

Chapter 40

Reimagining the Twenty-First-Century Employment Relationship: Aligning Human Resources and Corporate Social Responsibility Through Employment Policies and Practices

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No company would say, at least publicly, that it does not believe in taking care of employees or customers. No company would say publicly that it pursues mediocrity rather than excellence. But too often, the values written in the company values statement are not the values followed by the people who actually make decisions.

(Ton, Zeynep 2014: 195)

Introduction

We want to catalyze a conversation about the modern employment relationship that acknowledges current interconnected business realities and fosters greater alignment between companies' *espoused* commitment to employees through formal employment policies and *actual* employment practices. Human resources management (HRM) has often limited its relationship with corporate social responsibility (CSR) to discussions about how HR departments can implement sustainability programs (Wirtenberg, 2010), but we want to move the conversation beyond "going green" to consider what makes a company a good place to work in the twenty-first-century.

We encourage firms to "practice what they preach" or, more formally, align their employment policies (what they say) and employment practices (what they do), because this affects what we are defining as "employee CSR." Espoused values, or what Argyris and Schön (1996) call "espoused theory," represent the aspirations of the company, but academics and practitioners alike are all too aware that these often do not translate into "theory-in-use," or actual corporate or managerial actions and behaviors. We believe this failure of companies to "walk the talk" is a major cause of employee disengagement and discontent, which we demonstrate through social media postings. In an increasingly interconnected world, the prevalence of social media platforms, such as Glassdoor, Indeed, or Yelp, where applicants or current/former employees can anonymously review their employment experience, means that a firm's misalignment between policies and practices will not stay secret, and cannot easily be changed. Similar to the warnings that abound about how young professionals are being told they must manage their "online reputations" and that nothing on the Internet can ever be removed, corporations, too, need to be aware of and manage their online reputations since such a presence operates as an interface between the organization and society, particularly potential employees and customers.

At the close of the twentieth century, Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, and Kerr called attention to the need for a new world order in their seminal book *The Boundaryless Organization* (2002): "It is a social and economic revolution that is manifest in a new order for organizations as they shift from rigid to permeable organizational structures and processes." Organizations must operate at this interface, or what Jean Lipman-Blumen (1996) calls the "Connective Edge," in the twenty-first-century, and therefore managers and scholars alike must think of organizations as dynamic, fluid, living organisms, where the artificial boundaries that once shaped them are ever shifting underfoot (Wirtenberg, 2016).

In this chapter, we apply a multifunctional, transdisciplinary approach, and consider human resources, law, and management, and particularly corporate social responsibility, to start reconceptualizing the notion of "employee CSR" and how it should be put into practice. To provide a real-world perspective on the issues relating to alignment and how they affect our notion of employee CSR, we have gathered both qualitative and quantitative data from a sample of ten companies recognized as being "good corporate citizens" in multiple rankings. We then select three standout organizations and provide

“minicases” that compare and contrast four unique perspectives on these firms from our data sources: (1) what *consumers* are saying; (2) what *external analysts* are saying using publicly available documents; (3) what the *companies* themselves say in formal corporate reports; and (4) what *employees* are saying via social media postings. Minicases for the other seven organizations are available by request from the authors or available at <http://sef-tm.wikispaces.com>.

Microsoft

In its 2014 Corporate Citizenship Report, Microsoft includes commitments and performance highlights in six key areas: (1) ethical business conduct and governance; (2) our people; (3) serving communities; (4) human rights; (5) responsible sourcing; and (6) environmental sustainability. Consumers believe this commitment, with Microsoft ranked as number 2, with an overall score of 72.1, in the 2014 CSR RepTrak® rankings generated by the Reputation Institute. External analysts also seem to agree, with Microsoft ranking number 4 overall (with a score of 54.6) in *CR Magazine's* 2014 Best Corporate Citizens list.

