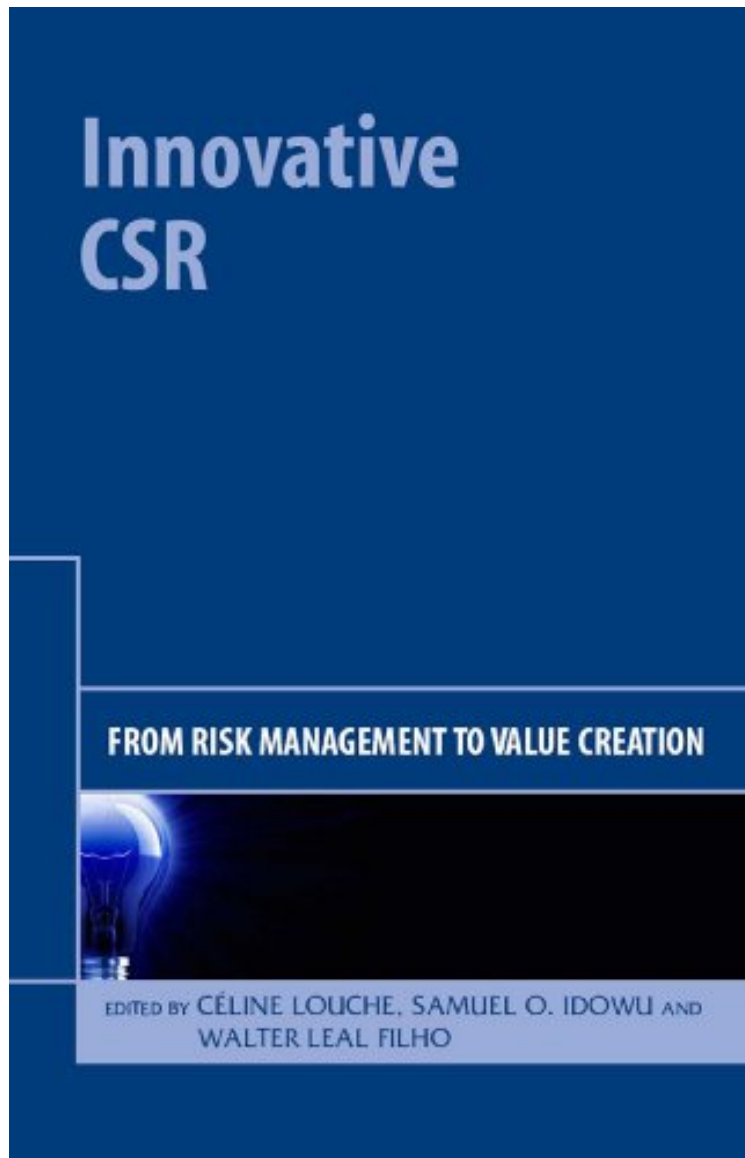


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Innovative CSR

Cécile Louche, Samuel Idowu
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Cécile Louche, Samuel Idowu : Innovative CSR before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Innovative CSR:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Insights abound in this book
By Elaine Cohen
For a full review of this book, see my review on [...] Insights abound in this packed volume of academic papers from scholars in 12 different countries around the world and how they perceive the modern practice of CSR and, in particular, the ways in which CSR can be leveraged to create strategic value for businesses. It is rare to find an academic textbook that is utterly riveting, highly readable and well-structured, providing a wide range of case studies and commentaries on the practical

aspects of CSR in a multitude of companies and organizations. This book does it superbly. Each paper is a gem. Each paper builds effectively around the central theme of strategic CSR innovation, exploring different dimensions of innovative and strategic practice on the part of corporate entities around the globe, offering new ways of thinking about the ways in which CSR is, and sometimes isn't, leveraged to deliver creative, strategic, triple bottom line value for businesses, society and environment. Part I, "CSR and competitive advantage", encompasses six chapters, each addressing the strategic dimensions of CSR. Highlights include a paper proposing a framework for creating a dynamic link between CSR and strategy, offering a new way of analyzing materiality, with case studies demonstrating the application of this framework at Aveda Corporation, Herman Miller and Toyota. The paper concludes that firms must focus CSR efforts in three areas - market based, regulatory/standards based and operational based actions - in a context specific way in order to create value-adding strategies for CSR. Another paper offers astute insights into the reasons Companies settle for convergent (me-too) CSR instead of divergent (innovative) CSR . You can also read a fascinating account of an Italian company, Beghelli SpA, the Italian market leader in emergency lighting systems, who has diversified its business along sustainability principles and reaped significant business benefit. This study of Beghelli is based on 5 strategic variables proposed back in 1996 by Burke and Lodgson, quite an interesting model, and in the case shown, serves to support the importance of leveraging firm-specific resources for strategic CSR initiatives. Part II, "CSR and value creation", examines the ways CSR can create value for a firm, its stakeholders and society. My favorite piece in this section is about corporate social responsibility as a brand building tool which offers another framework proposed by Simmons and Becker-Olsen in 2006 which establishes 4 key components of an effective strategic CSR program: clear motivation, appropriate initiative, right timing and right communication. The study cites both appropriate initiatives which add value, such as the company Gas Natural which established a relationship with the Barcelona city government to power the city's bus fleet with more environmentally-friendly natural gas, and less appropriate initiatives, such as Pepsi's support for a new highway construction in Mexico City, in which Pepsi's logo appeared on police booths along the new highway, thereby creating a negative association, confusing to consumers between the brand and the police force. A key conclusion of this paper is that strategic fit influences purchasing decisions, something many companies would be advised to note. "Programs that do not strategically fit with the business or are perceived as reactionary can lead to brand equity dilution". Part III, "CSR and Innovation", focuses on the innovative aspects of CSR. This section is headed up with a fascinating study of 129 global innovative solutions and an analysis of these using a 4-point innovation scale developed by Mark Kramer and the Skoll Foundation in 2005 in order to evaluate the innovative aspects of CSR solutions against 13 different dimensions. A key finding is that Companies tend to develop solutions that adapt existing systems rather than change the systems - only 7% of initiatives studied can be regarded as "really" innovative. Other papers in this section include a very interesting sustainable innovation model for SME's and an analysis of the value that consultants contribute to CSR innovation. All in all, despite the academic nature of this book, the sometimes rather tedious descriptions of methodologies applied, and the often repetitive introductory sections to each of the different papers penned by different academics, this book is a delight. The deep-dive into core CSR concepts provide original ways of thinking about how companies have and can make CSR a business-builder rather than a series of bolt-on projects. An essential understanding of what is strategic and what is innovative in CSR terms is a prerequisite, I suggest, for any company engaging in CSR practices. This book is a must-read for anyone considering these themes. elaine cohen[...]

By and large, corporations of the 21st century have come to realize that their obligations to societies in terms of corporate social responsibility are fourfold: economic, ethical, altruistic and strategic. This book aims to explore, inspire and support creative, innovative and strategic corporate social responsibility (CSR).