

*Corporate Social Responsibility: A perspective of leadership development.*

By: Thomas J. Gajewski, Int'l MBA, MDR, Ed.D (c.)

Program Chair – School of Business, Westwood College Los Angeles  
Campus

Dr. MD Haque

Assistant Professor, State University of New York (SUNY) - Empire  
State College

James Welch, Ed.D.

University of Phoenix

Stakeholder theory suggests that the primary objective of a company's activity should be to create and maximize value for all the stakeholders (Arrarat, 2008). However, over the last decade or so, corporate scandals involving leadership such as those at Enron and WorldCom followed by a global financial crisis where government bailouts went to firms whose leadership continued to reward itself with excessive bonuses serve as a few examples why leadership as it relates to corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been called into question. Numerous organizations today are in search of leaders who demonstrate leadership that goes beyond preventing their respective corporations from front-page scandals (Strand, 2011). According to McWilliams & Siegel (2001) interest has progressed into more subtle areas of CSR where there is a desire for corporate leaders and corporations to demonstrate a commitment to CSR. In fact, in a recent paper Mostovicz, Kakabadse, & Kakabadse (2011) noted that leadership is one of the four pillars of CSR. However, despite this increased interest in the relationship between leadership and CSR, there is strikingly little research readily available that explores this intersection (Strand, 2011). Considering the importance of leadership in shaping organizational strategies and practices, the lack of research on the interface between organizational leadership and CSR is noteworthy (Groves and LaRocca 2011a; Waldman and Siegel 2008). Recent enthusiasm about the topic of responsible leadership (Maak and Pless 2006; Pless and Maak 2011) also highlights certain deficiencies in current leadership theories, particularly with regard to the interface between leadership and CSR. Responsible leadership theory broadens the notion of leadership from traditional leader-subordinate relationship to leader-stakeholder relationships and contends that "building and cultivating ... ethically sound relations toward different stakeholders is an important responsibility of leaders in an interconnected stakeholder society" (Maak and Pless 2006, p. 101).

Relatedly, progress in understanding how to develop responsible leadership is also moderate (D'Amato, Eckert, Ireland, Quinn, & Ellen, 2010). Consequently, the purpose of this study is to propose a leadership development model based on existing research relating leadership with CSR in an effort to better understand the intersection of these fields and subsequently to identify potentially promising future research streams. The authors hypothesized that this prospective process would be a contribution for guidance to develop "good people" and to ultimately support the business operations, the preservation of environment, and social encouragement (Kesaprakorn, 2008).