Regarding its relationship with its employees, Microsoft desires to create a “dynamic work environment that fosters collaboration and inclusion among our diverse and global workforce, [and] which yields exceptional personal and professional growth for our employees” (2014: 24). It reports that 86 percent of employees responding to an internal employee poll recommend the company as a great place to work, 90 percent feel proud to work for the company, 93 percent feel that they are treated with dignity and respect by their managers, and 88 percent feel their work group values diverse opinions (2014: 24). Employee ratings on Glassdoor broadly align with Microsoft’s figures, with 85 percent of reviews recommending the company to a friend. *On Glassdoor, Microsoft scored 4 out of 5 overall, and 95 percent of employees approve of the job the CEO is doing.*

External analysts agree, with Microsoft ranking number 9 in employee relations in *CR Magazine's* list, while KLD reports six strengths in the area of employee relations and no attendant concerns. However, Glassdoor comments reveal that employees have significant concerns related to work/life balance and performance management. *Out of the nearly 16,000 reviews of Microsoft, work/life balance was listed as a “pro” in 1,627 reviews, but as a “con” in 958 reviews. Over a thousand reviews complained about Microsoft’s review system. Specifically, it appears that Microsoft used to have a formal policy and practice of “stack ranking” its employees which many researchers consider ineffective and which, according to Duggan (2014), can be demoralizing. Although Microsoft has apparently abandoned a formal stack ranking system according to Glassdoor reviews, a telling review from a current employee in 2016 stated, “Stack Ranking went from Overt to Covert,” and multiple reviews indicate that the spirit and practice of stack ranking is alive and well at Microsoft, even though the policy is no longer in place.*

Additionally, Microsoft views diversity as a source of strength, and has clear and measurable companywide goals to increase representation of women and ethnic minorities, particularly at senior levels of the organization (Microsoft, 2014). KLD reported two strengths in diversity and no concerns.

Millennials' Culture of Connectivity Calls for Redefinition of the Workplace

Given the generational shifts occurring in the workforce of the twenty-first-century, it is imperative to identify employment policies and practices that allow firms to engage with “the millennial generation,” who take a more fluid view of organizational boundaries (Stallard, 2015). Millennials are rapidly becoming the dominant segment of the workforce and have already broadened traditional recruiting practices to include “social recruiting,” leveraging “social and professional networks, both online and offline, from both a candidate’s perspective and the hiring side, to connect to, communicate with, engage, inform, and attract future talent” (Meister and Willyerd, 2010: 95). Millennials desire to work for, and support companies, with strong values and reputations, a track record of service to their community, and a “genuine desire to make the world a better place” (Behrens, 2009: 20). Millennial *employees*, therefore, require flexible benefits and rewards that provide them with the ability to blend work and life. Thus attracting and retaining millennial talent requires firms to rethink how they manage employment relationships. Similarly, appealing to millennial *consumers*, who possess an estimated \$200 billion per year in buying power (Schawbel, 2015), is a financial imperative for organizations to succeed in the twenty-first-century. Given these generational shifts and imperatives, how can organizations in general, and HR in particular, best respond to reconceptualizing the employment relationship which, in many ways, is an outdated carryover from the past?

The Nature of a New Employment Relationship

The employment relationship is the foundation that undergirds the entire world of work as we know it. It comprises the principles that define an organization’s aspirations: how the business strategies, key drivers, and performance expectations of success are communicated and understood; how the workforce is motivated, prepared, and equipped to handle the changes in the business; how development opportunities are provided to enhance business and individual performance; how employee groups and unions as well as management work together to improve the business; and how stakeholders collaborate—both inside and outside the organization—as the basis for the company’s success.

The employment relationship is manifested as a psychological contract between the firm and the employee and goes beyond written values and policies to consider how those values and policies are effectuated in day-to-day practices. Key domains

implicit in this relationship are: the company's expectations about employee loyalty; the employee's and firm's views about job security; and the role of the company in supporting the employee's future employability in the marketplace, including such things as skill and career development. In the "boundaryless organization," employees demand transparency regarding corporate direction and goals. They greatly value and expect the opportunity to have their voices heard, and they place great importance on two-way or 360-degree communication.

