

# HOW TO CHOOSE AN ETHICAL EMPLOYER

UK Version



**Will the level of care an organisation exercises with regard to its impact on the environment, its employees, the community, and the future influence your decision to work with it? How can you judge employers on these issues?**

## Terms you need to know

### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

A movement not a fad! CSR applies to all aspects of corporate responsibility: community, social, environmental, workplace, governance. CSR practitioners talk about corporate 'opportunity' - highlighting the opportunity/risk dimension of responsible business practice.

### TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE REPORTING (TBL)

A framework for measuring corporate performance against not only economic, but also social and environmental parameters.

### SUSTAINABILITY

An organisation's practices "... that meet the needs of the present without compromising ... the environmental, social and human needs of our descendants." [www.wbcsd.org](http://www.wbcsd.org)

### GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Implies an organisation's commitment to and awareness of good CSR practices across its operations at all levels, from local to global.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Moving beyond over-emphasis on short-term benefits for shareholders to consideration of long-term organisational implications for all stakeholders: shareholders, communities, customers, employees, the environment, the supply chain, etc.

### ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST

An organisation's recognition that it is in its own long-term business interest to engage in CSR strategies and sustainable business practices.

## Your turn

There are many things you can do from where you are. Consider your own position. What do you value, and what kind of impact would you like to make through your career? Which areas of CSR do you feel strongly about?

- Environmental** - the environmental impact, direct or indirect, of an organisation's operations, products or services including those of its suppliers.
- Community/Social** - the impact of an organisation's projects, products, services or investments on the community at a local or global level.
- Workplace Practices** - including respectful treatment of employees in: recruitment and selection; diversity and equal opportunity; work/life balance; professional development and progression; managing redundancies; full entitlement to employment rights.
- Marketplace & Business Conduct** - responsible behaviour in developing, purchasing, selling and marketing products and services.
- Ethical Governance** - from board level and throughout an organisation: transparency; risk reporting; effective codes of conduct, codes of ethics and compliance measures.

## Things you can do

1. **Read** the business pages in newspapers. Learn about what is happening in the business world, e.g. corporate strategies and performance, governmental regulations, etc. What kind of **media coverage** does the company get? Are its CSR/ethical initiatives visible? Investigate the same for the public sector if this is your career interest.
1. **Reflect** on the organisation to which you are considering applying. What is its core business or purpose? How does this impact on the environment and the community? Are its products, processes, and services in line with your own values?
2. **Research** the organisation through its website and consider its genuine commitment to ethical business practices and CSR strategies using the terms listed above. Look for **Values/Mission Statements, Annual Reports, and Sustainability Reports**. Are its CSR initiatives strategic and integrated rather than just 'bolt on'?
3. **Investigate** whether the company is benchmarking itself against other organisations using robust frameworks such as the Corporate Responsibility Index, the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI and G3) Sustainability Reporting Guidelines ([www.globalreporting.org](http://www.globalreporting.org)) and the AA1000 Assurance Standards or whether it is using non-standardised reporting. Check out [CorporateRegister.com](http://CorporateRegister.com) ([www.corporateregister.com/](http://www.corporateregister.com/)) - the world's most comprehensive directory of corporate non-financial environment/social/sustainability/CSR downloadable reports.
4. Look closely at **workplace practices**, e.g. gender mix, diversity policies, staff retention rates, opportunity for staff community volunteering and professional development.
5. **Talk to employers at careers fairs, employer events and even job interviews. Ask them questions. Get the conversations going on these issues. If you ask questions about CSR, an organisation learns that this is an important driver in attracting new staff. It is also an opportunity for them to showcase their initiatives and receive some positive reinforcement.**
6. **Finally**, check out the ratings of organisations to which you might apply (next section).

## CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INDEX (CRI)

Business in the

Community

Business in the Community's Corporate Responsibility Index is the leading UK benchmark of responsible business practice. FTSE350 companies, sector leaders from the DJSI and BITC member companies are invited to self-assess the extent to which corporate strategy is integrated into responsible business practice in the management of the four areas of **community**, **environment**, **marketplace**, and **workplace**, and performance in social and environmental impact areas. An independent assurance process follows which encourages authentic CR practices. View full results of the latest Index at: [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)

### Top 100 UK companies for 2007/08.

**Platinum:** BAA, Barclays, BHP Billiton, BBC, BT Grp, Camelot Grp, Co-operative Financial Services, EDF Energy, HBOS, J Sainsbury, John Lewis Partnership, Kelda Grp, Kingfisher, KPMG, Lloyds TSB, Marks & Spencer, National Grid, Pearson, PwC, Reckitt Benckiser, Rio Tinto, Rolls-Royce, RWE npower, Scottish & Southern Energy, ScottishPower, Severn Trent, Tesco, United Utilities, Veolia Water.

