

Full Length Research Paper

Media and social responsible business: A Serbian model

Vladimir Radenkovic*, Miodrag Radenkovic and Kristina Engus

Faculty of Technical Sciences, Novi Sad, Serbia.

Accepted 06 January, 2019

In transitional society as Serbia is nowadays, electronic media pursuit is burdened with numerous problems. Bad economic situation, undeveloped market and constant struggle for survival are not leaving much space for media to accomplish the role expected from them in a modern society. Exposed to pressures from the owners or political structures, it is hard to set forth a path for the media to promote contention among the community. The question of social responsibility is presenting a double challenge to the media. As broadcasters, they should assert values that are of interest to a broader social community. And on the other hand, promoting the principle of social responsibility management demands from the media and also transforms them into social responsible companies. This is because a responsible relation to the community develops in its best through its own responsibility. The acceptability of the principle of corporate social responsibility in media pursuit is considered in this text.

Key words: Media, social responsible business, corporate social responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

In the aim of promoting and inducting praxis of social responsible business-SRB, in Serbia in 2004, an initiative for responsible management was agitated. This program involves gathering individuals, companies and associations from country and abroad, as well as representatives of all departments who are willing to adhere to searching perspectives for a sustainable society development, through mutual acting of various social participants.

The concept is based on the principles of the United Nations Global Compact from 2000. This agreement contains ten principles from the following areas: -human rights protection, labour rights protection, environmental protection, corruption struggle.

Business entities, members of Global Compact should respect protection of internationally accepted human rights and to ensure their conducting in the process of pursuing. In the field of labour rights, a support should be given to the elimination of every type of coercive labour and discrimination in working place, prohibition of

children employment and freedom for gathering and implementing rights for collective negotiations. Protection of the environment is assumed to be a responsible approach to this problem, this is achieved by participating in technology development that is protecting nature surroundings, as well as promoting projects from this area.

Companies should fight against corruption on every possible level.

All these principles are derived from:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 2. The International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,
 3. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,
 4. The United Nations Convention against Corruption,
- The companies that are participating in the process of social responsible business have to include principle of responsibility on all performance levels.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Social responsibility of entities (Corporate Social Responsibility-CSR) should be understood as a volunteer

*Corresponding author. E-mail: vrftn@uns.ac.rs.

engagement of the companies in order to contribute to society, as well as to communities and the environment.

A social responsible entity (Djordjevic, 2007) is: taking care of the environmental protection, having a positive approach to its employees, providing financial and other forms of help, employing individuals with special needs, concerned about community in which it is developing its own pursuit.

Social responsibility of entities is overstraining into two areas of implementation and has its own inner and outer dimension (Djuric, 2008). The inner dimension is applicable to managing human resources, health and work security, adaptation to changes, acting in relation to the consequences of company actions, responsibility to the employees, and vision of development, etc. The outer dimension contains responsibility to the society, business partners, consumers, suppliers and others. Responsible business undertakes a high level of business ethics and respect of law.

STAKEHOLDERS

Social responsibility is a process in which companies act in relation to all of their partakers in a rather ethical and responsible manner. In this process, the owners and investors have the managers and employees on one side, while the consumers and broader community are on the other side, contribution should be given to improvement of quality of life and preservation of nature's surroundings (Marinovic, 2008).

Each of the stakeholders, depending on the field where they might act, can have a relevant influence. Attention should specifically be directed to public management, civil department and media. Public department should create conditions and stimulate development of the SRB. Civil sector is a key partner in democratic society, for both private and public departments. Media should make the society accept responsibility as a thoroughly social valor.