CSR, Employees, and Value Creation

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) concerns all managerial "actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law" (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001: 117). Although CSR initiatives are often equated with sustainability and humanitarian/charitable efforts, such initiatives should include managers' decisions that "consider the impact their decisions will have" on all of a firm's stakeholders, including "customers, employees, suppliers and communities, as well as their shareholders" (Trudel and Cotte, 2009: 61–62). Research on the link between CSR and corporate financial performance (CFP) has often focused on the question, "Does it pay to be good?" (See, e.g., the Trudel and Cotte, 2009, article by the same name) by considering whether consumers will pay more (or, at least pay enough for the company to recoup any extra costs incurred) for ethically produced goods. Results of such studies are unclear; ranging from flat, positive, negative, or a curvilinear/U-shaped effect. The consensus, then, is that there must be other factors at play, and research has shown, for example, that this relationship is mediated by the role of intangible resources (Surroca, Tribó, and Waddock, 2010), which, we propose, includes intangible resources like a firm's human capital and a firm's reputation as a "good place to work," both of which we include under our definition of "employee CSR." Stakeholder attention has also been shown to mediate the CSR-CFP link (Madsen and Rodgers, 2015), which, we suggest, includes especially employee-stakeholder attention to the potential misalignment of espoused values and actual practices, as well as consumer-stakeholder attention regarding a firm's reputation as an employer. This aligns with strategic HR literature, where there is clear acceptance of the "key role of workers and the importance of workers' perceptions and behavior in understanding the relationship between HRM and performance" (Guest, 2011: 5).

Designing and Implementing CSR into HR Employment Policies and Practices

Thus, the question becomes *how* should we conceptualize the role of employees in CSR? We believe the bulk of prior literature on CSR has underplayed the important value of talent management. Talent management should be both "a philosophy and a practice" and represent "an organizational mindset or culture in which employees are truly valued; a source of competitive advantage; an effectively integrated and enterprise-wide

set of sophisticated, technology enabled, evidence-based HRM policies and practices; and an opportunity to elevate the role of HR practitioners to one of strategic partner” (Hughes and Rog, 2008: 746). We believe the obvious choice is to broaden traditional definitions of CSR to explicitly include not just consideration of employees, but a broad notion of employee CSR based on this definition of talent management. Organizations promoting this version of employee CSR will, we believe, reap financial benefits—not only from their employees, from whom they should now be better equipped to garner commitment, unleash passion, fuel innovation, and maximize employee performance—but also from consumers who care how an organization treats its employees.

The next question is what practical steps organizations can take in order to embrace this notion of employee CSR. Acknowledging that there is no “one size fits all” solution across organizations, we believe the starting point should be for organizations to “walk the talk” and *align* their espoused HR policies (“what they say”) with their enacted HR procedures (“what they do”) across key categories of: (1) attracting and retaining, (2) developing, and (3) supporting the transition, of employees.

Policies: What You Say

With HR policies, there is an important difference between “carrots,” policies used to entice employees, and “sticks,” policies meant to punish employees. For instance, consider a firm desiring to reduce employee turnover: a “carrot” policy would be offering increased benefits, while a “stick” policy would be a noncompetition agreement that limits employees’ future opportunities. Which mechanism is appropriate will be unique to each firm, so next we only broadly identify applicable policies across our three key categories.

In the first category, attracting and retaining talent, firms consider how to appropriately manage staffing and selection. After identifying candidates, firms must address their first impressions, which include policies that become apparent during interviews, such as visible working conditions, as well policies emerging during the official contracting stage, such as offer letters or employment agreements. Offer letters and employment agreements themselves contain policies related to compensation, confidentiality, solicitation of customers or other employees, or noncompetition agreements. Also included are other, generally written, policies exchanged between firms and employees, such as employee handbooks, mission or vision statements, and codes of conduct. Retention of employees is similarly governed by many of these, often written, policies, and may additionally be influenced by the second category: policies addressing how firms develop talent.

Developing talent requires managing the day-to-day functions of employees as well as preparing them for the future, whether within a firm or without. Talent development therefore includes evaluative policies, such as performance reviews, as well as formal training or development programs such as tuition reimbursement, mentorship opportunities, or internal career transitions. Also included is problem management, such as performance improvement plans or workplace disciplinary procedures.

The final category, transition supports, includes policies that govern the employment relationship after an employee departs. Obviously, this includes formal separation or severance agreements, but also includes firm alumni programs or policies on rehiring former employees. Similarly, many firms offer transition programs that include access to career counselors, résumé editing services, or other support.

