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CSRLIVE THE VALUE OF CSHR (CORPORATE SOCIAL...

# CSRlive Commentary

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## The Value of CSHR (Corporate Social Human Resources)

By Aman Singh, [Vault.com](#)

Human capital. My career. My job.

In a game of word association, how many times would 'corporate social responsibility' elicit any of the above phrases? I'll hazard a guess and say maybe one out of 10 times.

Because not until recently has there been as much analysis and commentary on the importance of CSR and sustainability. However, most of it continues to lean toward discussing the greener aspects of sustainability: it's good for the environment, a sustainable business strategy leads to profits with performance, etc.

Until last month, when a much-awaited book arrived at my doorstep: *CSR for HR: A Necessary Partnership for Advancing Responsible Business Practices*. Authored by Elaine Cohen, cofounder of [Beyond Business Ltd.](#), a CSR consulting and sustainability reporting firm--and a prolific blogger on [CSR reporting](#)--the book is a persuasive argument for connecting CSR with a company's human resources function. Having spent over 20 years in senior leadership positions with companies like Procter & Gamble and Unilever, Cohen's narratives come from experience. And a strong belief that corporate social responsibility must begin internally--with your company's primary stakeholders: employees.

At [Vault.com](#), I follow the evolution of [CSR and sustainability](#) through the lens of [career development and recruitment practices](#). And what adds color to everything I write is the stark disconnect between CSR and recruitment professionals on how one's strategy and decision making impacts the other. To me this sounds like the left hand doesn't know what the right is doing: how can you recruit the best talent without a clear vision and understanding of the company's core values?

Cohen's 300-page missive then comes as a bible of sorts. Written in a conversational manner--which lends itself to an easy read on an otherwise weighty topic--the book follows two accomplished HR professionals who clearly love their jobs. The difference: Sharon Black sees her job as a strictly people management function (recruitment, compensation, benefits, training, etc.) while Arena Dardelle defines human resources as a vital driver of the company's long-term sustainability. By the way, both Sharon and Arena are fictional characters.

How do the two align? This is where the true value of the book lies.

Chapter by chapter, Cohen examines how functionalities like employee welfare, organizational development, compensation, benefits, training, recruitment and retention, diversity and inclusion, and even employee rights--long considered traditional HR duties first to be dispensed with in a recession, budget-constrained and full of regulatory jargon--tie into a company's lifecycle, strengthen its brand and guarantee long-term stability. Her use of numerous case studies like The Body Shop, GE's ecomagination, Gap, Nike, Microsoft, Patagonia, Timberland and many others, peppered throughout the pages, further add a quotient of practical realism.

She calls it Corporate Social Human Resources (CSHR).

It's simple really: a company's best brand ambassadors are its [employees](#). They are also your best strategists. To tune them out of the sustainability conversation is like ignoring your core venture capitalists. Why will they invest their time, productivity and ideas without the promise of a personal ROI? This is what Cohen encapsulates succinctly in *CSR for HR*. This gem will sit on my desk not only as an indispensable reference tool, but also as a constant reminder that a wealth of innovation remains untouched, just an arm's length away.

For more information on *CSR for HR* and options to purchase, please visit [CSRwire's Books Page](#).



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