Cooperation between participants can develop in different ways. Subjects of cooperation can be:

1. Money
2. Devices and equipment-the so called technical help (computer equipment, furniture, publication printing, expenses of seminars, etc.)
3. Space usage, equipment and vehicle usage (providing a free space hall for seminars, bus for participant transport etc).
4. Services in form of competent skills and knowledge (legal services, accounting, consulting, member training, Public Relations, etc.)
5. Media time (television, radio, Internet, printed media)
6. Volunteer work

The earliest form of the SRB is corporative philanthropy. Corporative philanthropy (Djuric, 2008) is acknowledging support of companies/entities to the non-profitable

organisations and institutions of culture, social and health care, in money, products or services. It is a part of social responsibility for many companies; the simplest way of showing responsibility for the society in which they work. One of such examples is the program of Coca Cola talents that the Coca Cola HBC company of Serbia has started in partnership with the Ministry of education and sport of the Republic of Serbia in 2006. The basic idea of the project was to contribute to the prevention of brain drain of qualified individuals by providing them with scholarships. The program is meant for students that are at their third year in state universities.

ISO 26000

Lot of attention is been given to the SRB in the world, this has resulted to an international organization for standardization publishing a document titled ISO 26000 Guidance on Social Responsibility. This document elaborates questions on social responsibility for all types of organizations and does not focus explicitly on corporate social responsibility.

The content of standard ISO 26000 is divided into the following areas:

- a. Subject and extent of appliance
- b. Coherency with other standards
- c. Terms and definitions
- d. Context of social responsibility
- e. Key subjects and releases
- f. Instruction for utilizing social responsibility

The document involves other themes such as:

- a. Nature's environment
- b. Human rights
- c. Employee rights
- d. Fair pursuing
- e. Consumer's rights
- f. Safety
- g. Women rights
- h. Disabled persons' rights
- i. Local community

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) IN SERBIA

Although, corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Serbia is a relatively new concept, agency for foreign investments and promotion of export, SIEPA-Serbian Investment and Export Promotion Agency, has a database in which there are already 70 companies that are nourishing social responsible behaviour. These companies have by far (01.08.2009) conducted over 3000 activities within the scope of social responsibility business

(SRB). And these actions are connected to the local community and society, working surroundings, health and safety, humanitarian activities, nature's environment, etc. A larger presence of foreign companies in the market is expected to increase this praxis. Authors like Marina Zivic and Marko Savic have carried out a research on CSR in Serbia (Zivic and Savic, 2008). Companies and relevant stakeholders from other departments in the society were used for the research. Forty companies were selected of which 8 were fractional, 15 medium and 17 large ones. The research was accomplished within the period of 31st of March and 1st of May 2008.

According to results of the inquiry, 87.5% examinees answered that CSR was inclined to environmental protection. At the same time, there was high percentage of CSR which equalized humanitarian actions. Almost 75% of the examinees replied that CSR was a way of eradicating corruption and increasing business transparency. The most relevant factors of implementing CSR in praxis from the approach of examinees of business department were enlargement of company's reputation, nature perseverance and management pretensions. After those, competitiveness and expansion on local and international market were rated, which indicated marketing significance of the CSR concept.

A large number of domestic companies do not recognize the relevance and role of the rest of stakeholders in CSR concept development. According to their opinion, non-governmental organizations are, for example, at the bottom of the factors scale that contributes to CSR fortification. One of the reasons is the fact that a great number of non-governmental organizations of such orientation are turned to international organizations. Although, Government is quoted as a good partner, examinees consider that governmental bodies, if they are not directly engaged, do not react to the CSR initiatives been spearheaded by others.

Law enforcement regulative on state level, questions related to equal conditions of pursuing consumer's protection, philanthropy and voluntary work are not regulated in appropriate manner.

The main promoters of CSR concept in Serbia are media, international organizations and business groups. Least active are, according to all criteria from this inquiry, syndicates and consumers' unions that are, as far as situation is considered by now, not a reliable partner to any of the CSR initiatives. The way an individual deals with CSR concept is dependent on the relation in which the process of production resides. According to an inquiry (Marinovic, 2008) conducted by Neven Marinovic, he examined the attitude of citizens towards the CSR. When a citizen is put in the role of a consumer, he gives an advantage to the quality of the product, health protection and pursuit of law. On the other hand, to the question of what matters to them in companies in which they would like to work, examinees put salary increment on the first

place, health protection and employee safety, as well as showing fair concern towards employees.

