

# We're Entering the Age of Corporate Social Justice

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Lily Zheng

Research has shown that companies with effective Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs are more profitable than those that aren't. Over the last 50 years, corporations have relied on these programs, which include social issue marketing, philanthropic efforts, employee volunteer initiatives, and diversity and inclusion work, to build their brands and satisfy customers.

Now, consumers and employees are raising the bar. The killing of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis has driven one of the largest protest movements in recent memory, and the widespread reactions to the standard CSR playbook suggest that old best practices may no longer work. Consumers and employees are now looking for more than Corporate Social Responsibility — they're looking for what I call Corporate Social Justice.

Corporate Social Justice is a reframing of CSR that centers the focus of any initiative or program on the measurable, lived experiences of groups harmed and disadvantaged by society. CSR is a self-regulated framework that has no legal or social obligation for corporations to actually create positive impact for the groups they purport to help. Corporate Social Justice is a framework regulated by the trust between a company and its employees, customers, shareholders, and the broader community it touches, with the goal of explicitly doing good by all of them. Where CSR is often realized through a secondary or even vanity program tacked onto a company's main business, Corporate Social Justice requires deep integration with every aspect of the way a company functions. [...]

Corporate Social Justice is a new paradigm that imagines a healthier and mutually beneficial relationship between companies and the communities they interact with. It is driven by the growing desire of socially-aware consumers and employees for companies, especially socially-conscious and forward-thinking companies, to do better. Companies have an opportunity to rise to the occasion and leverage their influence to build a better world for all — including themselves.