the non-sustainable economic activities. The ultimate result, however, is that only slight improvements in the fields of consumption of resources or in environmental compatibility are achieved. The real objective of CSR is missed in the process. In extreme cases, the symptoms of economic activity are not even worked on when companies merely engage in external CSR communication without acting on it. Reference is also made to greenwashing within this context.

Greenwashing is a notion that goes to the heart of the ecological debate surrounding CSR and sustainability and indicates that actions are simply taking place under a “green cloak”. A further allusion to colour occurs when automobile manufacturers seek to associate their more environmentally friendly cars with the colour blue. If the public loses its general confidence in a company's ability to act responsibly, the final consequences may also include falling sales figures for products or services that are actually sustainable.

Given this problematic background, it is important for transport and logistics companies to expose and refute contradictions that are subjectively perceived. Transparency is thus one of the key criteria for the planning, implementation, and communication of corporate CSR measures. This means that information imparted needs to be comprehensible and relatable for the stakeholders. The recommendation is therefore to develop a concept that facilitates a transparent exchange of information between the company and its stakeholders.

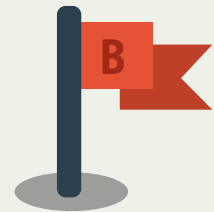


Implementing CSR measures in a sustainable and credible way at transport and logistics companies

The issue within CSR is how companies make their profits. In the world of CSR, companies see themselves as both economic and moral actors. The emphasis is not, therefore, on the question of how companies use their profits. Measures such as “prettifying” the company in brochures or sponsoring a local sports club would not succeed in bringing about systemic changes. CSR can be understood as the analysis of the responsibility of a company for the impacts of its activities on society and the environment. If we combine all these basic principles whilst also taking the European Commission’s official CSR definition into account, the idea of CSR management is to help to establish suitable procedures at the company and to implement projects and measures to help ensure that

- negative impacts on individual people, society, and the environment exuding from a company and its activities are avoided or minimised,
- applicable laws are complied with,
- the interests of stakeholder groups are taken into account in an appropriate way,
- and support is given to sustainable development.

When developing CSR measures, therefore, consideration needs to be accorded to the fact that responsibility for humans and nature is not only assumed at a company, product, or services level. Rather, the perspective adopted must be extended further to encompass the company location, the added value chain, and society itself. Against this background, CSR and sustainability need to be perceived as a learning process both within a company as well as within corporate networks.



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SUMMARY OF THE “RESPONSIBILITY – FROM THE WORKPLACE AND OUT INTO SOCIETY” LEARNING SUB-MODULE

Classification under training regulation: - Marketing
- Training company

Topic: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Type of learning task: Basic learning task

Learning venues: Workplace

Learning arrangements: Individual work

Target competencies:

- The trainees substantiate their own understanding of social responsibility using work-related examples.
- The trainees identify measures and projects aimed at the assumption of responsibility at their training company on the basis of their own understanding of responsibility.
- The trainees develop a claim and an advertising slogan to communicate the social responsibility of their own training company.

Brief description and sub-module context: The trainees begin by reflecting upon their own understanding of social responsibility. Against this background, they then present the understanding of social responsibility at their training company. In their description, trainees also take marketing measures and the company’s external image into consideration. They subsequently develop a claim and build on this to produce an advertising slogan, which can be used for the external communication of the understanding of social responsibility at their training company.

This learning sub-module serves as a basis for the completion of further sub-modules relating to the topic of “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)”. When processing the work orders, it will be of additional benefit if the trainees have already completed the “Sustainable development” learning module.


