

State of Sustainable Business Poll

BSR/GlobeScan

2009

Objective:

The objective of this poll is to find out where sustainable business ranks amongst industry members' priorities and what kinds of efforts are being taken to make sustainable business a reality.

Methods Used:

A poll was conducted amongst 274 representatives who attended the BSR Conference 2009 in San Francisco. The sample consisted of people from businesses, NGOs, governments and academia representing at least 15 countries.

Key Findings:

Key CSR/Sustainability Issues:

- When asked about their company's CSR/Sustainability priorities for the next 12 months, 41% voted for Climate Change, 32% voted for Human Rights and 29% for Basic Workers' Rights.
- 9 out of 10 people said their Sustainability Budget would either remain the same or increase in 2009. Only 8% said that their budgets would decrease.
- 86% of the respondents believe that the reputational benefits of sustainability initiatives are important.
- The most significant developments in the past year have been Wal-Mart's sustainability initiatives, the creation of a sustainability index and a new US administration coming to power which has an increased focus towards sustainability.

Public Trust and Responsible Business:

- Nine out of 10 respondents are optimistic that global businesses will embrace sustainability as part of their core strategies and operations in the next five years.
- The top three industries that have acted most responsibly in terms of their sustainability initiatives in the past few years are 'Retail' (56%), 'IT' (32%) and 'Energy' (22%).
- To rebuild trust post the economic crisis, companies should demonstrate positive social and environmental impacts (38%) and innovate business models for sustainability (39%).

Return on Investment of CSR/Sustainability:

- 61% of the respondents said their company either measures the ROI for its CSR/Sustainability efforts or expects to do so soon.
- The ROI is currently measured mostly through reputational benefits (88%), short-term cost savings (81%) and employee morale and satisfaction (81%).

Climate Change Strategy:

- 44% agree that the most significant element of their climate strategy is energy efficiency.
- The most important problems to addressing climate change are competing strategic priorities (49%) and short-term financial pressures (triggered by the recession) (46%),

- followed by implementation complexity (44%).
- Lowering costs and/or other efficiencies (70%) is considered the principal business opportunity of addressing climate change.

Conclusion:

The poll reveals that most companies are seriously considering making sustainability a main priority on their business agenda. Most companies are optimistic that sustainable business will be a huge thing in the future and those companies are headed in the right direction for now. To rebuild consumer trust, companies need to step up their sustainability efforts.

[Full Report](#)