



THE TIMES 100

Vodafone brief

Introduction

Vodafone is a mobile network operator. It provides mobile phones and the networks to support them. It is one of the world's largest. Its aim is to be the leading company in the communications market. Vodafone also aims to have a positive influence on the people and in the areas where it works. This is called Corporate Responsibility (CR). Part of CR is to do business in a way that is kind to the planet. Vodafone therefore aims to reduce its carbon footprint. This is a measure of the amount of harmful gases produced by a product and its use. It can reduce this by getting people to recycle or re-use old phones. This is good business and also benefits stakeholders. A stakeholder is any person, group or organisation that has an interest in the business.

External stakeholders

These groups are outside the organisation. The two main groups for Vodafone are customers and partner charities. Phone recycling and re-use affects them both.

- Customers are either businesses or final users of a product. Businesses can reduce their carbon footprint in a number of ways. For instance, they can cut down on business journeys. Mobile phones and fast data transfer allow this. People can work from any base with the right technology. Everyone can recycle old phones. These contain harmful materials so need to be disposed of with care. On average people upgrade phones every eighteen months. It also helps if they upgrade less often.
- Vodafone partner charities include:
 - Global Cool Foundation UK. This aims to reduce global warming. Its target is to get people in the UK to save a million tonnes of CO₂
 - Solar Aid. This provides solar-powered equipment to sunny but poor Zambia
 - The Million Superheroes Campaign. This aims to recruit a million people in the UK to promise to cut their carbon emissions.

Recycling agents and the supply chain

There are other external stakeholder groups. One group is the people that supply Vodafone. The supply chain shows how a product gets from supplier to consumer. Recycling and re-using phones makes the life cycle longer. A longer life cycle for a product means less waste. Consumers can send phones back to retailers or to Vodafone. Vodafone then sends them to Fonebak. This organisation recycles or re-uses the phone or its parts. These are sold to lower income countries. For each handset returned, Vodafone donates around £8 to the Global Cool Foundation UK.

Internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are inside the business. Employees are internal stakeholders. Employees can help Vodafone to reach its CR goals. They reduce waste, communicate electronically rather than on paper and recycle their phones.

Shareholders

Shareholders are also stakeholders. Shareholders own part of the business. They have an interest in supporting CR. This is good business as well as good sense. Vodafone shows this in its CR Report. The CR report is part of the Annual Report.

Conclusion

Leading companies need to show that they can act responsibly. Vodafone's CR policy helps the environment. It also keeps all of its stakeholder groups happy.