Practices: What You Do

As the minicase studies in this chapter demonstrate, however, firm policies can be “lip service,” and what truly matters are these policies in action, which we define as firm *practices*. Firms must ask, then, about each policy whether it is “practicing what it preaches.” If not, at best the firm may be regarded as overly bureaucratic (such as firms that have policies for only regulatory reasons but do not actually enforce them), or the firms risk being seen as hypocritical, particularly if the firm practices are viewed as benefitting management at the expense of employees, and, at the far end, firms may risk litigation from employees.

Moreover, corporate culture is more defined by firm actions than written policies. A firm’s policies-in-action are a form of social exchange that goes beyond contractual methods to address the social interactions between firms and employees. Thus, the employment relationship goes beyond what is contained in an employee’s offer letter and becomes a social-interaction-driven psychological contract. Under social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the social norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), “employees who perceive an organization’s actions toward them as beneficial” respond with “positive attitudes and may feel obligated to reciprocate and be motivated to exert more effort at work” (Melián-González, Bulchand-Gidumal, and López-Valcárcel, 2015: 907). Firms that practice what they preach should, therefore, secure rewards from aligning espoused policies with actual practices.

Johnson & Johnson

Through its family of companies, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) is “the world’s most comprehensive and broadly based manufacturer of healthcare products, as well as a provider of related services for the consumer, pharmaceutical and medical devices and diagnostics markets” Johnson & Johnson (2013: 9). The company is widely known and revered for having one of the most powerful sets of core principles driving its business as embodied in its credo. “Our commitment to citizenship and sustainability at Johnson & Johnson is inspired by what was written more than 70 years ago in Our Credo. To this day Our Credo serves as the compass that guides all decisions at our Company. Our Credo defines our responsibilities to all stakeholders and to the communities in which we work and live.” (2013: 2)

External analysts extol the company’s virtues as well. J&J ranked number 13 in the 2014 CSR RepTrak®, with a score of 68.6, and ranked second in *CR Magazine*’s list of America’s Best Corporate Citizens. In KLD 2013, the company had two employee

relation's strengths and no concerns, and two diversity strengths and no concerns. Overall feedback on Glassdoor supports the company and external analysts' perspectives. *With 3,000 total reviews, J&J scored 4.1; 89 percent of reviewers recommend the company to a friend, and the CEO received an extraordinarily high 97 percent approval rating!*

However, there were mixed messages from Glassdoor respondents in the area of work/life balance, and some concerning comments regarding J&J's credo. Work/life balance was included in 318 positive and 116 negative comments. On a positive note, one employee noted, "Great work-life balance and support from management to meet both work and family responsibilities. Very strong ethical and moral culture with the presence of the Credo." But other reviewers complained, "Minimum to no work life balance" and "Work Life Balance can be tough if [employees] don't define [their] own boundaries."

*A then-current employee (2008) praised: "J&J operates more or less according to their code of ethics, the Credo. Many companies have something like this, but J&J is probably one of the few that invokes it on a day-in day-out basis for making business decisions. That is not to say that **it is at times forgotten or even skewed to benefit a select few individuals**, but that is only select cases. J&J is excellent at communicating to their employees, personal development, and the management has an open-door policy and is very willing to share about their careers and career development with you. There are also potentially *limitless opportunities* given the sheer size and global presence in J&J and you are definitely encouraged to move around within the company."*

A current employee in 2016 disagreed, "No one (internally) respects the Credo." This did not seem to be a new conclusion, with a 2010 current employee advising management that they "Should practice what they preach (Credo)." Another former employee in 2010 said: "Don't try to preach the CREDO (mission statement), if you can't practice it on a daily basis (especially from senior management)." Still another former employee (also 2010) cautioned others that the "Credo is not practiced within. Senior management pay lip service to the Credo, and use it as a means of intimidation and bullying." Disagreeing with that, a current employee (2016) said: "The Credo is the center of all decisions." But the same employee cautioned, "'Slow' culture that may not be progressive enough for the Millennial generation."

