



ABSTRACT

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Title	Social Responsibility in Corporate Communication. Reporting Practice in Retail Industry.		
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Abstract	
<p>The thesis describes corporate social responsibility (CSR) as it is reflected in corporate communication. The aim is to find out <i>how companies use corporate social responsibility reports to convey the sense of social responsibility</i>. There is an attempt to answer the following questions: What kinds of corporate social reports are being produced? How is corporate social responsibility perceived? Why is corporate social responsibility a relevant issue to companies?</p> <p>The method applied in the study is a qualitative document analysis. The data comprises of four CSR reports produced by internationally operating European retail companies. The contents and structures of the reports are studied through a content classification, content referring to the meaning of the data and structure to the location of the data.</p> <p>The study shows that the CSR reports are targeted at a wide, non-defined range of stakeholders in order to promote an image of a company acting in a responsible way. The contents of responsibility are defined by the companies themselves in corporate values and business principles. Even if the importance of stakeholder dialogue is stressed, the reports represent one-way, subjective, managerial-level communication from the sender to the receiver. The channel used for sending the message is safe, non-innovative, resembling the traditional annual report. The reporting does not seem to be based on the receiver's information needs but rather on the sender's need to legitimise the business. The companies do not hesitate to admit that corporate social responsibility is approved as long as it is financially beneficial. On the other hand, a strong financial position makes it possible for the companies to engage in CSR activities.</p> <p>It seems there remains a lot to develop in CSR reporting. Companies need to look at their activities more objectively, to engage in stakeholder dialogue and to reflect this in their CSR reports.</p>	
Key words	Corporate social responsibility, CSR, corporate communication, retail industry
Further information	