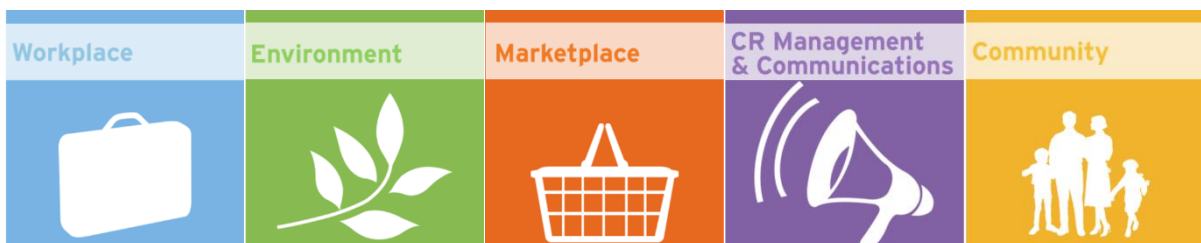


Business in the  
Community  
Ireland

## SUSTAINING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Q3 Network Meetings | Leah Naughton, CR Executive

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## Introduction

On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015, Business in the Community Ireland held its National and Munster Member Network Meetings hosted by Ulster Bank in Dublin and PM Group in Cork.

This report presents the main points discussed at the meetings including:

- ✓ An overview of the publication '*Business Case for Being a Responsible Business*'
- ✓ Sustaining the Business Case for Sustainability -A Perspective from Leaders in the Field
- ✓ Network Updates
- ✓ Member Activities

*Do you have difficulty explaining the business case for corporate responsibility and sustainability? Are you sometimes challenged by having to maintain momentum for sustainability initiatives, no matter how successful?*

We addressed these questions at our network meetings. We discussed how you can build the business case for sustainability. We heard how senior practitioners, in three leading companies, from three different sectors, are able **to explain and sustain the business case for sustainability**.

Join our **LinkedIn private members only group**, ['Members of Business in the Community Ireland'](#) to connect with members of the network. The Business in the Community Ireland members-only group provides a platform for members to continue network meeting conversations online, share best practice and access members-only resources.

## The Business Case for CSR

The new BITCI publication, *'Business Case for Being a Responsible Business'*, outlines how CSR has evolved as a core business issue impacting on business objectives – CSR is now on the agenda of Boards, CEOs, and senior teams.

This robust analysis gives you data and insights for use with internal stakeholders including CEO, CFO, and other functions, and showcases practice from member companies.

The business case for CSR relates to six key areas, and these were explored further by the three member company speakers at the network meetings. In addition, the report also identifies key emerging trends – and this is where the network can support you to maintain a relevant CSR strategy & programme, and keep Irish businesses on par with international best practice.

The report equips you with credible business analysis with regard to the CSR benefits of:

- leveraging brand equity
- engaging the workforce
- driving business expansion
- optimising risk reduction and management
- ensuring competitiveness, and
- boosting long-term profitability

For Irish business, the following trends will impact on business over the next five years:

- Irish Government and state agencies support for CSR
- business and human rights
- circular economy
- integrated reporting, and
- the changing workplace

The challenge for companies is realise the maximum possible benefits from CSR and to be prepared for future trends. To that end certain drivers are needed and again are reflected in the company examples shared, these included:

- having a **clear business case and ensure a direct alignment** between the business and CSR objectives
- engaging in **strategic programmes** with the community & employees to allow for more meaningful links between stakeholders and the business
- **innovating to ensure the CSR strategy remains relevant** to the business, and demonstrates best practice
- focusing on **impact measurement of CSR** against business goals
- **defining material issues & stakeholders**

As members of the BITCI network, you have led and shaped the CSR agenda over the past 15 years. As the network evolves we will look at new ways to engage with you, given the changing business needs & trends, provide new platforms to share and collaborate in order to support your innovation, and build the international reach and visibility of Irish business.

### Sustaining the Business Case for Sustainability - A Perspective from Leaders in the Field

Given that the business case has evolved in the last 15 years, the challenge for many companies is being able to sustain the momentum internally to ensure that:

- every element of the business is operating optimally, at all times;
- consultation with stakeholders isn't just undertaken as a matter of course, but is acted upon; and
- opportunities for innovation and differentiation are actively sought out.

Crucially, it is key that stakeholders know and understand the lengths and efforts committed companies are going to, so that they are able to capitalise on the competitive advantage that being a responsible and a continually-innovating company brings.

At the network meeting, we heard how senior practitioners, in three leading companies, from three different sectors, are able **to explain and sustain the business case for sustainability**.

Sustainability has been embedded in company operations because by so doing, risks are mitigated; costs are reduced; the organisation is future-proofed; employees are engaged; and continued innovation becomes the norm - giving rise to an ability to differentiate these companies in extraordinarily competitive, operating markets.

Marks & Spencer has generated a net benefit of £625m since 2007, through their sustainability strategy Plan A; Smurfit Kappa as a supplier, is taking the lead to support their customers to increase efficiencies, save on costs and reduce their carbon emissions; Ulster Bank is going the extra mile to engage their employees because engaged employees are more productive and motivated and more likely to engage customers they're meeting.

