

Happy Birthday! CSR International Turns One Year Old

By Wayne Visser

One year ago, on 4 March 2009, about 100 people gathered at The Hub in Kings Cross, London, to celebrate the official launch of CSR International. Memorably, the event included a funeral service for 'old CSR' (corporate social responsibility, or CSR 1.0) and a naming and blessing ceremony for the newborn CSR (corporate sustainability and responsibility, or CSR 2.0).

The ensuing 12 months have been a rollercoaster ride of growth, change, making friends, experimentation and shared learning, with a good deal of trial and error. Along the way, we have created a community of over a thousand CSR enthusiasts, students and professionals from 91 countries. We have conducted 22 learning events in the UK, Germany, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, Kenya and Australia, as well as online. We have also shared nearly a thousand knowledge-based posts online.

Over the past year, the website has received 47,690 visits by 34,501 visitors, with 111,349 page views. The offsite CSR International blog has received 29,252 visitors and was selected as a Top 100 Blog by The Daily Reviewer. CSR International has also built a presence across various social media platforms, including Twitter (976 followers), Facebook (850 members), Yahoo (710 members), Ning (128 members) and LinkedIn (95 members).

Despite this strong online presence, there is no substitute for meeting people face-to-face, and this has been the most rewarding part of the past year. Through CSR International's various learning programmes, I have had the chance to meet CSR friends from around the globe. Happily, this circle of friends will continue to widen through the CSR Quest world tour that I embarked on in January 2010. As to why I am doing the Quest, see the interview by my friends and leading CSR thinkers, Crane & Matten.

The year has not been without its challenges. In its first financial year (ending September 2009), CSR International made an operating loss. The business model of individual membership subscription has proved unviable, and without any sponsors, angel investors or corporate members, the financial security of CSR International remains precarious.

Nevertheless, a lot has been achieved, and there is much to look forward to. In the next 12 months, The World Guide to CSR will be launched, the CSR Quest Tour will be completed and CSR International will have moved more strongly into online learning and

supporting CSR professionalization. CSR International's claim to be "The incubator for CSR 2.0" will also be given a boost when my new book, *The Age of Responsibility: CSR 2.0* is published by Wiley.

It has been an invigorating (and at times exhausting) journey, but looking at how far we have come in just one year, I know it has been worth the effort. Much of our success is due to the generous and mostly voluntary support by a team of largely invisible researchers and interns, to whom I am deeply grateful. And to my fellow CSR enthusiasts and friends, I trust you will join us over the next year and beyond, as our profession continues to make a positive difference in the world.

Source:

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