

ABSTRACT

A Review of Trends: Two Decades of Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting

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In the recent past, corporate social responsibility reporting was viewed as the fulfillment of a moral obligation of a company to society. Currently, more and more entities consider social responsibility reporting as good business and a process that provides financial value derived from cost savings and an enhanced reputation. Beginning in 1993 and continuing, KPMG has conducted a survey and reports results every three years on the state of corporate responsibility reporting. The survey has evolved from a review of mainly environmental reporting to sustainability reporting over the course of the last two decades. In this paper, results from the KPMG surveys are analyzed to highlight developments in the following areas: standards companies use to assess and report their performance in social responsibility, the format and location of the reporting including the level of integration with the financial reports, the topics that companies include in the reports, and the level of assurance companies are using to verify their social performance. Results indicate that many companies, particularly large publicly traded companies, are taking corporate responsibility more serious now than in the past. More resources are being allocated to sustainability efforts, reporting those efforts, and verifying the results of the efforts. However, much work remains in this area. No standardized reporting is required and assessment of the performance data is only being completed by a minority of the companies reviewed.