

Spring 2003 update

GoodCorporation has had a busy first quarter, spreading our activity to a widening circle of sectors and countries. New sectors include broadcasting, transport, manufacturing, and the extractive industries. We have also faced the challenge of verifying in new cultures and languages. So far GoodCorporation has verified in English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese and Japanese. Coming up next: Mandarin and Thai...

A Classic success

Over the last ten years, Classic FM has become the most listened-to commercial radio station in the world with about 7 million people tuning in. Its sister stations, Core, Planet Rock and a network of 31 local radio stations, belong to GWR Group plc, one of GoodCorporation's newest Full Members. It went successfully through the verification process in March.

Since GWR became an Associate Member last year, it has been using the GoodCorporation framework to develop a consistent approach to CSR across the group. Simon Cooper, Head of Public Affairs, said: 'The all-encompassing nature of the standard helped us to look at new areas where we could improve. The verification process not only gives us direct feedback from outside the company, but from our staff as well.'

'GoodCorporation provided a powerful tool to promote the idea of corporate responsibility to people in the company that haven't thought about it before,' he added.

In the verification report, the company was commended for its community initiatives. They included some outstanding examples of how GWR and its staff help local charities and organisations. Classic FM also has its own charitable trust that raises money through concerts like the recent Classic FM Live held at the Royal Albert Hall. The verification process also helped GWR to identify ways in which its environmental policy and programme could be developed.

The group will include the results in its annual report this summer.

French oil and chemicals group

TotalFinaElf, the largest company in France, has announced that it is going through GoodCorporation's verification process on a worldwide basis. TFE has a worldwide workforce of 120,000 and over 100 subsidiaries. Its main sectors are oil and gas exploration and chemicals, though it has businesses in other sectors such as electricity generation.

The objective is to roll out verification to subsidiaries around the world. So far we have covered nine: four in Europe (including the North Sea operation at Aberdeen), three in Africa, one in Latin America and one in the US. TFE's aim is to track in detail how it is performing in its operations across the world against a robust standard, identifying strengths and weaknesses. We have taken the GoodCorporation's standard of 65 points and added a dozen more to meet sector specific needs, and to reflect the company's own code of conduct.

TFE's use of GoodCorporation was reported in the *Financial Times* on 15 April. It will also be covered in the group's first CSR report.

Lunch at the Lords

In March Lord Sharman, chairman of GoodCorporation's Advisory Panel, hosted another GoodCorporation lunchtime discussion in the House of Lords. The theme was the relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate governance.

Lord Sharman, who is chairman of Aegis plc and sits on the boards of several companies such as BG plc, ABN Amro and Securicor, argued in introducing the

discussion that there is a strong link between the responsible stewardship of a company's assets and responsible practices towards stakeholders. The link however is medium or even long term. While irresponsible stakeholder practices in the end rebound to shareholders' disadvantage there is usually a time-lag, barring any serious incidents such as, environmental damage, accidents or financial malfeasance. Despite this, Lord Sharman commented that at none of the AGMs he had attended recently had any questions been raised related to corporate social responsibility.

A first for Wales

When Rosemarie Griffith was presented with her Member certificate by the chairman of the Welsh Development Agency, her company Jay Griffith Consulting became our first Welsh member. She was also the only one-person business in the network.

Not for long. Rosemarie, who gives business advice to firms in West Wales, is now bringing a group of her fellow advisers and sub-contractors into the GoodCorporation network.

Queen's Award for Seaview Hotel

One of GoodCorporation's earliest members, the Seaview Hotel & Restaurant on the Isle of Wight, has received The Queen's Award For Enterprise in the Sustainable Development category for its approach to corporate social responsibility.

The hotel has implemented an impressive range of social and environmental initiatives for a company of its size. In addition to environmental good practice such as waste recycling and encouraging guests to use public transport, they have worked directly with island farmers, fishermen and local suppliers to source and develop local produce and products for the award-winning restaurant.

Unusually in this sector, staff development is given high priority with an imaginative mix of formal and informal approaches to training, an emphasis on participatory decision-making and a modern apprenticeship programme for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

'I'm sure GoodCorporation tipped the balance on winning the Queen's Award', owner Nicky Hayward said.

Reading hosts CSR Conference

A very successful CSR conference was held at Reading University in April, attended by 230 delegates. The conference was organised by Charles Baker, a specialist in Social Marketing who has brought CSR to a wider circle of organisations, particularly in the voluntary and public sectors and among SMEs. The conference was sponsored by Thames Water, the RWE group and Reading University. Proceeds went to the Prince's Trust and Reading Single Homeless Project.

Michael Littlechild of GoodCorporation spoke about measuring and reporting on responsible practices against a standard. He stressed the distinction between measuring and reporting on the *outcomes* of CSR and the *quality* of practices. He argued that the two are complementary but the second was often underplayed. Organisations work hard to demonstrate achievements in terms of numbers, without examining how well embedded their practices are.

Full membership for Pensions Trust

The Pensions Trust is the largest provider of pensions to workers in the charity sector. It successfully achieved full membership of the GoodCorporation network in March this year.

For more information about any of the items featured here, please contact Cat Craig at GoodCorporation on 020 7924 3994 or cat.craig@goodcorporation.com.