



June 2008

**IABC Research Foundation
Has received a US \$30,000 Grant**

**from DIRECTV, INC.
to conduct research on**

***Trends and Best Practices in Corporate Social Responsibility
Communications***

DEADLINE: August 25, 2008

Corporate Social Responsibility significantly goes beyond philanthropic acts, volunteering or charitable donations. It includes all the positive contributions an organization should make to the wider community through its core business activities; environmental footprint; social investment and philanthropy programs; and engagement with employees, other key stakeholders; and the public at large. Note that for the purposes of this study, “corporate social responsibility” encompasses the integrated dimensions of the triple bottom line—economic, social and environmental—and includes the full suite of activities and practices an organization might undertake to improve its performance in any or all of these dimensions.

As today’s organizations increasingly work to reconcile their strategies and goals with those of their stakeholders, communicators are increasingly called upon to support stakeholder engagement, assisting with or leading communications and other initiatives for corporate social responsibility.

Topic	A global look at the role of communications and communicators in corporate social responsibility, with the aim of identifying current trends and best practices in corporate social responsibility communications and the roles and responsibilities of communicators in carrying out these initiatives.
Audience for Research Conclusions	This resource would be of great value to communicators worldwide, members and non-members of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), and corporate communicators who could use it as a guideline for evaluating and assessing their performance regarding Corporate Social Responsibility
Questions We are Asking in Key Focus Areas	The study should be designed to provide meaningful research results in the following areas. The Changing Role of Communications Professionals. The study should identify how many (indicated as a percentage) communicators have had corporate social responsibility added to their responsibilities, how many have corporate social responsibility as their primary or exclusive job responsibility, how many would like to take on corporate social responsibility work, how many have partnered with others in their company to communicate about this (and to what degree), and whether organizations are focusing on corporate social responsibility <u>in addition to</u>, or <u>at the expense of</u>, other communication programs. 1. How is corporate social responsibility defined? Are there regional or

	geographical differences? 2. What organizational structure leads to the most effective CSR communications? What are communicators responsible for, and what are their internal partners responsible for? Whose budget is used and how is budget allocated? 3. What skills will communicators have to add to their portfolio in order to meet the CSR challenges of the future? Monitoring and Evaluating CSR Communication. The study should address frameworks for monitoring and evaluating corporate social responsibility communication using empirical indicators that measure what goes into a corporate social responsibility communication program and what comes out of it. It would also be helpful if the study addressed the “input-process-output-outcome-impact” framework for corporate social responsibility communication. 1. What are well recognized CSR frameworks? Best Practices. The study should identify and analyze case studies and best practices around developing and implementing communication strategies for corporate social responsibility. Where relevant, “lessons learned” should also be explored. 1. What internal and external messaging tools are successful organizations around the world using to enhance corporate social responsibility? Examples: • development of core advocacy materials • internal communications to mobilize/recruit employee and/or volunteer support for corporate social responsibility initiatives • use of talking points and messaging on critical issues involving corporate social responsibility • cultivating and managing relationships with key external media and contacts • press releases on corporate social responsibility activities • corporate social responsibility web site and its characteristics (e.g., static? interactive? feedback mechanism provided? other characteristics and best practices?) • giving guidelines (used internally and published externally) • corporate social responsibility report • podcasts • blogs • other related materials 2. How do organizations throughout the world build and expand widespread awareness and understanding of corporate social responsibility issues and performance among employees and other stakeholders? • media relations • employee communications • Web communications • publications
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	• issues management • brand management • advertising • other choices 3. How often do organizations communicate on corporate social responsibility to employees and other stakeholders? How often do they issue a formal report, either in print, online, or both? Trends. The study should investigate and examine ways in which organizations are using communication strategies for corporate social responsibility most effectively. Trends in communication strategies and practices should be examined and reported, as well as trends in reporting methodologies. 1. What is the value of having a communication strategy for corporate social responsibility? 2. What are the critical elements of any good communication strategy for corporate social responsibility? 3. How do organizations use communications to demonstrate and promote corporate social responsibility locally and globally? • business conduct and governance • people practices • environmental stewardship • community involvement • other actions 4. Given that transparency in communications is a key indicator of a socially responsible organization, how do corporate social responsibility and transparency come together in everyday practice? To what extent are today's communicators being held responsible for ensuring this transparency in corporate social responsibility? Please Note: The proposal should clearly identify the specific questions the researchers intend to explore and answer.
Research Participant Eligibility	We welcome proposals from researchers in various fields of study. However, individuals or teams of academics and/or practitioners with research expertise from the following fields are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal: • Corporate social responsibility/sustainability • Organizational/Employee Communication • Organizational Psychology • Public Relations • Mass Communication • Management Studies/Consulting • Related Field
Research Approaches	All appropriate research approaches to the aforementioned topics are eligible (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, combinations of these, etc.). • Both new and ongoing initiatives are eligible.

