

CSR Communication in Kitakyushu, Japan: Multiple Case Study

Kaori Takano, Ph.D.
School of Business Administration
Fort Lewis College
Durango, CO, USA

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Email: kaoringcun@yahoo.com

Abstract

The city of Kitakyushu is located in Fukuoka prefecture, southwestern Japan. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) designated it as one of the four “Green growth” model cities in the world. The city experienced industrial pollution in the 1960s, however, it currently enjoys a reputation for having successful environmental approaches. Because of this significant history, the author speculates that the Kitakyushu business community continues to be vigilant about socially responsible practices and their CSR communication with stakeholders may be more advanced compared to other businesses in Japan.

This multiple case study utilized two traditional data: Interviews and documents. Using purposeful sampling, three multinational corporations headquartered in Kitakyushu were selected. Findings include that the three major multinational corporations do not have systematic comprehensive evaluation measurements against their investment in CSR activities. Their primary focus tends to be on employees, not stockholders. One of the companies has no intention to evaluate their CSR communication due to their relationship-oriented approach, which emphasizes relationships developed over time with characteristics generally associated with partnerships. Finally, they all recognize a lack of effective communication systems and two of the companies are in the process of improving their systems. The author concludes that these three multinational corporations will continue to engage in implicit CSR because the nature of their CSR activities is relationship-oriented and they tend to be apprehensive about engaging in CSR communications.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, business communication, strategic management, Japan