



Business in the

Community

Ireland

CSR

Case Study

EirGrid

Company Description

Business in the community Ireland (BITCI) is Ireland's only network for responsible business, made up of 73 of Ireland's blue chip companies; the network is committed to expanding and improving responsible and sustainable business practices. BITCI also runs the Business Working Responsibly Mark, Ireland's only accreditation for responsible business practices. It is valid for two years and is audited by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). It provides a benchmark and gap analysis for businesses of their current Corporate Responsibility strategy across all business operations identifying opportunities and risk and improving on areas. Many of the companies who have received the Mark, 11 so far, describe the process as a journey towards best in class corporate responsibility and very much a process that reveals the before and after of having The Mark. Intel, Transdev and Eirgrid are three of those companies who have shared their experiencing of achieving the Business Working Responsibly Mark.

Transdev Ireland operate Luas, Dublin's Light Rail system. Transdev worldwide is one of the largest public transport operators in Europe with a reputation for delivering high quality local public transport. Transdev is active in all aspects of public transport provision from the organisation and management of major projects to the development of passenger services and the operation of networks. Every year 3.3 billion passengers travel on Transdev's tram, metro, train, transport on demand, bus and coach networks. In Ireland they transported 30.5 million passengers last year. Their client is the Railway Procurement Agency, the government body with responsibility for Luas and other transport projects. Previously known as Veolia Transdev the name changed following a company merger.

The Process

Transdev Ireland is part of Europe's largest private passenger transport company. Its 289 employees are responsible for more than 30 million passenger journeys a year, delivering 99% reliability on a daily basis and achieving independently audited customer satisfaction ratings of 87%. You'd expect a tram company to have statistics in relation to passenger journeys and reliability - at Transdev Ireland, these metrics are only the departure point.

Thanks to its work with Business in the Community, it now measures everything from the engagement of its staff and its customers, to the impact it has on the local community and the wider environment. The aim of all this measurement is simple – to ensure it stays on the right track for sustainability. In recent years it has concentrated on developing and formalising its CSR policies and procedures, to ensure its civic credentials match its business performance. Central to this has been the achievement, in 2012, of Business in the Community's Business Working Responsibly Mark, the gold standard in good corporate citizenship.

"We have always engaged with the community in terms of corporate giving and charity or sponsoring various events but we were doing it in a non-structured way," explained Transdev Communications Manager, Dervla Brophy, who took a lead role in helping the company attain the Business Working Responsibly Mark.

"BITC came into our lives and gave us a much more structured framework in which to work. What is different about our approach to CSR is that it is much more firmly embedded in the organisation. It is now an integral part of how we operate as a company."

Achieving the Mark, a structured process involving questionnaires, consulting and audits, "requires effort", but the benefits accrue not despite the work involved in gaining it, but because of it, she said.

One of the initiatives Transdev undertook was to partner with a local school in a disadvantaged area, helping to upgrade it. Transdev also partners with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, supporting its "Say no to Racism" advertising campaign which it runs on its trams

Not alone are both initiatives "loved by our staff" but they serve key business purposes too.

"We have more than 20 different nationalities within our staff," said Brophy. "Diversity is therefore a hugely important aspect of our business."

The mentoring Transdev's staff provides to school students is also mutually beneficial.

"We partner with a diverse, multicultural school and we are a diverse, multicultural workplace. We share our stories with them, run customer care workshops with them and we give work experience opportunities."

The benefits flow in both directions. "This school is on the LUAS line. By going in there, working with these kids, transforming their school room, it helps them appreciate us as employees and our service. It closes the circle in so far as they see that we are part of their community, not just driving through it."

Challenges

For the tram company, it's been quite a journey. "Our CSR activities no longer come out of the company's marketing or sponsorship budget, but stand alone. That represents quite an internal shift. It's not about activities that are up there in lights for their promotional value, it's about making a real difference to the community in which we operate, and in turn, it has made a real difference to us." said Brophy.

For Transdev Ireland's managing director Brian Brennan a key benefit of the Mark is the metrics it provides. "With anything you do as a company, if you want to make a difference you have to set targets and to do that you have to be able to measure," said Brennan.

"While we have always striven to be a good corporate citizen, what is new to us is the structure we now have on our CSR activities, and that is thanks to Business in the Community. It encompasses everything we do, from how we handle customers on a day to day basis to how we reduce our water or electricity consumption."

Benefits

Brennan now believes all companies should award points for CSR practices when tendering for business.

Achieving the Mark has been an important milestone for the company. "The fact that it is an external assessment has been of huge value for us in Transdev Ireland. Achieving it has given us international recognition within our own group," he said.

Write CSR off as ‘touchy feely’ at your peril. “I get very frustrated when people think it’s a warm and fuzzy concept. Just look at the companies that have the Business Working Responsibly Mark – Boots, Pfizer, Accenture. These are seriously successful businesses with serious bottom lines. The fact is, working on CSR puts you in a much stronger position as a business,” he said.

The Mark’s role is to provide a framework for continuous improvement. “Whereas before, good stuff just happened, now we have a road map, a vision that enables us strive for even more.”

Business Working Responsibly Mark

The Business Working Responsibly Mark measures all areas of your business:

- Corporate Responsibility
- Sustainable Practices
- Employee well-being
- Supply chain management
- Environmental policies
- Communicating your CSR

Based on ISO 26000, The Business Working Responsibly Mark certifies your responsible and sustainable business practices. Audited by the NSAI, it not only gives third party endorsement of your practices, it crucially provides you with an inventory, a gap analysis and a roadmap for your sustainable journey.

For more Information:

Visit <http://www.bitc.ie/business-working-responsibly-mark/>

Or contact Elise McCarthy at Business in the Community Ireland on 0 1 874 7232