Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been seen as a well-accepted philosophy for many companies today. Especially under the tendency of globalization, contemporary companies need to bring social impacts by building, improving and sharing their culture, values, and beliefs in order to realize CSR, and meet the demand of today’s consumers. On the other side, CSR today could also be a method for bad businesses to “buy” reputation. Some companies may not actually own the culture and values that are pursued by the publics but they are still able to earn the trust from consumers. However, reputation that is built by “fake” CSR activities cannot last for a long time. Successful CSR activities should be designed with heart for sharing significant values, improving social influences, and consequently increasing companies’ reputation rather than solely driving business results.

Two biggest wrongdoings that companies usually make while trying to realize CSR include seeing CSR as a marketing or promoting strategy instead of truly putting efforts to bring social good, as well as the conflicts between what they promise to the publics and what they actually do. Take Abercrombie & Fitch (A&F) to be the example, as Matthews introduced, A&F claims in their CSR statement saying that "It is our mission to continue our efforts to support human rights, invest in our associates, give back to our communities, commit to environmental sustainability efforts, make responsible business decisions, stand for and achieve diversity and inclusion”, which is totally opposite from what its CEO have done later (Matthew, 2013). A YouTube video showing that its CEO spent a little from his daily salary buying very old A&F clothes to homeless people. The biggest mistake here is that the company is not truly willing to help those homeless but solely to show that they are actually doing something to help homeless people. However, publics expect more than that. Publics expect true actions from companies to take their responsibilities to stand up for minority groups as well as other sensitive social issues. Besides, according to a Harris Poll survey that is explained by Ausick, there are around 83% Americans claim that some intentional wrongdoings about CSR activities such as "lying or misinterpreting the facts about a product or service” will collapse a company’s reputation in their minds. Takata had been aware the problem of their automobile airbags for a long time before they released the recall announcement. The company firstly claimed to the publics that the problem would not influence the operation system as well as the driver’s safety severely, and reminded publics what they did before to request for understanding and trust. However, the explosive inflation of millions of their automobile airbags caused around 200 deaths and injuries in America finally. This should be an example of intentional lying, which is one of the wrong practices of CSR. Companies who do not take their bounden duties to serve the community and incorporate social good do not realize CSR effectively, let alone those who even bring mortal danger to consumers.
There are two main successful practices that make CSR campaigns stand out. One is that the CSR campaigns are naturally related to the area of the company's service. I think I will be loyal to a company, which is willing to take actions to deal with social issues that are related to its service or product. To be specific, I will be more loyal to Disney if they launch campaigns for countering and fixing child labor than they take actions to support sustainability; I will trust Twitter more if they promote campaigns to oppose and deal with cyber-bullying than support organizations to promote literacy among children. Chipotle launched a successful campaign called “The Inglorious Fruit and Vegetable” with the goal to reduce food waste. As AI-Bender from Prezly introduced, Chipotle realized this campaign by selling the “less-than-perfect looking food” at a huge discount as well as educating consumers about the situation of food waste all around the world. As a restaurant, Chipotle considers food waste issues seriously and actually takes actions to tackle this problem from itself. It's much more convincing than campaigns with other topics.

The other successful strategy is that companies complete CSR campaigns quietly but effectively and release report annually rather than announcing what they have done to the world immediately. Huawei, a Chinese telecom giant has done this strategy well. As Cremer explains, the Confucian values, which impact Chinese history largely, pursue “the importance of harmony and doing good” (Cremer, 2016). Huawei's company culture has been affected and shaped by these values to a large extent. Similar with what other companies' official websites state, Huawei also claims that it “aims to build a sustainable, better connected world” (Huawei, 2017). However, they realize this goal silently. As a Chinese, I did not read anything about what they had implemented from news; I did not know anything about what they had done about sustainability strategies until I read their annual CSR reports and outcomes on their website. I found that Huawei has taken a lot of effective efforts in the sustainable development of the economy, society and the environment globally. This finding earns my trust and favorable impression a lot.

Nike can be seen as one of the leading brands with effective CSR. However, from protesting about Nike's sweatshop to the exposure of poor working conditions of its garment industries, Nike has experienced, struggled and learned from these mistakes. Compared to these two successfully CSR practices, Nike has been supporting campaigns that are naturally related to it for a long time. For instance, Nike started to support workers by releasing policies to improve working and living conditions of workers from 1998 (Newell). In addition, Nike invented and developed its materials management system in order to monitor water security as well as to decrease water waste (Newell). I think it's hard for Nike to do anything silently since its size and influence. Therefore, staying transparent and trustworthy is essential for them today. As Newell states, Nike was the first brand to introduce the definition and importance of transparency as an element to realize CSR. It released its first CSR report in 2005 include “detailing pay scales and working conditions in its factories and admitting continued problems” to emphasize what they would do to fix the problem about worker issues (Newell). Over these ten years, Nike keeps its words and continues to take efforts to build engaged workforce and their level of engagement, which is a long-time successful CSR practice.
Hamdi Ulukaya, who is the founder and CEO of Chobani yogurt, is one of the leaders owning valuable thoughts about CSR in my opinion. According to the “60 Minutes” documentary that reported the remarkable rise story of Chobani Yogurt, Chobani seems to have all the factors of CSR including its willingness to take responsibilities to realize its influences on environment, community as well as society (Sharp, 2017). To be specific, under the lead of Ulukaya, Chobani chose to become the official sponsor for the 2012 US Summer Olympic Team, and make its first national commercial debut during the opening ceremony (Elliott, 2012). In this way, Chobani expresses its value about caring Olympic spirit and the social good to the publics. Besides, Chobani also effectively builds an image about caring people, human capital as well as employee engagement. Ulukaya gives about 10 percent of the ownership stake to its 2000 employees, and hiring legal refugees to work for the company (Sharp, 2017). This year, he continues to launch campaigns about making “no kids hungry”, helping legal refugees, fighting income inequality and many other topics that are able to bring social good to the community. He leads the company to be the one that is different from others that rarely "stand up" for sensitive social justice issues. The Cone communication CSR study from 2017 found that there are 63% of American citizens hope companies will “take the lead to drive social and environmental change moving forward, in the absence of government regulation”, and there are about 87% of consumers state that they will purchase and even be loyal to a company if it advocates for a issue that they care about. Ulukaya knows how to take the social responsibilities from heart as a company. He would definitely be the person who owns valuable and smart thoughts toward CSR.
Reference


