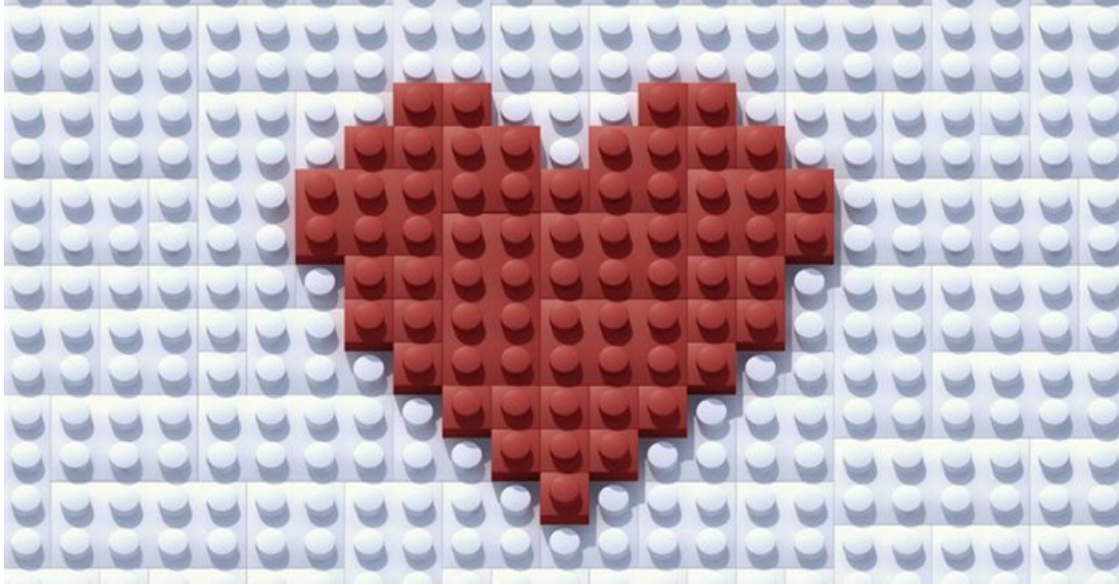


Seven tips to improve your CSR marketing

 By [Jennifer Bruce](#)

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Millions of Rands and countless company hours are spent annually on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects, yet it is often a company's best-kept secret.



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From a business point of view this is like using time and resources to develop a product and then launch it to market with a whisper. Here are seven tips that will effectively communicate your brands good works.

1. Talk about the issue, not you

CSR is - and if it isn't it should be - about the problem it is designed to resolve, be it education, food security or an environmental issue. Make your CSR communication an opportunity to talk about those issues first and foremost. At the same time how, where and why you are addressing them will also come into play.

2. Tell the story

Very often communication around CSR is limited to a press release and a group photo of people wearing branded t-shirts. A huge opportunity is being missed, because behind this dull approach is a real story – in fact, more often than not, a great story about people working together to solve a problem and make life better.

3. Make your consumers part of the story

When choosing between two similar products knowing that one company helps their local community or is sourcing responsibly makes the choice a no-brainer. By purchasing brands that act responsibly consumers feel as though they too are part of the solution, but they won't know you're a responsible company unless you show them how you are being responsible.

4. Show don't tell

Don't just tell consumers you're responsible, show them. I have yet to come across a CSR project that wasn't extremely visual, video and photo content are a powerful tool in this space, they allow your brand's CSR story to speak for itself giving

it the credibility it needs to be believable.

5. Show both sides

Don't shy away from the 'bad news' side of CSR communication. All too often clients want to avoid the sad or depressing side of CSR but without describing the problem you can't show how your brand is part of the solution. By combining the good and the bad your brand's CSR story becomes about hope and triumph.

6. Find your story's characters

Like any great story the characters are key. Find your story's main characters (either the people that created and/or are benefiting from the project) and use their voice to tell the story.

7. Relevant and authentic

CSR stories are not about big logos and heavy branding, you don't want the story to feel like an advertisement. The minute this happens, the story loses credibility and the message is not believable.

Incredible projects are underway in our communities. Good works combined with clever ideas are making a difference from projects in Khayelitsha that combine washing machines with a library to encourage and give parents time to read to their children instead of spending hours hand washing their clothes to a camera shop that sponsors printed photographs of children at Cape Town's Red Cross Hospital bringing joy and comfort to parents and families of sick children.

These good works make great news, why wouldn't you want to share your brand's CSR story with your consumers, staff and shareholders?

ABOUT JENNIFER BRUCE

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