MEDIA BUSINESS

The crucial question is how media can participate in affirmation of the SRB concept and what their objective possibilities are. Nowadays, in Serbia there are five commercial television channels present, with license for national coverage, and two additional channels of public television. On state level, there is one commercial television and two channels of public service. Six stations broadcast on the territory of the city of Belgrade, while twenty-six television broadcasters have permission to broadcast regional program. This list in addition requires hundred and four broadcaster on local level.

When only the numbers of broadcasters were observed an impression that in Serbia media market is quite well developed emerged. However, information on numbers of employees in media organizations, as well as percentage of incomes of purchasing program and space for advertising gave a completely different perspective. If consider that only for Public Service (RTS) around 40 % of employees fall off, and that three national broadcasters are making over 90% of total incomes, it is noticeable that apart from stations with national coverage, the rest of the companies have an average of less than 50 employees, while all together they participate with less than 10 % of overall incomes. This suggests that most of media are small companies with low financial potentials.

Media products

Program that such stations broadcast are mostly got from the following resources:

- a.) Own production
- b.) Independent production
- c.) Program purchasing
- d.) Program exchange
- e.) Co-production
- f.) Reemitting
- g.) Replaying

Own production

According to the Law on Radio-diffusion (article 73), a broadcaster is obliged to broadcast a minimum of 50% of program on Serbian language, of which 50% should be programs in own production from the total annual period of broadcasting. Private production is the most expensive one, but is necessary at the same time, especially for informational programs. An informational program cannot be purchased anywhere for the requirements of local

district. This kind of program creates the image of the station and to a great extent determines the station's future on the market. The conditions of weak financial potentials are often on the obtained basis to turn the production of emissions that do not require larger human and material sources. Minimum of the production team (journalist, photographer, editor) that this kind of stations mostly have, can secure for only shorter news in simple journalist forms, especially if during the day there are more happenings to be followed through. Reading the agency news with the image of the speaker, phone calls from the venue and talks in the studio are the image of the local broadcasting programs.

Independent production

Radio and television programs exclusively assigned to radio-diffusion are produced by a person alone or a legal entity that is licensed for that function, but broadcasters of program that they are developing, are treated as an independent production (Law on Radio-diffusion, article 4, sub article 10). Fractional commercial television stations acquire cheap emissions of independent production from production houses that do not hand big projects. Such production houses consist sometimes of just one member that is the manager, who is the producer, journalist, organizer, photographer and editor at the same time, and can satisfy a part of the needs of local media in some segments that are mostly for emissions of nonfactual type which are not connected to the actual happenings. Itinerary reports, documents of interesting people from the surroundings, as well as emissions of entertaining character of nowadays and popular shows on cooking, are often seen in the programs of such media.

Program purchase

By purchasing programs of usually foreign production, the requirements of movie and educational programs are mostly satisfied. The price of the emission depends on the number of broadcasts and the size of the area for which they are being broadcasted for. If the economic side is purely observed, it is paid in multiples of purchase rather than product. This sort of program is present within the deficient media.

Program exchange

Exchange of programs between the local broadcasters is, nowadays, a very developed way of securing a program, of course, this happens in cases where the observed station has a product of interest from any other area than its own.

Co-production

Only big houses that already have well developed private production have recourse to co-production used to decrease the expenses and risk.

Rebroadcast

Rebroadcasting of some other local broadcaster is a good way to fill in the private program without bigger material expenses.

Replaying

Replaying is the least popular within audience, but it has a justification when interesting contents are replayed in some other term, so that other categories of viewers could also see them.

Organization

Fractional television companies do not have precisely defined organizational structure, yet there are groups of distinguished jobs and vocations that exist in each company. These are:

- Management
- Techniques
- Administration
- Journalists
- Staff members

Management

Recently in Serbia, there are many faculties that were opened that are educating managers of various directions, even for media, but those kinds of personnel usually hardly find employment within media houses. Managers in media, whether they are chosen by the owners or they are themselves representing owners of the television houses, are rising from those castes that have gained capital in previous years, which means they are not a product of the educational system.