Contents and tasks:

- Structured reflection upon their own understanding of social responsibility
- Structured analysis of measures and projects aimed at the assumption of social responsibility that have been instigated at their own training company
- Development of a claim and an advertising slogan to communicate the social responsibility at their own training company

Materials required:

- PC with Internet access
- Paper and pens
- Corporate brochures (advertising), if relevant



LEARNING PHASES	SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNERS	EXPLANATION OF LEARNING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES	NOTES ON RESOURCES
 ALL PHASES ARE WELL-SUITED TO BE WORKED ON INDIVIDUALLY			
INTRODUCTORY PHASE	<p>Before trainees are able to look at the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in more detail, they will need to substantiate their own understanding of social responsibility. For this purpose, the trainees explain each other for whom they assume responsibility during their everyday work at the training company.</p>	<p>Trainees are given tips on areas and stakeholders for whom they assume responsibility at the workplace (see Note 1)*.</p>	<p>The trainees need pens and paper to record their results.</p>
ANALYSIS PHASE	<p>Once the trainees have addressed their own understanding of social responsibility, they look at the questions of whether their company acts in accordance with these ideas and of how social responsibility is communicated externally at their company.</p>	<p>The trainees are offered a table to serve as a structural guide for the identification of social responsibility at their own training company (see Material 1)*. Trainees are given tips on how to research the social responsibility of their own training company (see Note 2)*.</p>	<p>It would be useful for trainees to have access to their PC in order to carry out research. They can conduct internal research by looking for data relating to the assumption of corporate responsibility at their own company on company drives or on the company intranet. At the same time, trainees can also pursue external research by using the Internet to shed light on the public image of their company with regard to the assumption of corporate responsibility.</p>
DEVELOPMENT PHASE	<p>Once the trainees have addressed their own understanding of the assumption of social responsibility and have investigated the extent to which their training company acts in accordance with these notions, they move on to consider the topic from the perspective of marketing. For this purpose, they subsequently develop a claim and build on this to produce an advertising slogan, which can be used for the external communication of the understanding of social responsibility at their training company.</p>	<p>Trainees are given tips on how to develop a claim and an advertising slogan (see Note 3)*.</p>	

* see Notes for Trainees/Students

SUMMARY OF THE “CSR (MEASURES) IN THE TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS SECTOR” LEARNING SUB-MODULE

Classification under training regulation: - Marketing
- Training company

Topic: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Type of learning task: Basic learning task and connecting learning task

Learning venues: Workplace, company or classroom

Learning arrangements: Individual work, and pairs or group work

Target competencies:

- The trainees identify existing and future CSR measures of their training company.
- The trainees analyse CSR measures with regard to the three dimensions of sustainability.
- The trainees develop a CSR measure and an advertising slogan for their training company.

Brief description and sub-module context: The trainees begin by looking individually at the concept of CSR with the assistance of an information text and thus receive an initial insight into the design of CSR measures. They then use the notion of the three dimensions of sustainability as a backdrop for identifying possible CSR measures for their training company and go on to plan the design and implementation of one of these measures. The trainees then present their results to each other and work together to specify in more detail a CSR measure for their own training company. Finally, they develop an advertising slogan for the CSR communication of this measure.

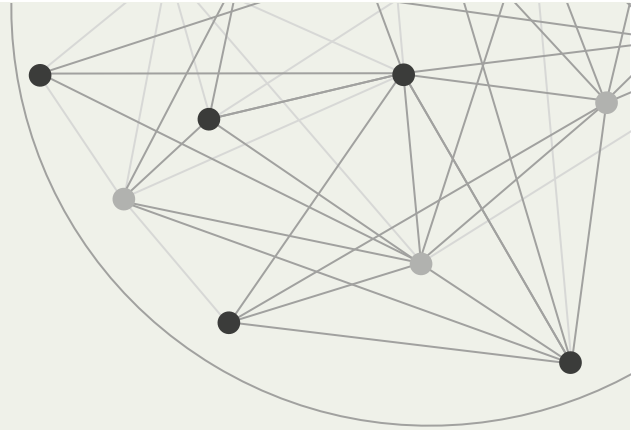
This learning sub-module follows on from the previous sub-module on the subject of “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)”. When processing the work orders, it will be of additional benefit if the trainees have already completed the “Sustainable development” learning module.