**Gold:** Accenture, Anglo American, AstraZeneca, AWG, BNFL, Bradford & Bingley, BAT, Cadbury Schweppes, Carillion, Centrica, Diageo, Ernst & Young, Friends Provident, Gallaher Grp, H M Revenue and Customs, Imperial Tobacco Grp, International Power, Lafarge Cement UK, Liberty Int'l, Northumbrian Water Grp, Reed Elsevier, Scottish & Newcastle, Serco Grp, Smith (WH), The Go-Ahead Group, Unilever, Unipart Grp of Co's.

**Silver:** 3i Grp, Aggregate Industries, Alfred McAlpine, AMEC, Amey, ARM Holdings, Assoc. British Ports Hldgs, Atkins (WS), Barratt Dev'ts, BBA Grp, Brixton, Deloitte & Touche, F&C Asset Management, FirstGroup, Ford Motor Co, Great Portland Estates, Home Retail Grp, ITV, Nationwide Building Soc, Northern Foods, Provident Financial, Royal & SunAlliance, Shire, Sodexo, Speedy Hire, Standard Life, TATA Consultancy Services, Toyota, Wates Grp, Whitbread, Zurich.

**Bronze:** Britannia Building Soc, Capgemini(UK&I), DSG Int'l, Hallmark Cards, Legal & General, Marshalls, MITIE Group, National Australia Grp UK, Premier Farnell, Rentokil Initial, Total UK, United Co-operatives, Valuation Office Agency, Woolworths Grp, Workspace Grp.

## THE DOW JONES SUSTAINABILITY WORLD INDEXES

(DJSI WORLD)

Track the performance of the global sustainability leaders listed on the stock market. Based on an assessment of economic, social and environmental criteria relevant to industry specific criteria, the indexes are used in managing sustainability investment portfolios. The top 10% of the 2,500 largest companies in the Dow Jones Global Indexes are selected as components of DJSI World. Register online and track the performance of companies of interest: [www.sustainability-indexes.com/](http://www.sustainability-indexes.com/)



### DJSI World 2006/07 Leaders UK (alphabetically) as of April 30, 2007

3i Grp, Alliance Boots, AMEC, Anglo American, Astrazeneca, Aviva, BAE Systems, Balfour Beatty, Barclays, BG Grp, BHP Billiton, BP, BAT, British Land Co., British Sky Broadcasting, BT Grp, Cadbury Schweppes, Cattles, Centrica, Compass Grp, Diageo, DSG Int'l, EMI Grp, Experian Grp Ltd., Firstgroup, Friends Provident, GlaxoSmithKline, Hammerson, HBOS, Home Retail Grp, HSBC Hldgs, Imperial Chemical Industries, Investec, ITV, J Sainsbury, Kingfisher, Ladbrokes, Land Securities Grp, Legal & General, Lloyds TSB, London Stock Exchange, Lonmin, Marks & Spencer, National Express, National Grid, Pearson, Provident Financial, Reckitt Benckiser, Reed Elsevier, Rentokil Initial, Reuters, Rio Tinto, Rolls-Royce, Royal Bank of Scotland, Royal Dutch Shell, SABMiller, Schroders, Slough Estates, Smith & Nephew, Taylor Woodrow, Tesco, Travis Perkins, Unilever, Vodafone, WPP Grp, Xstrata, Yell Grp.

### DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYMENT

"A Level Playing Field" developed by AGCAS and made accessible online at [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) – "Handling Discrimination" provides a comprehensive starting point for diversity and employment. A range of diversity groups are identified, each with a section on "Positive Employers", leading you to some excellent sites such as:

- [www.blackandasiangrad.ac.uk](http://www.blackandasiangrad.ac.uk): Aims to improve the employability of all Black and Asian students in the UK.
- [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk): Race for Opportunity (BITC) lists over 180 UK members (employers) dedicated to diversity in employment.
- [www.get.hobsons.co.uk/advice/equality](http://www.get.hobsons.co.uk/advice/equality): Hobsons website guide on equality in the workforce for a range of diversity groups.
- [www.employers-forum.co.uk/](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk/): The Employers' Forum on Disability lists over 400 employer members.
- [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk): Opportunity Now (BITC) for women in the workforce, lists 360 employer organisations and identifies "Exemplar Employers".

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