In this current phase of market positioning, owners of the media are recruiting managers on the basis of their utility values. Above all, a capability for selling a program is the one highly searched for, or services of production that are connected to renting human and technical capacities.

Engaging managers without experience does not provide immediate investment for the owner. Time is needed until a young manager feels the market and gains positions. In the vision of the owner, the manager is less

of an organizer and more of a salesman. It is because of this fact that when employment of such staff is taking place, the employer refers more to their biography from which they will conclude which position best fits a candidate, rather than his qualifications.

Technique

Convergence of the jobs, connection of more various jobs and tasks is mostly noticed within the technical staff, where, for example, a cameraman is quite often seen as a photographer or an editor. This accumulation of working profiles is possible also for technological reasons; this is because the computer has become a main device in the production process. A logical consequence is that such universal multifunctional machine needs a universal operator. The operator should know everything that can be accomplished with a computer. Jobs such as that of an editor or photographers, etc organizationally belong to technology despite the fact that the educational system sees them as artistic skills and educate them on academics. The reason why they are classified as technology is because when speaking of equipment for media production, digital technology has influenced two major characteristics which differ from these devices when compared to the analog ones. Digital devices have become more available and operative.

Under the term of availability, the study considers a possibility of purchasing and using the equipment. Decreased price of the computers, cameras, etc enables almost every individual to buy such devices and learn how to use it. Analog devices of the same type were much more expensive and the opportunity of working with them has been only offered to rare people that were employed in media houses. Operativeness is based on a fact that working with almost all of the devices of such type is more or less similar and requires only elementary computer literacy. Utilization of digital devices has been based on software that considers guidance similar to every device. Mostly it is based on navigating through an offered menu.

Computer education is relatively available mostly through training courses; consequently, the study has very good operators without any knowledge of media. In the absence of the requirements for the production of high artistic quality broadcasts, because those are the ones mostly purchased, the owners rather consider employing a good craftsman (operator) than an educated editor.

Administration

Only administration has a long tradition in educational system and on the market of workmanship there are enough qualified people for this job.

Journalists-editors

As far as journalists are considered, there is no regular record keeping of people that are professionally, full time, or part time working in media. Having in mind the praxis of employment and firing journalists in mass media organizations, without much or any respect for the degree of their education, it can be concluded that the level of their education is now lower than it was at the beginnings of the 1920's in the previous century (Miletic, 2008). Its negative consequence is that an insufficient professionally oriented journalist is converted to manipulation and instrumentalization which connected to low incomes leading to bribery and corruption.

Considering the editorial structure their choice of program orientation and actually listening to what the audience would like to see and hear, will go a long way towards satisfying the taste of the audience and not towards informing it.

MEDIA INSIGHT

Today's spirit of time is, among other, marked with certain reductionism in which the market has become the only ethical norm, a generator of all the values, and a reality in which all the other things have to be submitted to. It is because of this that the media are acting more, according to the principle of news industry and entertainment, as machinery that produces a certain product for the purpose of profit only. The system nowadays, in which a media format is mostly used as a well sold advertisement, have become completely an opposition compared to the older system in which advertisements were a secondary content in media. On the other hand, the question of social responsibility seems to be utopia, since the most famous media are either in the possession of corporations or powerful individuals to whose interests they serve, while marketing has become a vital sector of the industry. In the desire to accomplish more views, the media will often sacrifice social responsibility for an exclusive information or program, not paying enough attention to the consequences that are produced for the local community, moral, and the citizens themselves. Management has an argument- high rating, audience - got what it sought for (Pevac, 2009). But, can everything that the mass audience finds interesting be broadcasted in the media, without any responsibility? Is it possible that every ethical norm in the media can be violated, in spite of ethical codex of journalist unions and media houses? The freedom of media has turned itself into a disrespect of social responsibility that the media have towards their audience. For that reason exclusively, it is necessary to reaffirm a principle of social responsibility that characterizes the role of media in modern society.

