**Corporate Social Responsibility – Origins & Implementation**

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**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concept and roots**

The Financial Times defines Corporate Social Responsibility as; “a business approach that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders.”  Many people believe that businesses should help with social issues as they have the means to do so.

Over the decades this concept has continued to develop since first emerging before WWII with examples going back to the Victorian era (the Cadburys family).  The idea guides businesses to not only think about their employees and customers but society as a whole

**Was this the result of a changing society?**

CSR really flourished at the time when social movements started to catch wind.  This was the ‘swinging sixties’ when certain social movements were born, these being:

* Civil Rights – 1954
* Women’s Rights – 1948
* Consumer’s rights – 1960
* Environmental Movements –  1960

Such activist groups lead to a changing social environment which in turn added pressure to businesses to adopt greater corporate social responsibilities & attitudes.  More and more pressure from external forces such as consumers, has created a stronger demand for ethical and responsible business, whereby businesses are realising they (HAVE TO LISTEN TO THEIR CUSTOMERS) must incorporate this.

Businesses such as the Co-Operative, believe that in addition to the pursuit of profits, businesses should also be responsible for their worker’s communities and other stakeholders, even if this requires a sacrifice to their bottom line.

**Were Cadburys the pioneers of CSR?**

The Cadbury family believed that all human beings should be treated equally and live in peace (an ideal way of thinking?) this of course would be a dream world as peace and equality are desired by a majority of people, although companies still exist where child labour and the exploitation of people in third world make up their “cheap” workforce, and obviously extremist groups who hold their radical beliefs above peace.

George Cadbury (son of one of the founding brothers) was driven by a passion for social reform and wanted to provide good quality, low-cost homes for his workers in a healthy environment.  This was to give an alternative to grimy inner-city life at the time.

George dedicated one-tenth of his Bourneville site (referred to as ‘the factory in the garden’) and laid out space for parks, recreation, and open space.  Through initiatives like these, the brothers had set new standards for working and living conditions.

George’s second wife Elizabeth was also involved in philanthropy, together they built and opened woodlands hospital in Northfield and built The Beeches where children from the city slums could holiday.

This was one of the first signs of a business going way beyond what was required for workers and society without the sole incentive of financial gain.  [(Cited from J.Ella, BBC](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/birmingham/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8412000/8412655.stm)