	• Research must include a significant and meaningful global representation. • Research should be relevant to communication practitioners worldwide and results should specifically account for and articulate any regional/geographic differences identified through the research.
Research Preferences	Preference will be given to study proposals that include the following: • Quantitative measures • Qualitative measures • Professional communicators on the research team • International and cross-cultural scope of issues • Demonstration of relevance to an international audience • Demonstration of experience with and understanding of current trends in corporate social responsibility, especially corporate social responsibility-related communications
Proposal Requirements All reports must be submitted in Microsoft Word format.	Projects must include significant and meaningful globally representative data. Preliminary proposals must be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail message, and must include the following: 1. Contact information, including name, title, organization, address, telephone, fax and e-mail address for primary and secondary contacts. 2. A summary proposal of 2,500 words or less organized into the following sections: I. Brief analysis of research topic II. An outline of the major research questions the study will address III. Study outline with brief descriptions of plans for: A. Literature review B. Research design and methodology Please provide rationale behind methodology choice(s) and a brief description of why they are the correct methodologies for a global study. If a survey is chosen as a primary or secondary method of research, please identify your approach for determining the correct questions to ask and approach for selecting the global, sample audience. C. Description of interim and final reports. D. Preliminary description of diagnostic or training tool and how it will benefit communication professionals and the communication profession as a whole. E. Budget breakdown of all funding for the project, limited to grant amount. (IABC Research Foundation does not cover indirect costs.) IV. Timeline, including delivery dates for interim and final reports. V. Synopsis of researcher or research team qualifications. 3. Example of previous work

	4. Curriculum Vitae of principal researcher and research team, if applicable. Include listings of any published research in the past three years. Listings should include any URLs for published research available on the web.
Deliverables Requirements All reports must be submitted in Microsoft Word format.	<u>Literature Review (Microsoft Word document)</u> 1. Bibliography must be annotated and organized by subject. 2. References in bibliography must be ranked according to research validity, practical relevance and overall value. 3. Must include web-based research, with URLs included in the bibliography. 4. May cover reputable research reported in journals, web sites, business press, academic institutions, think tanks and interviews. <u>Interim Report – First Draft (Microsoft Word document)</u> 1. Executive summary: 10 pages or less. 2. The body of the report, including the bibliography and appendices: approximately 200-300 pages in length and written in language clearly understood by a general business audience. Contents must include: - o Discussion of the research approach and methodology - o Research findings - o Implications to business communicators - o Recommendations for strategies and tactics based on findings and implications - o List of organizations and resources referenced. - o Description or outline for the diagnostic or training tool. <u>Final Report (Microsoft Word document):</u> 1. Same content as above with all changes received from Research Foundation on draft report implemented. 2. <u>At least one</u> practical diagnostic or training tool to help communication professionals develop a corporate social responsibility communications strategy for their organization, including staffing models, budget and ROI metrics. Examples include (but not limited to): - o Valid communication assessment tool, survey or matrix that has been tested and includes a reliability coefficient. - o Training workbook with presentation. - o Benchmarking index of key corporate social responsibility communications strategies for the organization. <u>Additional Requirements:</u> 1. Researchers must collaborate on a feature-style article that outlines the research results and their relevance. If approved by the IABC’s editorial team, IABC will publish the article in its publications. 2. Researchers may be asked to present findings at IABC’s annual international conference held in June of each year (include in budget breakdown).
Copyright	To ensure compliance with applicable laws and Foundation policies, the IABC Research Foundation is the sole owner of the research reports and other products resulting directly from the Study and may trademark, copyright or otherwise protect its property at its discretion.

The IABC Research Foundation	The IABC Research Foundation serves as the research and development arm of IABC.). The IABC Research Foundation is dedicated to contributing new findings, knowledge and understanding to the communication profession and to helping organizations and communicators maximize contributions to organizational success.
About DIRECTV	DIRECTV, Inc., is the nation's leading satellite television service provider, presenting the finest television experience available to more than 17 million customers in the United States, and is leading the HD revolution. Each day, DIRECTV subscribers enjoy access to over 265 channels of 100% digital picture and sound, exclusive programming, industry-leading customer satisfaction and superior technologies that include advanced DVR and HD-DVR services and the most state-of-the-art interactive sports packages available anywhere. For information on Corporate Social Responsibility at DIRECTV, please visit directv.com/Community .
Review Process	All proposals are reviewed by a distinguished international panel of communications experts in accordance with the schedule outlined below:

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>DATE</u>
RFP Announced	July 22, 2008
Preliminary proposals received at IABC	August 25, 2008
Researchers notified of results	September 22, 2008
Agreement is signed	October 6, 2008
Project commences	October 6, 2008
First interim report due	December 15, 2008
Second interim report due	February 16, 2009
Final report due	April 27, 2009 (for release at the June '09 conference)

Send proposals by August 25, 2008 via e-mail to:

E-mail: mpavia@iabc.com

If you have questions, contact Mari Pavia, IABC Research Foundation Director, at mpavia@iabc.com.

IABC Research Foundation
One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 600
San Francisco, CA 94102
Phone: (415) 544-4700
Fax: (415) 544-4747