Why do companies have not yet considered universities as stakeholders?

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In the present days, I think we reached a significant stage on understanding and progress of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Large companies have participated in this process with significant contributions, such as the ISO26000 standard and other guidelines. If this phenomenon is part of several factors from the role of civil society to the internationalization of business, it is a discussion apart. The critical point is that we have a great challenge to restore this bridge between company and university.

From the perspective of CSR, reviewing the annual reports, the mention about University is usually an information that is not properly detailed, and simply slightly mentioned in any or virtually nonexistent social action.

Let's face a real example of contact between a university and one of the largest Brazilian’s companies (cosmetics industry) internationally recognized for its policy of sustainability and CSR. "Because of the positive impact of our brand, related to sustainability management, academic demands have been increasingly growing, making it impossible for us to meet them with quality and dedication we would like," said the head of the Company.

I understand that if the company has a recognized image and often awarded for CSR policies, it will lead to a reflection for a strategic action: the evolution of the "positive impact" of the company should not lead to identify recognize and legitimate stakeholders?

The larger the enterprise prestige on the subject of CSR, the greater the demands for information from the various actors in society. In other words, came the famous stakeholders will come! I think you need not be an expert in communication or corporate reputation to reach to this conclusion.

Another situation: it seems that the CSR report has become the "lifeline" for some companies, by answering any kind of question or comment on their activities, especially for stakeholders "not legitimate". "Any question, look at the report." Thus the reports are presented as an end, when in my opinion, they should be the means.

In addition, the company has an essential role in the mission of the university, which in turn, is the one that should provide the necessary employability and entrepreneurship education for students. To reach this purpose, it is essential to establish links with the academic environment. In the future the students will be collaborating to develop business and making decisions that involve and value the different actors in society.
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Applied research projects that evaluate the business environment definitely need a custom link with the company, with the aim of generating studies that would allow a better understanding of the achievements and business challenges. Today, it is a path for effective socio-economic development. In the methodologies for Case Study, we see the real importance of company-university approach.

Universities declared as stakeholders are part of a dynamic policy of CSR that is addressed to new social challenges.

The relationship with academic sector, should be considered essential for the exchange of experiences and to multiply the best business practices. In fact, these elements are the ones that are characteristics of a legitimate stakeholder.

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- Wide experience in business consulting activities
- 15 years experience as a university professor in the areas of Business (Postgraduate and Undergraduate)
- Research on CSR, Sustainable Development and Business Management from the perspective of Corporate Strategy and International Relationships and international NSAs
- Organization of academic events and participation in scientific committees
- Planning and implementation of information projects, management and training for business, especially SMEs

Member of the Chilean Mirror Committee of ISO 26000 Social Responsibility in 2010 and currently teaches at the Universidad Mayor (Santiago de Chile).

Co-Founder of the International Symposium on Social Responsibility in Organizations SIRSO), a biannual event that brings together international researchers, especially in Latin America.

1st edition 2010 - Santiago University of Santiago, Chile
2nd edition 2012 - Rio de Janeiro (Universidade Federal Fluminense)
3rd edition 2014 - Lima (Catholic University of Los Angeles de Chimbote)
4th edition 2016 - Colombia University of St. Thomas)