Aligning Policies and Practices: The Importance of Responsible Leadership

A misalignment between policies and procedures will be most salient to an organization's employees. In the Internet age and for the newly boundaryless organization, employee thoughts and feelings surrounding a misalignment will find a way outside of the organization! Therefore, responsible firm leaders must "acknowledge that corporations operate in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world and have

to move toward more relational modes of interaction with all their constituents,” particularly employees (Gond, Kang, and Moon, 2011:116). Justice and fairness in dealing with employees require appropriately managing employee expectations—not promising more than can be delivered and not failing to live up to expectations. If employee expectations are not realized, then firm leaders have created an ethically problematic situation (Greenberg, 1990) and negatively impacted the corporation’s duty to its employees—affecting our notion of employee CSR. Worse, knowingly deceptive practices by firms undermine employee autonomy and show a lack of respect for employees as human beings. It is therefore the essence of responsible firm managers to promote alignment: “the activities and behavior of people at *every level* must be aligned with the main thing. When this happens, tremendous organizational power is created. The energy of the many is focused in a single direction. In its absence, energy is dissipated. . . . This is why middle- and lower-level managers need to be as aware of alignment as people at the top.” (Labovitz and Rosansky, 1997: 45).

Methodology

We considered data across four perspectives: (1) consumers, (2) external analysis, (3) the companies themselves, and (4) employees. In order to maximize data availability, we focus on 2013/2014 data, although, as discussed below, we include employee quotes from many years.

The *consumer perspective* is provided by the 2014 RepTrak® Global CSR rankings by the Reputation Institute, which are based on a global survey from tens of thousands of consumers, ultimately resulting in the Forbes 2014 Companies with the Best CSR Reputations list. The lack of variation in this list is surprising: the highest-ranked firm (Google) scored 72.7, while the last-ranked firm (Zara) scored 61.8—a difference of only 10.9 points. In order to be statistically different, company scores must differ by 0.9 points or more (Reputation Institute, 2014). Reviewing the scores for sample firms (Table 40.1), we see variation of only 7.6 points, despite ranging from number 2 to number 74 in the RepTrak® rankings. Significant variation among groups of firms (e.g., comparing top 5 firms versus top 10), however, indicates that there may be important differences in how consumers perceive corporate CSR reputations.

To investigate these differences, we turned to *external analysts*. First, we considered *Corporate Responsibility (CR) Magazine*, which yearly ranks America’s 100 Best Corporate Citizens. *CR Magazine* utilizes a weighted measure of 260 data points across seven dimensioning publicly available data. (These dimensions are: climate change, employee relations, environmental issues, financial matters, governance, human rights, and philanthropy/community support.) Rankings and scores, as well as firm rankings for an employee relations dimension, are presented in Table 40.2. “What distinguishes *CR Magazine’s* list is its seemingly exhaustive criteria: a list of 298 questions” across these categories (Adams, 2014: para. 3). Generally, our sample firms ranked similarly for overall CSR and employee relations; however, three firms had notable differences: GE ranked 30th overall but 111th in employee relations; Boeing ranked 86th overall but 394th in employee relations; while HP ranked 73rd overall but 19th in employee relations.

Company Name	Rank	Score
Microsoft	2	72.1
The Walt Disney Company	3	72
Intel	8	69.4
Johnson & Johnson	13	68.6
The Coca-Cola Company	29	67.3
Hewlett-Packard	49	65.9
Campbell Soup Co.	61	65.2
Nike	61	65.2
Boeing	65	65
General Electric	74	64.5
	(Out of 100)	(Higher is better)

Table 40.1 What Do Consumers Say?

Source: *Forbes Magazine* 2014 "Companies with the Best CSR Reputations" from 2014 Global CSR RepTrak® survey by Reputation Institute

Company Name	Corporate Responsibility Magazine 100 Best Corporate Citizens 2014			MSCI KLD STATS 2013			
	Overall Rank	Overall Weighted Score	Employee Relations Rank	Employee Relations Strengths	Employee Relations Concerns	Diversity Strengths	Diversity Concerns
Microsoft	4	54.6	9	6	0	2	0
The Walt Disney Company	10	83.0	18	5	2	2	0
Intel	8	71.5	3	9	1	2	1
Johnson & Johnson	2	43.3	4	2	0	2	0
The Coca-Cola Company	9	82.9	7	4	1	3	0
Hewlett-Packard	73	154.6	19	7	2	2	0
Campbell Soup Co.	11	83.3	10	3	0	3	0
Nike	19	93.4	23	3	1	2	0
Boeing	86	162.0	394	7	0	2	0
General Electric	30	109.8	111	4	0	2	0
	(Out of 100)	(Lower is better)	(Out of 1,000)				

Table 40.2 What Do External Analysts Say?

