

**Jan-Christoph Kischkewitz / Koen W. van Bommel**

**Great Expectations - Investigating the connection between incentives for CSR activities and the actual results at Becker**

**Bachelor Thesis**

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# Great Expectations

**Investigating the connection between incentives for CSR activities and the actual results at Becker**



Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen  
Nijmegen School of Management

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“It is better to light a candle than to complain about the dark”  
(Chinese wisdom)

Honourable mention at the “Accenture scriptie-prijs 2005”

# Executive Summary

## The reason

Over the last decades the emphasis on sustainable development has steadily been increasing. The exact reasons for this are still debated, but increasing globalization, technological advancements, liberalization of markets and increasing interdependencies between governments, businesses and civil society all seem to have made an impact on this increased interest and importance. What is certain is that organizations have become much more prominent as well as powerful in today's world. However, with that changing position also new responsibilities arise. One of these is that the business world has to come up with its own answer for achieving sustainable development.

That is where the term Corporate Responsibility (CR) comes into play, which can be seen as the business response to sustainable development. This responsible can be focused on an economic, environmental or social pillar, the last one being the key focus of this particular research and also known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Many organizations have decided to engage in a wide variety of CSR measures. Many, mainly quantitative, studies have shown possible financial benefits for these companies. However, are these statistics really true, or has CSR actually become more of a fad, like there are so many in the world of organizations? Do organizations engage almost blindly in CSR activities, without actually knowing why and whether or not it will bring the proclaimed benefits?

Therefore, this research will try in a qualitative way to investigate what the connection is between the incentives that cause organizations to engage in CSR activities and the actual results of these activities by providing a description and analysis of these incentives and results for a company actively engaging in CSR activities. This research will be conducted in the German multinational Becker, specialized in vacuum pump technology.

## The theory

The concepts which require further theoretical explanation are CSR activities, incentives or drivers for engagement into these activities and the projected results of the activities. These concepts are finally combined into an overall conceptual model.

CSR can be divided into internally and externally focused activities. The internal ones are employee-oriented in the areas of employment conditions, health and safety, training and education and emancipation of minority groups or equal rights. As for the external ones, these are focused on the local community, society or business partners, suppliers and customers.

The drivers for CSR engagement are fourfold. They can be based on societal conditions, possible sanctions for irresponsible behavior, internal organizational conditions or on possible strategic incentives. Especially the latter aspect is important for this research since possible benefits can be obtained from these strategic incentives and therefore the results that are the outcome of CSR engagements have to be sought for in that category. Improved financial performance, higher