

in turn, are very difficult to convince, and they are wary of non-standard solutions, as they like order in everything. In addition, they are extremely punctual and will likely demand all things to be completed on time, even if the reason for the delays was valid. Europeans are more loyal to this. By the way, the French are very fond of praise, and the Israelis like arguments, backed up by numbers and statistics.

Thus, this information can help to minimize the number of controversial issues during negotiations, which will lead to a better mutual understanding. At the same time, if we understand each other better, we will better interact, and as a result, develop international and trade relations and also closer sociocultural ties between countries.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT BIG FOUR ACCOUNTANCY FIRMS

Социальная ответственность бизнеса в компаниях «Большой четверки»

The objective of this paper is to study the meaning of the term «corporate social responsibility» and find out how this business concept is implemented by the Big Four accountancy companies globally and in the Republic of Belarus.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the strategy of company development and business achievement of commercial success in ways based on ethical standards and respect for people, communities and the environment. CSR is a free choice of a company in favor of the commitment to improve the well-being of society by implementing appropriate business practices and committing corporate resources.

CSR practice is the subject of much controversy and criticism. Advocates claim that there is a strong business grounding for CSR, and corporations obtain numerous benefits from operating for a broader, longer-term perspective than their own short-term profits. Critics argue that CSR tends to undermine the fundamentals of the market. This theory is associated with the famous statement of the American economist Milton Friedman that «the only social responsibility of business is to make a profit». The main concern of the company's management is to maximize stockholders' profits. Therefore, any diversion of funds and resources for extraneous purposes, including social responsibility, is unacceptable.

Having examined the CSR strategy of the four global leaders specializing in providing audit, taxation, management consulting and accounting services – Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers, we have identified the following important aspects that they target.

Market. The companies demonstrate ethical behavior and integrity through participation in market development, sharing of information with other market participants, fair competition and advertising. They seek and unite different people, views, ideas, exchange contacts and knowledge.

Workplace. Safe and healthy work conditions help people to flourish best. People should treat each other with respect, courtesy and fairness. The companies understand the importance of physical and mental well-being. In order to accomplish this they support their employees, provide physical security, information privacy, firmly prohibit all forms of harassment, discrimination and disrespect.

Education. The Big Four companies not only create jobs, but also provide equal career opportunities for their employees, encourage talent development through various training programs and invest in the professional development of their workforce so that they can reach their full potential. They understand that continuous learning and improvement is critical to innovation and success.

Environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability within the CSR framework implies the protection and preservation of nature: energy conservation, proper waste disposal and reduction of the risks of environmental pollution. To this end, the companies take an active part in the implementation of international programs to combat climate change, e.g. they strive to reduce their carbon footprint, have set reduction goals for their buildings and business travel.

Community. Following the fundamental human rights is an integral part of the companies' activities that try to gain public confidence. This significantly enhances the company's reputation and helps to interact with various external stakeholders. Special attention should be paid to various advertising campaigns involving the company's consumers in charity and other social activities.

In conclusion, the concept of social responsibility of business is closely related to the concept of sustainable development, according to which enterprises make decisions based not only on financial or economic factors, but also on the short-term and long-term social, environmental and other consequences of their activities. The idea of CSR has spread around the world, and its advocates are truly changing the situation for the better, creating both long-term commercial and social values.