To further investigate, we turned to MSCI's MSC database (presented in the second half of Table 40.2). KLD is widely regarded as the most comprehensive data available to measure CSR in academic literature and, despite some limitations, is believed have good empirical reliability (Walls, Berrone, and Phan, 2012). [Note that limitations include industry effects (Rowley and Berman, 2000) and potential issues around subjectivity (Entine, 2003).] Annual data come from 0/1 ratings utilizing publicly available data across many CSR categories, and include both strengths and concerns in each.

Company Name	Culture and Values	Work/Life Balance	Senior Management	Compensation and Benefits	Career Opportunities	Overall	Average Rating*	18-Month Overall Rating	Recommend to a Friend	Approve of CEO	Positive Business Outlook
Microsoft	3.8	3.7	3.4	4.1	3.8	4	3.8	Upward	85%	95%	73%
Walt Disney	3.9	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.8	3.52	Flat	78%	87%	60%
Intel	3.6	3.5	2.9	3.9	3.5	3.7	3.52	Downward	71%	58%	43%
Johnson & Johnson	4.1	3.8	3.5	4	3.7	4.1	3.87	Slightly upward	89%	97%	73%
The Coca Cola Company	3.3	3.1	2.8	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.22	Slightly upward	65%	74%	48%
Hewlett-Packard	3.8	3.8	3	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.37	Downward	61%	67%	35%
Campbell Soup Co.	3.7	3.6	3.2	4.1	3.6	3.8	3.67	Upward	81%	81%	52%
Nike	4.2	3.6	3.3	3.7	3.5	4	3.72	Flat	83%	95%	68%
Boeing	3.1	3.7	2.7	3.8	3.3	3.6	3.37	Flat	67%	83%	41%
General Electric	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.58	Flat	80%	87%	58%
			(Ratings are out of 5)				*Average is across all prior categories				(All percentages are out of 100%)

Table 40.3 What Do Employees Say? Employee Ratings from Glassdoor, as of early February 2016

Since KLD does not provide a summary ranking, we limited the data presented here to total “strengths” and “concerns” in the most relevant categories for our definition of employee CSR: employee relations and diversity.

Each of our sample firms publishes company reports that address topics of concern relating to corporate citizenship, sustainability efforts, and employee development. We have collected reports based on the closest available reports to the end of the 2013 calendar year, in order to be consistent with our other data sources. It should be noted that the fiscal year start and end dates for these companies varied considerably, however, and many reports are released several months after the close of a firm’s fiscal year.

Although tempting to survey current employees, we wished to specifically address the role of social media. Glassdoor allows applicants and current or former employees to review companies on a web-based platform. Ratings on Glassdoor start in 2008, and we intentionally did not limit ourselves to reviews from 2013/2014 because we wish to consider firms’ *online* reputations (see Table 40.3). Much like modern-day teenagers are cautioned that nothing on the Internet can ever be deleted, the rankings on Glassdoor are computed using all available reviews and can’t be deleted by a company.

Nike

Nike opens its FY12/13 Sustainable Business Performance Summary Report by emphasizing a commitment to transparency: *“Transparency and accountability are fundamental to our business and our approach to sustainability.”* (Nike, 2013: 3). At all levels, Nike dedicates itself to helping athletes reach their full potential, is committed to creating a culture of innovation, and embraces sustainability as an opportunity to constantly innovate. To help drive the creativity that fuels its brands, the company focuses on creating a talented, diverse, and inclusive employee base (Nike, 2013: 74).

