

What Does Responsible Brands Compliance Mean?

If you ask 10 people for their definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), you will likely get 10 different answers on what should be included and what should not. The same is true with the term Sustainability. Some see Sustainability as only environmental while others include things like long term financial viability and employee availability.

Multiple surveys have shown that a majority of people would prefer to buy from a company that operates in a responsible manner. However, it is impossible for the average consumer to understand all the potential factors that go into responsible operations and material sourcing, and companies with large advertising budgets might leave false impressions.

... globally, 66% of consumers are willing to spend more on a product if it comes from a sustainable brand.

— Forbes, Mar-2017

The primary goal of Responsible Brands Initiative (RBI) is to enable consumers to have ready access to an uncomplicated and objective assessment of a company's CSR and sustainability performance and an easy way to consider that performance when making their buying decision.

The planned approach uses a wide variety of individual factors that are weighted in a structured way to come up with an overall performance score. The weighting also

comprehends the differences between industries on some factors such as manufacturing for an automobile company vs. a financial institution. RBI is working with experts in a variety of industries and roles, and we encourage you to consider participating. Our goal is to be comprehensive in scope while involving experts and collaborating towards the final scoring system.

Once complete and in use, we expect that a company's RBI performance score will have an impact on people, organizations and the environment. Over a dozen stakeholder audiences are being considered, for example employees, customers, government, suppliers, creditors, community, owners and investors and the environment. Experts from these sectors will decide the weighting based on the impact of specific criteria to the group. We plan to incorporate recognized third party data into the weighting when possible to raise credibility and reduce effort.

So far, criteria for Responsible Brand™ compliance includes:

- metrics that are practical, objective, demonstrable and significant.
- metrics that are required by law and others that are not.
- metrics that encompass most tenets of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability.
- a rubric that weights various aspects of CSR into a balanced and meaningful *overall view*.
- no requirement that a company be perfect to be in compliance.
- no factors that preclude a company from being in compliance.
- no criteria that are political or personal in nature

Responsible Brands Initiative™

- criteria that reflects support for the *spirit* of responsible sourcing and efforts that go *above and beyond* minimum requirements.
- inertia and persistence of compliance that is minimally impacted by current events.
- recognition for achieving Responsible Brands compliance and use of RBI Compliant logo
- openness on the details of the compliance scorecard.
- a focus on corporate CSR environment, policies and actions, not individual products or services.

We need your help, now. The definition of a responsible company, based on specific criteria, and eventually the program to recognize Responsible Brands compliance requires involving myriad people and entities. Topic experts are needed for working groups to define compliance requirements, branding elements, and promotion programs to activate consumers.

As you make plans for implementing programs to meet CSR objectives for your company, consider investing resources in Responsible Brands Initiative. This is a simple way to increase the impact of what may already be in your annual budget. By supporting RBI, your company will gain additional recognition and credibility with the growing audience who favor products which are produced in a responsible manner.

More information about how you can help is available on our website; please visit:

<http://responsiblebrands.org>

**Take Affirmative Action
Today**

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