



**OBTC 2016 at Walsh University**  
**June 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Understanding Corporate Social Responsibility  
(CSR): AKA “Making a Difference”**

## **Understanding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): AKA “Making a Difference”**

### **1) Title, Abstract & Keywords**

*In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words), and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.*

## **Understanding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): AKA “Making a Difference”**

Learners often have trouble evaluating social responsibility in the business world; the public relations efforts of organizations obfuscate the actual from the perceived responsibility making it difficult to easily discern which organizations act responsibly. During this 90 minute interactive session, participants will identify and evaluate organizational corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices. Participants will learn how to cooperatively evaluate organizations with their in-class teams using iterative team-based learning small and large group processes. Participants will also take away lessons which their students can apply in their own job searches as they evaluate their future employers (e.g., making a future difference).

Key words: corporate social responsibility, team-based learning, evaluation of organizational learning, decision making

### **2) Format**

- ☒ Activity or exercise
- ☐ Roundtable discussion (60 minute only)
- ☐ General discussion session

A 90 minute conference session will allow the participants to fully experience the activity and allow for discussion of application to other disciplines. 70 minute activity/exercise. 20 minute discussion.

### **2a) For activities and exercises only, is yours best suited for**

- ☒ A traditional classroom
- ☐ An online class
- ☐ Either

*Note that this could readily be adapted for an on-line class as a significant team-based discussion board activity with a small amount of revision.*

2b) For activities and exercises only, is yours best suited for

- ☐ Undergraduate students
- ☐ Graduate students
- ☒ Either

3) Time Requested:

- ☐ 30 Minutes
- ☐ 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- ☒ 90 Minutes

4) Planning Details:

*Each room contains a white board with markers, computer (PC) with DVD capability and computer projector. Does your session require any other equipment?*

No other equipment required beyond what is listed above.

5) Teaching Implications:

*What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.*

Many of those in Generation Z (i.e., post millennials) claim that they 'want to make a difference' but they don't necessarily fully understand what that means in the context of their employment post-graduation. Organizations like Toms (shoes) appear to be doing everything right, but is the one-for-one model really socially responsible? What about the practices of Nike, Starbucks, Chipotle and other companies revered by Gen Z?

Organizations spend millions of dollars to position themselves as socially responsible. But what does social responsibility really mean? How do we know if an organization really is socially responsible and how can we evaluate that responsibility? Further, as students graduate and seek jobs, how can they evaluate whether or not their future employer is responsible?

This interactive iterative team-based small and large group activity will immerse the participants in a session which is readily applicable beyond supply chain management. Participants will take part in the activity used with undergraduate learners in an operations and supply chain management session. Participants will receive printed materials and teaching notes used in class.



The objectives for the OBTC session participants are as follows:

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Gain a working knowledge of corporate social responsibility (CSR)
2. Use knowledge of CSR to identify and evaluate supply chain management practices in organizations
3. Evaluate CSR practices to determine which stage of organizational learning has been achieved for that organization
4. Understand applications to other disciplines beyond supply chain management (e.g., human resource management, marketing, finance, etc.)

For participants who elect to utilize or adapt this activity in their own classrooms, suggested student learning objectives are as follows:

Learning Objectives (for use in the classroom):

1. Gain a working knowledge of corporate social responsibility (CSR)
2. Use knowledge of CSR to evaluate supply chain management (or other discipline) practices in organizations
3. Evaluate CSR practices to determine which stage of organizational learning has been achieved for that organization
4. Ability to apply evaluative processes of CSR to potential employers as students seek jobs after graduation

The activity is heavily influenced by the ideas of organizational learning (Zadek, 2004) and Team-Based Learning (TBL) (Michaelsen, Knight and Fink, 2004). The activity uses small and large group TBL pedagogy to evaluate organizational learning via Zadek's model as applied to social responsibility in supply chain management. It is important to note that other models and disciplines could readily be substituted into the larger framework of social responsibility via TBL pedagogy. Approximately 20 minutes of the 90 minute session will be allocated for discussion of adaptation into other disciplines beyond supply chain management.