Contents and tasks:

- Structured consideration of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- Structured analysis of possible CSR measures for the own training company
- Design of a CSR measure in the transport area of the training company
- Development of an advertising slogan for the CSR communication of the conceived measure

Materials required:

- PC with Internet access
- Paper and pens
- Corporate brochures (advertising), if relevant



LEARNING PHASES	SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNERS	EXPLANATION OF LEARNING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES	NOTES ON RESOURCES
THE INTRODUCTORY PHASE AS WELL AS THE ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT PHASE ARE WELL-SUITED TO BE WORKED ON INDIVIDUALLY			
 INTRODUCTORY PHASE	<p>Once the trainees have considered their individual understanding of social responsibility by using their own company as an example, they move on to compare this understanding with the CSR concept. They begin by investigating the requirements of CSR measures and the correlation between CSR and sustainability with the assistance of a text. They then relate the understanding of social responsibility presented in the previous learning sub-module to their newly acquired findings regarding CSR measures.</p>	<p>The trainees are provided with information on CSR measures (see Material 1)*. The trainees are given tips on how to perform a more precise analysis of various guidelines relating to social responsibility (see Note 1)*.</p>	<p>The trainees should have access to a PC with Internet access in order to enable them to carry out a more exact analysis of different guidelines on the subject of social responsibility.</p>
 ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT PHASE	<p>Once the trainees have considered the general requirements made of CSR measures, they identify possible CSR measures in the area of transport for their training company and outline a rough plan for the design and implementation of one of these measures.</p>	<p>The trainees are provided with a template for the structured identification of possible CSR measures in the area of transport. This template includes the three dimensions of sustainability (see Material 2)*. Trainees are given tips on how to identify and design CSR measures (see Note 2)*.</p>	
THE PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION PHASE IS WELL-SUITED TO BE WORKED ON IN PAIRS OR GROUPS			
PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION PHASE	<p>Once the trainees have considered their own understanding of the social responsibility of companies in detail and reflected upon this with regard to the requirements of CSR measures, they now meet with other trainees from the company in order to present, summarise, and discuss the results. They then work together to specify one of the CSR measures previously outlined and develop an advertising slogan to accompany this measure.</p>	<p>Trainees are given tips on the joint further development of a CSR measure (see Note 3)*. Note that the plan of action developed within this context will be required in the following learning sub-module. The trainees are provided with a chart, with which they are able to visualise the advertising slogan they have developed (see Material 3)*. The advertising slogan will form the basis for working on the next learning sub-module “CSR communication at the training company”.</p>	<p>Flip chart paper and flip chart markers should be made available to the trainees during this phase.</p>

* see Notes for Trainees/Students

SUMMARY OF THE “CSR COMMUNICATION AT THE TRAINING COMPANY” LEARNING SUB-MODULE

Classification under training regulation: - Marketing
- Training company

Topic: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Type of learning task: Link-up learning task, expansion learning task

Learning venues: Workplace, company or classroom

Learning arrangements: Pairs or group work

Target competencies: - The trainees critically examine CSR communication in the context of greenwashing.
- The trainees work out possible approaches for sustainable CSR communication at their training company.



Brief description and sub-module context: Taking the problem of greenwashing within CSR communication as a starting point, the trainees analyse possible challenges that may emerge from here for their training company. They follow this up by using a role play situation to develop criteria that enable the identification of greenwashing within the scope of CSR communication. On the basis of these findings, the trainees develop a guide for successful CSR communication at their training company. They then present this guide to the company's marketing department. Alternatively, the trainees review existing or future CSR communication measures using the guide as a reference and make improvements to these measures where necessary.

This learning sub-module forms the conclusion of the sub-modules relating to the topic of “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)” and serves as a collection of ideas for CSR measures and for the communication of such measures, which can be forwarded to relevant departments at the company for further use.