The aim of this part of the meeting was to give members an opportunity to share and learn best practice examples from member companies. We were delighted to have the following as our guest speakers:

## Ulster Bank

*Sarah Dempsey, Head of Corporate Affairs & Economics*

*Fiona Kingston, Programme Director Business Women Can Initiative*

### Ulster Bank

- Focusing on the customer experience on the phone and online. Ulster Bank creating 350 new jobs in Northern Ireland in their call centre, serving ROI, NI and Nat West customers in the UK.
- Supporting SMEs is another key focus with providing finance to lend.
- Motivating and engaging staff is core to their sustainability strategy. The Living Our Values programme rewards staff who excel at customer service.
- Change in the bank is constant. Ulster Bank is upskilling their staff to manage change effectively.
- The Business Working Responsibly Mark requires values to anchor it. Values central for our people, customers and business.
- Financial education is a key area and it has never been more important than it is now.
- Supporting the community is in our DNA and Ulster Bank endeavour to make it easy for their people to give back.
- How you make the money you spend is what's important (not how you spend the money you make).

## Smurfit Kappa Group

*Jim Fitzharris, Assistant Group Secretary*

### Smurfit Kappa

- The Environment, the customer (50,000), the employee (43,000), transparency and reporting are all major areas of focus.
- Smurfit Kappa puts a lot of effort into engaging its 43,000 colleagues in 30 countries. People want to work for a company that takes care of them and their communities.
- Smurfit Kappa made a pledge to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20% by 2020, however this has already been achieved and a new target of 25% has been set. As part of this strategy to reduce its carbon footprint, a number of plants globally are self-sufficient in energy generation and are selling energy to the grid. 44% of direct fuel consumption is now biofuel. There is also significant focus on water management, treatment and best practice.
- Smurfit Kappa has a wealth of design and innovation tools to ensure customer packaging displays well, uses the least amount of cardboard and can be transported using the least amount of CO<sub>2</sub>. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> used is measured end to end - a USP for Smurfit Kappa in the packaging sector.

- Smurfit Kappa goes the extra mile to support their customers to meet their sustainability targets. In some cases, customers are driving action and audit operations e.g. Nestlé, but in most cases, it is Smurfit Kappa who is taking the lead to ensure customer packaging and accompanying logistics are operating to the highest sustainability standards possible.

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Carmel McQuaid, *Head of Sustainable Business*

Carmel spoke candidly and inspirationally to attendees and asked that her talk not be recorded or elements tweeted.

All speaker presentations are available on our **LinkedIn private members only group**, [‘Members of Business in the Community Ireland’](#).

## Network Updates

Welcome  
to our new  
members

We announced the **new members** to join the Network in Q3.

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DAWN MEATS

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 workday.

## Member Activities

### Member Network Meetings

Our quarterly network meetings are exclusive to our members and aim to be informative and inspiring events.

Save the date for the Annual Network Meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Member Network Meetings 2015	
National 11 <sup>th</sup> February (completed)	National 22 <sup>nd</sup> April (completed)
<b>Quarter 1</b>	<b>Quarter 2</b>
Munster 12 <sup>th</sup> February (completed)	Munster 28 <sup>th</sup> May (completed)
National 16 <sup>th</sup> September (completed)	Annual 9 <sup>th</sup> December
<b>Quarter 3</b>	<b>Quarter 4</b>
Munster 17 <sup>th</sup> September (completed)	

### Upcoming Events

We updated our members on the upcoming events including:



#### Business in the Community Annual CEO Breakfast Forum

Megatrends and Leadership is the theme of this year's Annual CEO Breakfast Forum and will examine megatrends around ethics and trust and we will hear from leading companies who have benefited from having a sustainable business model.

Speakers include:

- Pat O'Doherty, *Chief Executive, ESB*
- Dorman Followwill, *Director, Frost & Sullivan*

We will also announce the companies in Ireland to receive the Business Working Responsibly Mark, our NSAI audited standard for corporate responsibility. This essential networking breakfast forum is a critical date in the diaries of business leaders in Ireland, therefore making attendance a must.

❖ **ACTION: Please make sure this event is in your CEO's diary.**

Event Details: 13<sup>th</sup> October, 7.00-9.00am, Guinness Storehouse, St. James' Gate, Dublin 8





### Change Management Tools to put your CR Strategy into Action

Business in the Community Ireland is offering a workshop on 'Change Management Tools to put your CR Strategy into Action'.

The workshop is ideal for members implementing a corporate responsibility strategy that requires business support from all levels of your organisation.

The course is based on content licensed from the Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility at the Cranfield University of Management and includes case studies and interactive exercises.

- ❖ **ACTION:** Contact your Account Manager or Elaine Stephen at [estephen@bitc.ie](mailto:estephen@bitc.ie) if you or your colleagues would be interested in attending the workshop

Event Details: 5<sup>th</sup> November, 9.30am-2.00pm, Business in the Community Ireland, 32 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1



### Annual Network Meeting

We will host our Annual Network Meeting for all members on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> December.

This is a must attend event for all of our members as we make a number of important network announcements on the day including unveiling our 2016 calendar of exclusive member events. In addition, each year, we invite guest speakers to join us to look at a particular topic.

More details of the event will be announced closer to the date.

- ❖ **ACTION:** Save the date in your diary

Read the full [Event Programme for 2015](#), detailing the events and training available to our members.

Please contact your Account Manager or Leah Naughton at [lnaughton@bitc.ie](mailto:lnaughton@bitc.ie) if you have any queries about any of the material in this report.