It is important to have a framework with which to evaluate CSR. Zadek (2004) states "Companies don't become model citizens overnight. Nike's metamorphosis from the poster child for irresponsibility to a leader in progressive practices reveals the five stages of organizational growth" (p. 25). TBL advocates that teams are best suited for decision making in an environment where all teams are considering the same question and able to report simultaneously in order to most effectively facilitate learning (Michaelsen et al, 2004). This activity promotes the first two of the TBL principles by implication. "1. Groups must be properly formed and managed (p 28)." This activity assumes that teams have been established via TBL principles for the purpose of the course. "2. Students must be held accountable (p. 29)." In class, the instructor creates two assignments which are done in advance of the social responsibility activity by students individually and outside of class. These assignments will be discussed briefly (5 minutes or less) during the OBTC session.

The third and fourth principles will be exhibited iteratively through the activity. “3. Team Assignments must promote both learning and team development (p. 32).” “4. Students must receive frequent and immediate feedback (p. 33).”

Thus, the planned 90 minute session will introduce team-based decision making pedagogy along with an appropriate organizational learning framework as the application for decision making.

Michaelsen, Larry K.; Knight, Arletta Bauman; and Fink, L. Dee. (2004). *Team-Based Learning: A Transformative Use of Small Groups in College Teaching*. Stylus.

Zadek, Simon. (2004). “The Path to Corporate Responsibility.” *Harvard Business Review*, December.

## 6) Session Description and Plan:

*What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session.*

It is important to have a framework and process with which to evaluate CSR. This interactive iterative team-based small and large group activity will immerse the participants in a session which is readily applicable beyond supply chain management. Participants will take part in the activity used with undergraduate learners in an operations and supply chain management session. The presenter uses this exercise each semester across three 50 minute class periods. This session will replicate much (but not all) of the in-class activity as noted below in the time line. Approximately 20 minutes will be given for discussion of adaptation into other disciplines.

TBL “Principle 2. Students must be held accountable (Michaelsen et al, 2004, p 30).” Before class students are assigned a classic but accessible to undergraduate reading on corporate social responsibility (CSR) (i.e., Zadek, 2004). Students are also assigned to read several relevant and recent readings on various companies’ practices, usually from Time, Fast Company, etc. However, during the OBTC session, a slide will summarize this reading for participants. Students are held accountable by completing both an individual on-line quiz before class and writing a two paragraph analysis about a business of their choice. This will be summarized for OBTC session participants during the first few minutes of the session.

Students come to class prepared to discuss the supply chain CSR of a business of their choice with their in-class team. For the purpose of this OBTC session, the session leader will assign companies with relevant and accessible information during the session

(it would be helpful if participants had smart phones to use during this session but some information which students would usually 'mine' on the internet will be provided to the participants which is not usually provided to students – this will be done in order to keep to the 90 minute session time-limit).

TBL “Principle 3. Team Assignments Must Promote Both Learning and Team Development (Michaelsen et al, 2004, p. 32).”

Participants will clearly identify both the organizational learning stage (Zadek, 2004, p. 127) for the organization they have been assigned and identify some clearly compelling supply chain practices at that organization which clearly support the learning stage identified. This will be done at the small group level (approximately 20 minutes).

TBL “Principle 4. Students Must Receive Frequent and Immediate Feedback (Michaelsen et al, 2004, p. 33).”

Iteratively, there will be additional small and large group discussion using TBL “simultaneous report” (Michaelsen et al, 2004, p.63) to discuss and compare the various companies' CSR as considered by the class teams (approximately 40 minutes).

As time allows, the session leader will discuss various other follow up assignments and activities which focus on individual accountability after the team decision making has occurred. The last 20 minutes will be spent in a brainstorming session with the participants to identify other disciplines and models to which this TBL decision making framework can be applied within the CSR realm.

## 7) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *United in Service*?

Many of those in Generation Z (i.e., post millennials) claim that they 'want to make a difference' but they don't necessarily fully understand what that means in the context of their employment post-graduation. Organizations like Toms (shoes) appear to be doing everything right, but is the one-for-one model really socially responsible? What about the practices of Nike, Starbucks, Chipotle and other companies revered by Gen Z?

Organizations spend millions of dollars to position themselves as socially responsible. But what does social responsibility really mean? How do we know if an organization really is socially responsible and how can we evaluate that responsibility? Further, as students graduate and seek jobs, how can they evaluate whether or not their future employer is responsible?

Thus, the proposed OBTC session can not only help students learn to

- evaluate organizations from which they may purchase products and services,
- and evaluate their future employers

- as they begin to understand how they can fulfill their own personal mission of “making a difference”.

#### 8) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

*Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different?  
Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How  
will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?*

The proposed activity has been used in class for several years by the instructor, but it has not been submitted as a proceeding or as a publication.