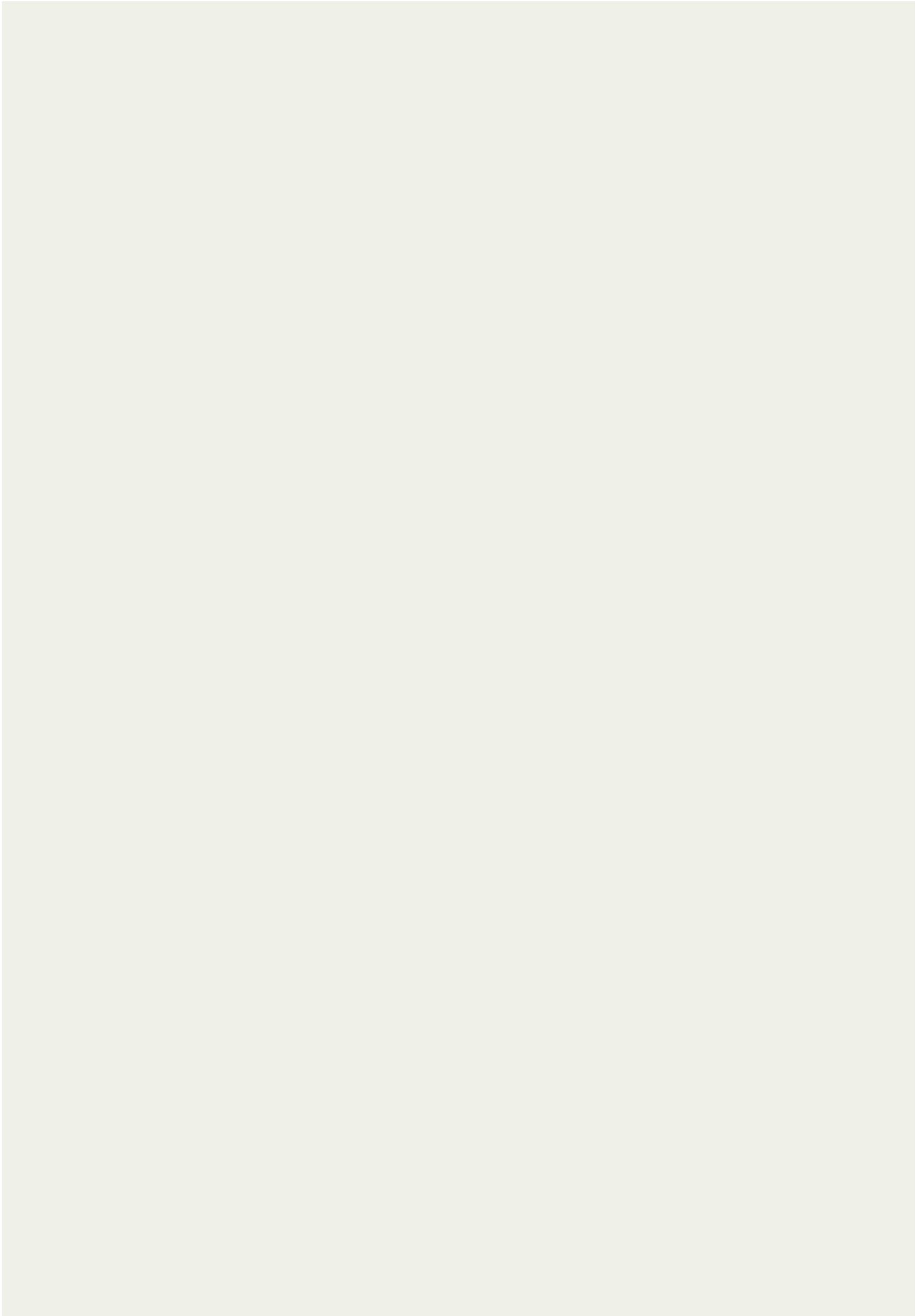
Contents and tasks: - Addressing the problem of greenwashing
- Transfer of greenwashing problem to own training company
- Structured analysis of possible criteria for the identification of greenwashing
- Development of a guide for successful CSR communication at the training company
- Presentation and/or application of the guide

Materials required: - PC with Internet access
- Paper and pens
- Flipchart paper and flipchart markers
- Corporate brochures (advertising), if relevant

