

Can the Marketing Function Benefit from Socially Responsible Marketing?

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Abstract

In a world where corporate social responsibility is a meaningful trend valued by firm stakeholders, it is still not clear if marketing functions benefit from engaging in socially responsible practices. Using legitimacy as the underlying theoretical explanation, this research studies the role socially responsible marketing plays in marketing functions' impact outside (performance) and inside (influence) the firm. This work extends research on the role of the marketing function and its contribution to firm performance. Based on multiple empirical efforts (Twitter analysis of marketing executives, two surveys of marketing managers, and an experiment involving CEOs), we find that, while socially responsible marketing is far from mainstream, it positively contributes to marketing functions' performance and influence. Additionally, this impact is strengthened when customers – a key stakeholder for marketers – are more interested in social responsibility.

Keywords: *CSR; performance; legitimacy*

Track: Marketing Strategy & Theory