

The 1999 Example of Excellence

BT



For British Telecommunications plc (BT), corporate social responsibility assists competitiveness, as well as benefiting society at large. BT's mission statement explicitly commits the company "to make a fitting contribution to the communities in which we conduct our business".

Policies

Policies ensure that BT acts as an excellent corporate citizen and are set at the highest levels. BT's stakeholder base has been extensively researched. Key groupings include shareholders, customers, employees, suppliers and opinion leaders (including the Government).

All activities are linked to ensuring continuous improvement in BT. An annual review of each operating division's impact on society is ensured throughout BT by the ongoing use of the Business Excellence Model.

Business practice policies are declared in a set of Statements of Business Practice, recently updated comprehensively. These statements cover commitment to all the stakeholders in BT – customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers and the community – and provide a formal ethical policy framework that informs BT's strategy as well as all aspects of operations.

People

BT's Equal Opportunities Policy is communicated to staff through induction and training programmes, employee communication channels, campaigns and award schemes. BT also supports employee-led initiatives such as the Ethnic Minority Network and the Women's Network. A "virtual" disabled Employees Network was recently established, based on the company's intranet.

A thousand BT people receive formal backing for working as school governors, while others sit on local Business Link boards. One tenth of all BT people share in the company's Give As You Earn scheme – the largest payroll giving scheme by far in the country, and the most generously matched. Employees involved in their own charitable activities can apply for Community Challenge Awards. BT also runs several major company volunteering schemes, including mentoring and a very large new scheme to help children with reading skills as a major contribution to the National Year of Reading.

Three of BT's education and economic regeneration projects secured £16.7 million of matching funds from Lottery, Government and European sources, for a BT investment of only £1.1 million.

continued overleaf

"Embracing its social and environmental responsibilities has brought BT two benefits:- understanding better the environment it operates in and responding to the changes in that operating environment, and demonstrating its inclusiveness within the society it operates in thus generating goodwill among customers and others in society and reinforcing the company's reputation. These directly relate to our competitiveness, not only in the UK but in the world market."

**Bill Cockburn CBE,
Group Managing Director,
BT UK**

SUMMARY OF KEY IMPROVEMENTS

- The largest company to have gained the prestigious Investors in People accreditation.
- Reduced energy consumption by 8% compared to the previous year.
- Give As You Earn Scheme is the largest giving scheme in the country, involving 10,500 employees and raising £2.5 million (including BT matching) for 2,300 charities.