



REPORTING | NIKKI WRIGHT

RESPONSIBLE OPPORTUNITY

The concepts of sustainability and corporate responsibility (CR) are now part of mainstream business in New Zealand, with early adopters followed by every company smart enough to recognise the absolute importance of CR in the local and global marketplace.

But New Zealand is well behind places such as Europe and the US when it comes to CR reporting. Few companies here prepare full triple bottom line reports that give a transparent account of their economic, social and environmental impacts.

We won't have fully embraced CR until companies inform stakeholders to a global best-practice standard. Going through the process required to comprehensively report on CR

sustainability reporting. It has been a steep learning curve, but the annual process is now showing its worth as a tool for engaging with its many and varied stakeholders, and establishing Ricoh's reputation as a market leader in CR.

It is well known now that making claims about green values will backfire on a company that cannot demonstrate real action. Reporting is a brilliant way of cementing brand credibility and lending authenticity to a company's CR initiatives.

Trends in international CR reporting include a strong move towards the use of online communications tools within integrated CR communications strategies. Multimedia, social media and interactive content now

company on its human rights, environmental stewardship and community performance.

In another interesting development, the International Organization for Standardization has developed ISO 26000, which will provide guidelines for social responsibility, a key component of CR.

This is due to be released in November and is the product of experts from all main stakeholder groups in a wide range of member countries.

The aim of the standard is to encourage voluntary commitment to social responsibility and lead to common guidance on concepts, definitions and methods of evaluation. It is not for certification.

Thankfully, New Zealand has

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shows companies where gaps, risks and opportunities exist in their operations.

That self-knowledge is invaluable and can lead to real competitive advantage. Benefits such as increased employee motivation and improved brand reputation justify the effort required to develop an effective reporting framework.

Ricoh New Zealand, a Wright Communications client, is now in its third year of public

feature alongside more traditional printed reports.

Website updates of newly available CR data and case studies lend fantastic immediacy to reporting. The Dow Chemical Company and premium clothing company Timberland are two well-known names that now report quarterly updates online.

Timberland updates 15 key CR performance indicators and provides a dialogue forum for stakeholders to engage with the

a relatively good record on issues such as labour exploitation. But an international consensus on what social responsibility means will be an excellent benchmark for innovative New Zealand companies to compare themselves with as CR reporting continues its evolution.

Nikki Wright is managing director of PR firm Wright Communications