Nike’s people and culture commitments encompass extensive investments in employee development (e.g., 174,515 training sessions delivered online by NikeU since its launch in 2012). Employee engagement is measured by an “always open” pulse polling approach to gathering employee feedback and the creation of an “inclusion index” to gauge how the company is doing in creating an open and inclusive culture. By way of comparison, KLD reported three employee relations strengths and one concern (relating to supply chain controversies), and two diversity strengths and no concerns; the company ranked 61st in the 2014 CSR RepTrak®, with a score of 65.2, and 19th in *CR Magazine’s* list of America’s Best Corporate Citizens.

Nike leaders receive support in: planning for, hiring, and growing talent, as well as aligning the company’s strategy with team performance; celebrating and rewarding performance; and driving overall excellence across the organization (Nike, 2013: 77). *Comments on Glassdoor reflect a gap between the company’s commitments and employee perceptions.* For example, a then-current employee (2011) warned: *“The Nike I read about [in the employee handbook] and the one I worked for are*

NOT the same!" The same employee continued, "If it says it in the Employee handbook JUST DO IT!"

Regarding work/life balance, a then-current employee (2015) said: *"Lots of lip service to work/life balance—in the right group you may even experience it (I do)." Supporting this, work/life balance is listed as a pro in 129 reviews (including the above review), but as a con in 79 reviews.*

A former employee (2008) voiced discomfort with Nike's culture, including secrecy and privacy: *"You've got to drink the Kool-Aid. You will be literally kicked off campus if you don't wear Nike shoes to work, or (worse yet) you bring a competitor's shoes. Secrecy is big and privacy is huge."* Moreover, a then-current employee (2016) lamented about how the company culture was changing because of its sheer size: *"Nike no longer feels like family. It's getting really, really big. It's changed a lot with the growth but that's to be expected. What's not acceptable is to let 'Just Do It' die under a giant pile of red tape."* A current employee (2008) agreed about bureaucratic stiffness: *"Internal communications are stale and corporate. Management classes and performance review processes are often rigid and disconnected. I don't work here to 'increase shareholder value' or my own ego. I want to be a part of something I feel good about."*

Conclusion and Recommendations

The goal of this chapter is to start a conversation about the importance of incorporating the value of talent management, as enacted by alignment through a firm's policies and practices, into a definition of employee-related corporate social responsibility. Since this is but a start to what we hope is a thoughtful dialogue, we close by raising general conclusions and offering potential avenues for further research and discussion. Future research should address whether social media, such as Glassdoor, reflects a complementary view of employee experiences when combined with internal surveys, and should further probe the relationship among the various perspectives we have identified. For instance, is there a statistical relationship between the ratings or rankings firms have on Glassdoor, RepTrak®, *CR Magazine*, or KLD? How can practitioners do a better job of aligning perspectives from all their internal and external stakeholders?

Moreover, based on our review of Glassdoor comments from our 10 sample firms, the following themes appear across companies and time: (1) the importance of individual managers in shaping employee experiences; (2) the need for alignment and transparency between firm policies and actions (saying versus doing); (3) work/life balance, particularly when some employees find it while others cannot; (4) employees really do care about benefits—including the small ones, like snacks and coffee; (5) employees worry about stability, both among their ranks and among management; and (6) employees are concerned with the role of temporary workers or outsourcing that may go on in many workplaces around the country. This raises the question of how firms can address these concerns, or, to use our terminology from earlier, what principles, policies, and practices can firms implement to garner employee commitment, unleash

employee passion, fuel innovation, and maximize performance? Firms in general (and perhaps HR practitioners in particular, since they are positioned uniquely within such firms) must first become aware of these issues and conduct a self-audit to determine whether there is a risk of their employment policies and practices being out of alignment. Red flags for such misalignment could include groups of employees having radically different experiences, or if it is clear that an abandoned policy is still rearing its head through the actions of individual managers. Of course, policies that are simply out of date should also be updated!

We believe future research should address whether certain firm practices are more hurtful or helpful than others in the attraction and/or retention of talent. In addition firms should consider methods in which our broad notion of employee CSR can be incorporated into HRM policies that are aligned with actual firm practices. The big question for academics and practitioners alike is how can we develop and implement talent management systems that help “boundaryless” firms adapt to a twenty-first-century information age interface between the firm and its stakeholders.

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