The media should serve to develop the local community by promoting and improving their conditions

and lifestyle in accordance to the valuations of the 21st century in the economic and social sense and especially in relation to connection with natural environment. The goal should be targeted at making a network of media that are not exclusively into profit, but into content, and are willing to serve the citizens of the community. By promoting public rather than private interest, media should open those questions that are nowadays hardly noticed or disregarded, although, they are interesting for a larger social community group.

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY

The media are capable of realizing their social role to the environment that they are working in. Various international organizations and associations have for a great number of years been following and controlling the conditions in which media systems work. Media Sustainability Index-MSI (Njegovan, 2008) presents one of the instruments for grading the works of the media. For a media system to be considered sustainable, there are five conditions to be fulfilled:

1. Presence of law and social norms that are protecting and promoting freedom of speech and availability to public services.
2. Journalism satisfies professional quality standards.
3. Pluralism of information sources that enables citizens to have confident and objective information.
4. Profitable pursuing of media-independent media are business that is well conducted; financial independence of media enables editorial independence.
5. State institutions (governments and regulatory bodies) and business surroundings support professional interests of independent media.

This method used by IREX provides four levels of grading for each of these demands. It is considered that a country that is given an average grade between 2 and 3 has a media system on the level of sustainability. Serbia was, for the year of 2009, given a grade point of 2.35.

MEDIA AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Media companies are very specific concerning their social responsibility. They have commitments both as broadcasters and as companies. As broadcasters, the media are presenting crucial connections to society and they have an activating power due to their role of information propagator. The media have the power to determine which problems they will expose to the public and in which way they will present them. On the other hand, media are as any other company, appointing relations with their partners and local community and simultaneously creating economic and social value with respect to complexity of relations among all stakeholders.

The process of implementing social responsible

behavior is the aim of every company, as well as the media, and it is being developed in five basic steps (Pearce and Doh, 2005; Stankovic and Djukic, 2006):

1. Identification of problem
2. Implementation of goals into business politics
3. Strategy of action
4. Connecting to interested parties
5. Valuation of results

Each media company should primarily establish which social priorities it will incorporate into its field of action. After identifying a problem and appointing goals of action, the way those goals can be possibly implemented into programs and business politics of company is considered. On the strategic plan, it is needed to harmonize chosen social goals with public organizations that are promoting the same idea. On that level, it is relevant to connect to governmental bodies, local autonomy, civil sector and other interest groups. Valuation of total benefits in all projects in which company has taken participation comes at the end. The case of a commercial station and a station of public service is examined to know how the process of transformation of Television Company into a social responsible company looks like. Commercial television B92 that owns a license for national broadcast has gone the furthest in that process. B92 has identified its social goals as (Green, 2008): Responsible journalism, dedication to positive social changes, and promotion of human rights.

Implementation of these goals is conducted through: Responsible conduction of primary actions of a company as a media house.

The strategy involves: Developing activities dedicated to the improvement of living conditions and employees' work (permanent education, health insurance, prevention of diseases, social programs) and commitment to corporate philanthropy and support to programs (voluntary blood donations, counteracting family violence ...)

In the actions of B92, employees participate actively. Company consigns media space for philanthropic activities. Tributes of humanitarian and similar actions are broadcasted free of charge. As an additional goal, B92 steps into partnership relations with the government, local community, NGO and others, and intervenes in co-operation with companies that are practicing SRB. For that kind of activity, the station is a holder of the main prize "Virtus" for corporate philanthropy for 2007, for campaigns such as "Safe female house" and "Make your day more cheerful for you and others, donate blood", as well as a special prize for media contribution to sensibility of public audience regarding family violence".

