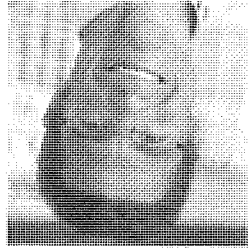


Path to a responsible approach

Corporate social responsibility is ultimately a matter of cultural shift



Martin Loosemore

DENNIS PARSONS

WHEN it comes to discussions of corporate social responsibility, construction sectors have often been overlooked in the past. But this is changing, according to a new book that delves deeply into the area and calls for a fundamental change in thinking.

"Our research shows that the construction industry is becoming a focus of activism, as the public realises what a significant impact it has on their lives," says Martin Loosemore, professor of under-

safety, environmental degrada-

sity to the needs of under-

represented and minority groups,"

Loosemore notes. "Some argue that in Australia, that picture has

bottom-line company performance is difficult to quantify. Never-

theless, he believes there is sufficient evidence of companies that

focus on CSR having better records of attracting and retaining

good employees, having easier access to capital, and having more

positive brand recognition.

Even more, he argues, a poor CSR record has the potential to

infect significant losses on a company.

"All the companies we interviewed at the top you will find some of Australia's most innovative and

balanced economic, environmental and social outcomes as part of their corporate strategy, but all

acknowledge they are at the beginning of a journey," he says.

"There are different types of companies out there. There are large clients taking leadership, and it

appears that many clients don't yet see the value in CSR. Ulti-

mately, therefore, government regulation will be needed to

require the industry to change,

and the humanities. A more

disciplines such as science, arts

needs to attract people from other

needs to change, the industry

thinker that will change its cul-

ture. To truly change, the industry

doesn't create the type of

educaate those who work in the in-

large firms depend on major

higher CSR standards. But the

supply chains to comply with

and this is a shift in thinking that

needs to happen," he says.

"The way most institutions

yet been reached. The key mes-

age is: the direction is right even if

the pace could be much better."

is not possible to operate without

people in the infrastructure, con-

struction and engineering sectors,

ing point has been reached, so it

we call in our book, the CSR tip-

"In many other industries, what

environment.

sign and management of the built

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communities and other stake-

in an economic environment

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see little benefit in CSR, especially

Many companies in the sector

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"The industry needs better

We also need more women.

changing the industry's gene pool.

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