

COMMENTARY

Coffee and corporate social responsibility: Not as simple as revitalizing training

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Despite Hayes et al.'s (2020) warning against peripheral approaches to corporate social responsibility (CSR), they unknowingly suggest one such approach through the integration of antidiscrimination and harassment trainings with CSR. According to Aguinis and Glavas (2013), peripheral approaches to CSR are not integrated into the organization's *daily operations and strategies*, two conditions that *both* must be satisfied if CSR is to be embedded. Trainings such as those suggested by Hayes et al. are typically done in a preemptive or reactionary fashion to prevent EEOC lawsuits, with little to no maintenance done in between. Therefore, simply incorporating elements of peripheral CSR may not make antidiscrimination or harassment trainings any more effective because they are *not embedded* into daily operations or strategies.

Instead, integrating elements of CSR into trainings may actually be damaging to gender and ethnic minorities—the very groups we are attempting to protect with these trainings. Peripheral approaches to CSR can create a mismatch between what an organization claims it values (i.e., antidiscrimination and harassment trainings) versus what actually occurs in daily operations. This potential mismatch can result in a perceived lack of fit, decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover in employees (Aguinis & Glavas, 2013). For example, Windscheid et al. (2016) found that when organizations had a pro-diversity statement, but a homogeneous leadership board (i.e., all White males), there was a decrease in the organization's perceived behavioral integrity and employer attractiveness. Thus, simply trying to revitalize training by incorporating elements of CSR is merely covering a hole in the wall without fixing it and may create further damage.

Embedded corporate social responsibility

Because it is clear that peripheral approaches do not have a lasting impact on reducing discrimination and harassment, we propose that it is plausible to embed CSR at every level of the organization (i.e., organizational strategy and daily operations) to achieve the same outcomes as training. Our actionable solutions shift the focus from training to emphasizing proactive policy making and revitalizing how organizations incentivize their employees.

Proactive policy making

In order to maximize the benefits of creating a culture of diversity and acceptance through embedded CSR, organizations should focus on policy making that results in changes to strategy and daily

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operations in a top-down approach. Research indicates that when organizations implement deterrence-focused approaches for diversity and inclusion initiatives (e.g., avoiding bad publicity and EEOC scrutiny, reducing money spent on resolving discrimination cases), policies are not effective for long-term behavior and attitude change (Parker, 1999). Conversely, when organizations implement promotion-focused policies (e.g., increasing safety behaviors), they are more likely to ensure positive changes (Evans et al., 1991). These promotion-focused approaches can include *proactive corporate policies* that are framed to encourage inclusion, tolerance, and diversity.

An example of a proactive corporate policy that promotes embedded CSR, and that is related to the same incident that Hayes et al. (2020) discuss in their article, is the Third Place Policy at Starbucks. The Third Place Policy states that anyone “who visits a Starbucks store is a customer, whether they make a purchase or not” and that all customers are welcome to use any Starbucks space (e.g., restrooms, patios, etc.; Starbucks Corporation, 2018). The implementation of this policy aims to (a) prevent similar incidents from re-occurring and (b) establish that Starbucks’s philosophy for customers extends beyond monetary transactions—a sign of broadening inclusivity for customers. Had the Third Place Policy been in place prior to the incident, there would have not been a problem and diversity training would not have been necessary. Although the policy was created as a reaction, the policy encompassed embedded CSR by impacting daily operations at every Starbucks location, as well as changing the overall organizational strategy of customer philosophy and the utilization of space within the organization. Since the implementation of this policy, which encourages more daily customer activity, Starbucks has experienced a record increase in business growth and sales (Starbucks Investor Relations, 2018). Thus, policies that focus on embedded CSR can be beneficial to customers and the overall business model above and beyond training.

Revitalizing how employees are incentivized

Another way that organizations can shift the company culture is to reprioritize department goals and change the emphasis from a solely deadline- and profit-focused climate to one that celebrates good deeds and being a good corporate citizen. When organizations only incentivize sales goals and profit, they increase the potential for counterproductive work behaviors, within-company competition, and harmful rhetoric that could lead to both social and legal ramifications (Berrone & Gomez-Mejia, 2009). Research has found that incentivizing prosocial behavior, promoting volunteerism, and emphasizing team bonding improves corporate reputation, promotes loyalty in both employees and customers, and predicts long-term organizational success (Sherer & Lee, 2002). A way to promote and incentivize CSR within the organization is to include a metric in performance reviews and evaluations. Setting an expectation of citizenship and civility creates a high standard within the company and ultimately benefits both the organization and the employees by creating a healthier, more productive climate. Indeed, introducing a CSR component to the performance management system can be more beneficial than just integrating training with CSR. The integration of CSR and performance management may reduce the instances of subtle bias and microaggressions due to the possibility of these hostilities being acknowledged during performance reviews and impeding advancement within the organization.

Along with altering performance reviews, companies can also promote change by holding leaders to higher citizenship standards, being vocal about new procedures, and confronting behaviors in real time. In fact, in a study examining the effects of anti-sexual harassment training, researchers found that there was no effect of training on occurrences of sexual harassment (Williams et al., 1999). However, there was a reduction of harassment when managers implemented consequences and changed their behavior toward harassment. It is important for organizational leaders to address microaggressions when they occur and to set a standard of zero tolerance for these behaviors, as employees are likely to adopt similar social behaviors at work as

their direct supervisors (Chandrasekar, 2011). This creates a system that is felt from the top down because it integrates social expectations into the corporate reward system and incentivizes employees to change daily behavior in order to succeed and advance in the company.

Conclusion

Organizational culture emerges as a result of socialization processes, team processes, and experiences with leadership within the organization. We argue that before implementing costly training programs, organizations must focus on creating environments (based both on policy and interpersonal environment) that are congruent with the values promoted by those trainings. Because trainings only represent one level of CSR (i.e., peripheral), they are less influential than when CSR strategies are embedded at every level. Even across different training program features, trainings are only effective if the organizational environment affords the opportunity to practice their new skills and/or knowledge (Salas *et al.*, 2012); thus, it is the responsibility of managers and organizations to create an environment in which these skills are naturally developed and rewarded. Based on previous research regarding the effectiveness of racial antibias trainings, diversity trainings will likely be ineffective over the long term; however, proactively implementing multilevel changes can establish that the organization, particularly executives and management, values inclusion.

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Cite this article: Burrows, D., Phetmisy, C.N., Watson, I., Brown, R.L., and Beier, M.E. (2020). Coffee and corporate social responsibility: Not as simple as revitalizing training. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* 13, 216–218. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2020.44>