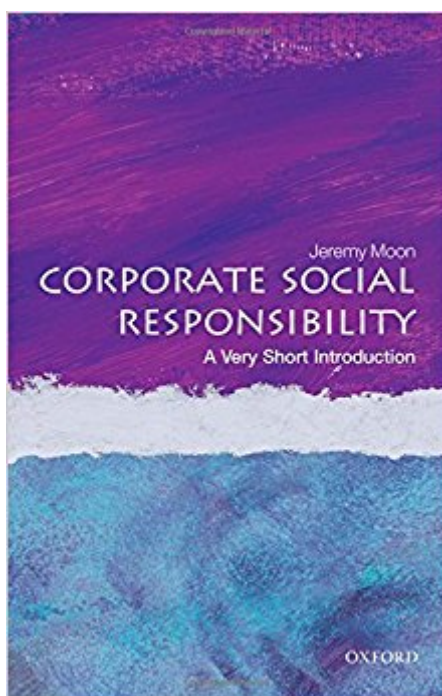


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Corporate Social Responsibility: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

Corporate social responsibility has been defined as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society." Is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) just window dressing or is it a contradiction in terms? In this Very Short Introduction, Jeremy Moon shows that CSR holds much more value than it first appears, and examines how it has come of age in recent years. Illustrating the sorts of CSR investments companies make, the ways in which they practice CSR, and the challenges this brings, Moon considers how the principles migrated from their US roots to become a global business phenomenon. Exploring the place of CSR in different economic, social, political, and managerial contexts, this short guide considers the many positives, but also challenges, that CSR can present for companies, societies, and governments worldwide. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jeremy Moon is Professor and founding Director of the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility, Nottingham University Business School. He has held visiting positions at the European University Institute; McGill University; the University of Toronto; Churchill College, University of Cambridge; the Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton; University of Manchester;

Trinity College, University of Melbourne; and Copenhagen Business School.

Professor Moon provides a useful overview of corporate social responsibility. The genesis of CSR lies in the United States, but the professor considers its worldwide dissemination. Since he is in Great Britain, many of his examples of CSR come from Great Britain and Europe. He also adds specific examples from India; while he refers to China's embrace of CSR, he was less specific about CSR in China than he was about India. I did not find this surprising since the Communist Party will dictate the social responsibility of Chinese corporations. This raises the question of: what is CSR? It is an effort to guide the behavior of businesses, principally multi-nationals, as their activities affect working conditions, the environment, education, and social conditions such as poverty and women's rights. These efforts fall into the gaps between what national governments may regulate and what civil society deems necessary or appropriate. It is interesting that the author finds religious teachings frequently inform what civil society requires of businesses. The author reviews the history of CSR, its goals, its methods, and its intellectual support. He also examines the detractors of CSR, principally Professor Friedman, but he expresses no sympathy for Friedman's argument. You should be aware that that Professor Moon fully supports CSR. Personally, I can think of two examples of the effect of CSR. One occurred in Munich, Germany, in 2005, at a conference sponsored by Taurus Investments with MIT as a co-sponsor. The Taurus representative, a German, started the conference by saying that, while in the U.S., he had encountered the idea that businesses had a responsibility to "give back" to society and this was Taurus' effort to do so. The second example occurred on a couple of occasions in Austin, Texas, at some business training courses, when I heard 30-somethings say they were pursuing this training because "I've started my non-profit and now I need to start my for profit" or words to this effect. The phrase "social camouflage" came to my mind. Professor Moon considers these and other outcomes of CSR. I recommend his Introduction to this subject. Whether you agree that CSR is essential or not, I think that you will find the book rewarding.

This is a great little book by an excellent, knowledgeable author. I strongly recommend this to anyone who wants a short reader on CSR.

Very good introduction to the subject

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a topic that has generated significant interest among

business practitioners and academicians in recent years. But despite the interest, there are different opinions about what this term really means and how it can be applied to constantly changing business environments and concerns of society and government. As the title indicates, the book by Jeremy Moon provides the reader with *A Very Short Introduction* to the topic *Corporate Social Responsibility*. According to the book cover, the author is a Professor of Corporate Sustainability at the Copenhagen Business School and was the founding Director of the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility at Nottingham University Business School. In short, he is an authority on the subject matter. The author divided the book into an introduction and seven chapters. There is also a list of abbreviations at the beginning of the book and two additional lists – one of references and another of materials for further reading; these latter two lists are sorted by chapters, which allows the reader improved access to the information. Furthermore, Moon offers a well-developed index of key terms he used in this book and a list of 16 so-called “boxes”. The purpose of these boxes, which are highlighted in grey color and distributed throughout the chapters, is to summarize and emphasize the most important learning points about CSR. Moon mentioned in the introduction that *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)* has been described as “an oxymoron” by all too many dinner party pundits who are suspicious of business claims about its sociability. He points to the profit-making ideas of corporations on the one hand and to the increasingly central role of business-society relationships on the other. In Chapter 1, Moon provides various definitions of CSR, discusses who is involved in this business phenomenon, and describes recent developments of CSR. In the following chapters, he discusses frameworks for managing CSR on the company level (Chapter 2), past and current national and international developments of CSR (Chapter 3), and the institutionalization of CSR (Chapters 4 and 5). In the final two chapters, he presents critical perspectives about CSR from various points of views (Chapter 6) and then engages the reader in prospects and reflections about the economic, business, environmental, and social futures of CSR, including its limitations (Chapter 7). The book is part of the *Very Short Introductions* series published by Oxford University Press. This series contains entries on a wide variety of topics and is aimed at reaching “anyone [person] wanting a stimulating and accessible way in to a new subject”. In my opinion, Moon’s book is well-written and easy to understand. It is relatively inexpensive and provides the reader with a wealth of information about the past, present, and future of CSR. I highly recommend this book.

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