

**“More CSR Leadership from Germany, Japan, et al.”**

**Judith Hennigfeld, Manfred Pohl, Nick Tolhurst (eds.), *The ICCA Handbook on Corporate Social Responsibility* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2006)**

A Review by William C. Frederick, May 2007

Begin reading this book at the List of Contributors. You’ll find authoritative voices from 11 world-famous corporate leaders, 9 NGOs, the UK’s Minister for Trade and Industry (also in charge of promoting CSR), and CSR advocates in academia, European media, foundations, and industry—hailing from Germany (13), UK (6), USA (4), Japan (2), Greece, Switzerland, and Netherlands (1 each).

Their collective message: Corporate Social Responsibility is desirable, achievable, measurable, and pays both financial and social dividends to business and society.

One by one, you hear the top officers of such companies as Toyota, British Telecom, Credit Suisse, Henkel, Volkswagen, Canon, the National Bank of Greece, and others testify to the workability and necessity of CSR policies, programs, and strategies. No soft-headed pushovers, they detail the various ways their companies have found to integrate CSR into their day-to-day operations. They are among the strongest advocates that today’s global companies have incurred a planetary responsibility for their economic, social, and environmental impacts. For most of them, CSR is not a costly “add-on” to profit making but is inherent in the business system itself. Listen to Canon’s CEO and President: “In my opinion, it is only natural for a corporation to fulfil its social responsibilities. Companies are organs of society and . . . have an obligation to participate actively in society . . .”

The Institute for Corporate Culture Affairs (ICCA)—not to be confused with the other ICCA (International Center for Corporate Accountability at City University of New York)—is headquartered at Frankfurt Am Main, Germany and began life in 2003. A nonprofit, it sponsors CSR research, organizes workshops and conferences, and encourages networking among companies seeking to begin or expand their CSR activities. ICCA is to publish a CSR dictionary and a CSR directory listing the 500 largest global companies and their CSR practices. In addition to stressing the importance of corporate culture, ICCA uniquely emphasizes the role of corporate history and memory in shaping a company’s CSR approach.

And don’t miss Dirk Matten’s comprehensive answer to the question, *Why Do Companies Engage in Corporate Social Responsibility?* Additional “goodies” include chapters on empowering women, microfinance, Japan’s *Kyosei* [CSR] philosophy, and a fascinating description of VW’s Memorial Work scheme that brings German and Polish youths to perform voluntary work at the former Auschwitz concentration camp as an acknowledgment of Volkswagen’s entanglement with Hitler’s Third Reich during WWII.

The book is yet another testimony to the solid CSR achievements of companies based in Germany, Japan, and other European nations. Think about it a moment and then ask yourself: Why cannot US-based multinationals match this kind of record? Why does today’s CSR leadership come primarily from Europe? When will American corporations “get it”—and “get with it” to the same degree?