Province public service of Radio Television of Vojvodina - RTV is considered as an example, although, insufficient in its program, it is still more than a national public service, and pays attention to social responsible behavior. During 2008, RTV engaged in the following

themes, through program actions:

1. "Photo-garbage" video is done in RTV production by the initiative of province secretary's office for Nature's Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development. The idea of the action was to take photos of unsuspecting citizens that are disposing garbage on forbidden places, and to publish those photographs on RTV program.
2. Session "Forbidden cut". Promoting ecological conscience of nonsense in cutting down Christmas trees
3. "Fight diabetes"
4. "Serbia against cancer"
5. "Struggle against violence in family"
6. "Agitation for education of ethnic group of Romany"
7. "Signing in the evidence of birth book record for Romany"
8. "Campaign "Naked facts" anti-trafficking action"
9. "Safe female house"
10. "Man and environment" ecological action
11. "Dictionary of war" anti-war campaign
12. "Big people for little people" action for helping children in the Children's hospitals in Novi Sad
13. "Caritas" humanitarian action
14. "Think of life" action for increasing conscience of participants in traffic
15. "Stop the violence towards women"

However, besides these unsuspecting beneficial actions from the available data on the internet site (www.rtv.rs), no other element can be found from which it could be concluded that this company has accepted social responsible business as one of its leading principles.

CONCLUSION

Transition period in which Serbia is situated is stressed with large social problems. Cases of corruption, environmental pollution, labour rights, and human rights, etc are on the top of the theme charts that media are showing interest for. Such illustrations are subject to the concern of all media. However, the problem lies in the fact that there are very small numbers of media approaches

to principle of social responsibility through self transformation into social responsible companies. Responsible relation towards social requirements is built through self responsibility. It is only in that way, that the media are becoming the ones who are trusted and as that, they can present a respectable social factor. Media in Serbia are only developing social responsible behaviour, and until they build a social responsible behaviour, there is a long and hard way awaiting them.

REFERENCES

- Green S (2008). Media and Public Interest. Movement for Social Responsible Business in Serbia – A report.
- Djordjevic M (2007). Social Responsibility of Companies and Consumer's Protection. *Economy Topics*, 1, 257-264. Retrieved August 13, 2009 from: <http://scindeks.nb.rs/article.aspx?artid=035386480701257D&redirect=ft>
- Djuric S (2008). Social Responsible Pursuing. Business and Nonprofit Sector Cooperation in Serbia - lecturing, Belgrade Open School. Retrieved August 13, 2009 from: <http://www.bos.rs/grad/download.php>
- Marinovic N (2008). Introduction to Social Responsible Business - lecturing, Belgrade Open School. Retrieved August 13, 2009 from: <http://www.bos.rs/grad/download.php>
- Mikic H (2006). Uvod u ekonomiku medija [Introduction to Media Economics], Media Art Service International, Novi Sad, Serbia
- Miletic M (2008). Resetovanje stvarnosti [Reality Resetting], Protocol, Novi Sad, ISBN 978-86-86343-01-7
- Njegovan RB (2007). Sustainable Media, deliberation On a Way to the Era of Knowledge], Sremski Karlovci, September 20-22
- Pearce II J, Doh (2005). The High Impact of Collaborative Social Initiatives. *MIT Sloan Manage. Rev.* Retrieved August 13, 2009 from: <http://www.manyworlds.com/exploreco.aspx?coid=CO4250511195383>
- Pevac S (2009). Who Would Buy Socially Responsible News?. *Link*, 76. Retrieved August 13, 2009 from: http://www.mediart.org/index.php?view=article_details&id=39&cat_id=11&article_id=0
- Stankovic LJ, Djukic S (2006). Improvement of Competitor's Advantage by Strengthening Social Responsibility of Companies]. *Ekonomске teme [Economy topics]*, 1-2, 401-409. Retrieved August 13, 2009 from: <http://scindeks.nb.rs/article.aspx?artid=0353-86480803017S>
- Zivic M, Savic M (2008). Baseline study on CSR in Serbia. UNDP and Center for Monitoring and Evaluation. Retrieved August 13, 2009 from: http://www.cme.org.yu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=41&Itemid=293.