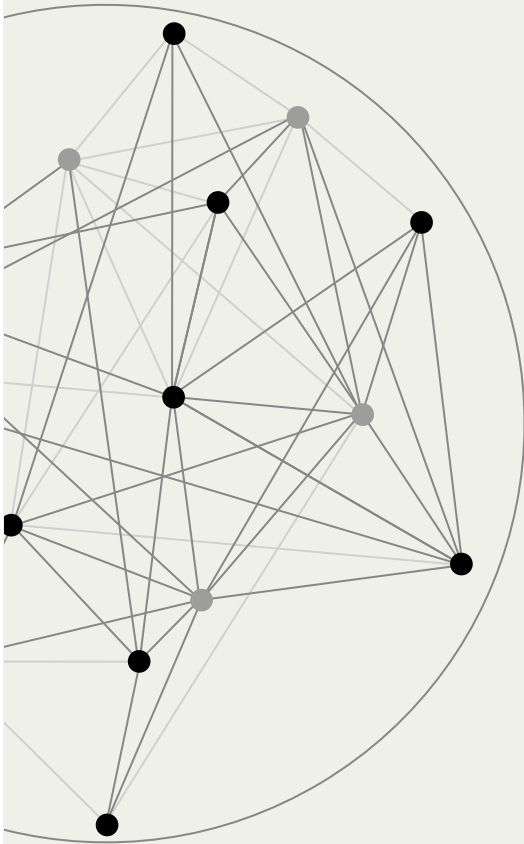


LEARNING PHASES	SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNERS	EXPLANATION OF LEARNING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES	NOTES ON RESOURCES
 THE INTRODUCTORY AND ANALYSIS PHASE IS WELL-SUITED TO BE WORKED ON IN PAIRS OR GROUPS			
INTRODUCTORY AND ANALYSIS PHASE	<p>Before the trainees look at the question of how their training company can implement successful CSR communication, they are first made aware of the fact that the use of CSR communication can have a negative impact on companies if it is deployed purely as a marketing instrument. To this end, the trainees analyse and interpret a caricature, which deals with the problem of greenwashing. This enables the trainees to create a link with prior experiences of the topic and to establish a connection between greenwashing and CSR measures.</p>	<p>The trainees are provided with a caricature on the topic of greenwashing in the transport and logistics sector (<i>see Material 1</i>)*. The trainees are given tips on the analysis and interpretation of the caricature (<i>see Notes 1 & 2</i>)*.</p>	<p>The caricature portrays the problem of greenwashing in the transport and logistics sector in an exaggerated form. When the trainees undertake a precise analysis and interpretation, they may discuss the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The problem of the advertising slogan on the lorry - Playing with the colour green - The customer/consumer does not know what is hidden behind “green packaging”. - ...
THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE AS WELL AS THE PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION PHASE ARE WELL-SUITED TO BE WORKED ON IN GROUPS			
 DEVELOPMENT PHASE	<p>Once the trainees have embraced the problem of greenwashing, they in this phase turn to consider how this issue can be avoided in CSR communication. They carry out a role play in which both the company and its stakeholders are represented. One element of the focus here is on the shift in perspective, the other explores the various criteria to prevent greenwashing.</p>	<p>The trainees are given role cards and provided with an initial situation for the role play scenario. The trainees are also given tips on the joint design and follow-up of the role play (<i>see Material 2</i>)*. The trainees are provided with tips on the distribution and preparation of the roles (<i>see Notes 3 & 4</i>)*.</p>	<p>A quiet room (seminar or meeting room) should be made available to the trainees for the preparation, execution, and evaluation of the role play. The trainees will also need flip chart paper and flip chart markers. It is helpful to give the trainees access to a PC with an Internet connection in order to allow the trainees to prepare extensively for their respective roles.</p>
PRESENTATION AND REFLECTION PHASE	<p>Once the trainees have summarised the results of the role play scenario, they use these findings as a basis for drawing up a guide for successful CSR communication by their training company. They present this to the marketing department, if appropriate. The trainees can also use the guide to scrutinise existing CSR communication measures to put forward proposals for improvement where relevant in a next step.</p>	<p>Trainees are given tips on how to conduct a joint discussion (<i>see Note 5</i>)*.</p>	<p>Flip chart paper and flip chart markers should be made available to the trainees during this phase. The trainees may also require a PC.</p>

* see Notes for Trainees/Students







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