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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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In recent years, the use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has gained widespread recognition in business as an effective practice that can lead to improvement of corporate image and financial performance of the enterprise. Every year the need for CSR grows and actualizes in accordance with world events. The global COVID-19 pandemic has led to a reassessment of CSR models and a trend towards its complete transformation. The spread of the disease around the world has changed the perception of corporate social responsibility and forced companies to look at it from a completely different angle (Letunovska et al., 2020; Prudnikov and Nazarenko, 2021; Antonyuk et al., 2021; Tiutiunyk et al., 2021; Pimonenko et al., 2021; Pimonenko et al., 2021; Ziabina et al., 2020; Novikov, 2021a; Biewendt et al., 2021; Niftiyev et al., 2021). Whereas CSR used to be part of the overall communication of companies, in the last year it has become the main tool for staying in the information field, as well as the main tool for survival in business. The percentage of Ukrainian companies that used CSR, in contrast to many countries around the world, was quite low, but the situation with the pandemic has significantly accelerated the development of corporate social responsibility in our country (Kosar et al., 2014; Bouchetara et al., 2020; Zolkover and Georgiev, 2020; Nemmiche et al., 2019; Moskovicz, 2019; Kaya, 2020; Starchenko et al., 2021; Zainea et al., 2020; Greco and Matta, 2021; Khaliq et al., 2021; Novikov, 2021b; Dzwigol, 2020; Shkarlet et al., 2019; Hrytsenko et al., 2021; Fila et al., 2020; Kordos, 2019; Partlova et al., 2020; Us et al., 2020). After the introduction of quarantine, all domestic companies found themselves in a severe economic crisis. Due to the reduction in the number of social programs, all long-term CSR development strategies have become irrelevant and companies have had to respond quickly enough to maintain their own businesses.

CSR has proven to be a powerful element that inspires consumer confidence in companies. Thus, Nielsen in its global report on corporate social responsibility notes that more than 70% of consumers in Ukraine have a positive perception of those companies that are responsible for society and the environment (Nielsen, 2016).

Quarantine measures in 2020 have become a real test for almost all global and domestic companies. In a pandemic, brands have lost the opportunity to loudly declare the benefits of their products or services and compete in creative promotion decisions. At the same time, no company that plans to go through the crisis with minimal losses can afford to go into the shadows now. After all, as soon as a brand

"stops talking", it ceases to exist. All this led to the global crisis, which significantly affected the activities of all structures of the economy and business. According to the forecasts of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), the fall in global GDP in 2020 will be about 4.5% (OECD, 2020) which will be the largest decline in several decades. As for Ukraine, the IMF forecasts our fall in GDP at 7.2% (IMF, 2020).

That is why the main marketing tool of companies that allows them to stay in the information field, has become corporate social responsibility. According to research by CSR Ukraine, 67% of the company's reputation is its social responsibility (CSR Ukraine, 2021), which confirms the fact that CSR is one of the key indicators of brand recognition.

Table 1 – Corporate social responsibility projects of well-known Ukrainian companies during the COVID-19 pandemic (Stepanova, 2020)

Company	CSR projects
NOVA POSHTA	The company has allocated UAH 25 million to help clinics. Thanks to these funds, the equipment needed to fight the coronavirus was purchased. In addition, a special project "Humanitarian Mail" was created, the purpose of which was to free delivery of protective equipment to hospitals and orphanages.
ROZETKA	The company, in cooperation with Nova Poshta, ATB and the Zhyttelyub Charitable Foundation, organized the delivery of food for the elderly to protect them from danger when visiting stores.
Silpo	The company has become one of the largest patrons in the fight against COVID-19, allocating UAH 100 million. These funds were used to purchase the necessary medical care for hospital staff, necessary equipment for Ukrainian hospitals, including ventilators.
Uber, Bolt and Uklon	The most popular taxi call services in Ukraine have created an action to support medical workers of infectious diseases hospitals in large cities of Ukraine, providing them with free transportation to and from the hospital.
Kyivstar, Vodafone and Lifecell	The most popular mobile operators in Ukraine have created promotions to provide free calls to hotlines of government agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others. During the quarantine, Kyivstar provided free online consultations to doctors by phone using a special Doctor Online application. Vodafone Ukraine has allocated more than UAH 3.5 million for the purchase of necessary medical equipment for Ukrainian hospitals.

Despite this practice, most companies were concerned about employees. Yes, some leading domestic companies have redirected their staff to remote work, which has made it possible to save jobs and work from home. The rest provided employees with personal means protection. As a result, for such a responsible approach, companies receive staff loyalty, the formation of the HR brand, respect in society as a whole and positive mentions in the media. A striking example is the Ukrainian corporation Roshen, which spent more than 26 million hryvnias to protect employees and distributors, as well as to pay employees during the pandemic period.

The COVID-19 Barometer study by the international agency Kantar, which involved 25,000 respondents from 30 countries, showed that companies should be more focused on the interests of employees. More than 60% of respondents insist that companies should switch to a more flexible work schedule in order to take into account the interests of employees and care for their health (Ukrainian Marketing Group, 2020). The period of the pandemic is very important for the development of CSR around the world, especially in our country. Such a time of uncertainty in business has become a real test of business survival. Some companies have raised prices several times, while others have met the needs of society by creating special assistance programs, which have made them more attractive in the long run, improving their own image. Because of the analyzed experience of corporate social responsibility in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, it can be concluded that after the CSR pandemic will accelerate even more, as more firms and enterprises realize that their long-term survival and development depends on achieving a balance between profitability and harmony with social responsibility.

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