

CSR as an Element of a Marketing Strategy – The Example of IKEA

CSR jako element strategii marketingowej na przykładzie IKEA

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest wyjaśnienie istoty koncepcji CSR i zasadności jej praktycznego wdrażania przez duże przedsiębiorstwa, istoty społecznej odpowiedzialności biznesu w budowaniu wizerunku firmy i w procesie zaopatrzenia oraz prezentacja praktycznych rozwiązań zastosowania CSR w przestrzeni marketingowej. IKEA nie tylko dba o swój wizerunek poprzez różnorodne działania na rzecz CSR, ale także wykorzystuje strategię CRM w kontekście marketingu. Strategie te wykorzystywane są nie tylko do pozyskiwania nowych klientów, ale również do budowania trwałych relacji biznesowych opartych na wzajemnym zaufaniu i wspólnych wartościach.

Słowa kluczowe: społeczna odpowiedzialność biznesu (CSR), marketing społeczny, cause related marketing, wizerunek, komunikacja marketingowa.

1. Introduction

The conditions for the functioning of companies in the modern world are constantly evolving, which in turn is reflected in the increasingly new financial, organizational and marketing management strategies adopted by enterprises. The incredible speed of information flow using new technologies in the modern, increasingly globalized world determines many changes in the way companies

* Graduate of the Faculty of Management at the University of Łódź, previously: Fujitsu Internet Customer Service Agent.

compete. Competitiveness between companies is increasing, and those that want not only to survive in the modern market, but to achieve market success, apply more and more innovative marketing strategies, using the latest technological solutions and properly responding to market needs. In order to achieve the intended goals, companies use various measures aimed at convincing the customer to the products and services they offer in order to later establish and maintain a relationship with the customer ensuring mutual benefits.

Customers are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of a consumerist lifestyle and the associated environmental and social risks. Being aware of the need to care for the environment, as well as aware of many negative social phenomena and abuses occurring in the production process, customers are more and more willing to use products or services of companies operating in accordance with the laws of sustainable development. Companies that operate socially are better perceived by both their consumers and other business partners. In response to this, many companies use socially engaged marketing, in which the company's environmental or social activities play a significant role.

Strategies in the field of corporate social responsibility that are implemented by enterprises not only play a role in building the company's image on the market but also serve the purpose of marketing communication with clients who become involved in the undertaken activities. IKEA is an example of a company that implements many CSR activities both internationally and locally. Co-creating value with the customer by implementing numerous simplifications in the production and distribution process of the products offered by IKEA is one of the many activities that the organization has taken in connection with the enforcement of the principle of sustainable development. Numerous CSR programs and projects gave IKEA the reputation of an authority for other companies in terms of implementation of CSR practices.

2. The concept and the essence of CSR in business management

The idea of sustainable development has been shaped since the 1970s in response to the growing social, economic and environmental problems in the world. Too fast exploitation of natural resources, progressive environmental pollution, difficult living conditions for many people, all social problems related to the lack of respect for human rights, poverty, hunger in less developed countries, uncontrolled demographic and urbanization processes occurring at regional levels, such as social exploitation and many other problems in the socio-economic area were

the premise for the development of a global strategy to counteract these threats. According to the norms and documents of the United Nations:

Sustainable development of the Earth is development that meets the basic needs of all people and preserves, protects and restores the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem, without endangering the ability to meet the needs of future generations and without exceeding the long-term limits of the Earth's ecosystem capacity.¹

During the conference in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, called the Earth Summit 1992/ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED, in which 172 governments and non-governmental organizations participated, important documents were adopted and they contained the fundamental principles of socio-economic policy, with particular emphasis on environmental protection. In later years, other events of a similar nature took place, including The World Summit on Sustainable Development, WSSD in Johannesburg in 2002. At that time, five key areas for rational and sustainable management of natural energy, issues related to water supply and sanitation, issues related to health as well as agriculture and biodiversity were defined.

Subsequent large events of this type, e.g. in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, in 2018 in Katowice and 2019 in Madrid, contributed to the extension of the idea of sustainable development to other areas of life, and were a driving factor to take action to protect the climate and the natural environment. Among the new challenges there were issues related to: Trade and Green Economy Options for Strengthening IFSD: Peer Review, FSD: Issues related to an intergovernmental body on SD, Oceans, Sustainable Cities, Current Ideas on Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators, Green Jobs and Social Inclusion, Reducing Disaster Risk and Building Resilience, Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture, regional, national and local level governance for sustainable development.²

In 2019, the analysis of documents such as the Global Risk Report, which is prepared annually by the World Economic Forum, showed that problems related to environmental degradation (high greenhouse gas emissions, climate warming and forest protection) are the biggest problem, resulting from the increase in the population on earth and hence more production of goods and services. It was found that cooperatives and social business stimulate sustainable development. The concept of CSR from Customer Social Responsibility has started to function in business, which is based on the idea of sustainable development. For the first time,

1 <https://www.ekologia.pl/wiedza/slowniki/leksykon-ekologii-i-ochrony-srodowiska/zrownowazony-rozwoj> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

2 <https://www.unesco.pl/rio-20/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

the problem of CSR was described on a large scale by Andrew Carnegie.³ Sustainable development can be called a modern strategy of socio-economic development, and above all, the basis for responsible business in the modern world.⁴

Corporate Social Responsibility is a corporate management strategy that takes into account the company's voluntary actions for the benefit of society and the environment, aims at sustainable development, contributes to the prosperity and health of society and assumes building positive relations with various groups of stakeholders, in particular with employees.⁵

A socially responsible organization is one that invests in human resources, environmental protection, and shapes positive relations with the company's environment and cooperates with them on social and environmental issues, as well as provides reliable information on the activities carried out.⁶ According to the ISO 26000 standard, corporate social responsibility covers such areas as: organizational governance, human rights, labor relations, the environment, fair market practices, relations with consumers, social commitment.⁷

Enterprises engaging in corporate social responsibility have many tools at their disposal to help them achieve their goals.

Table 8. Application of CSR tools in practice

Application of CSR tools in practice	
CSR tools	Possibilities of applying CSR in practice
1	2
Social campaigns	Enterprises can use the media to shape consumers' attitudes towards an existing social problem. Social campaigns make it possible to inform the public about the activities carried out on a large scale and motivate consumers to participate in pro-environmental and pro-ecological activities. Part of the profits from the sale of certain products of the company is a fund for the implementation of projects for the benefit of society or the environment. In order for this CSR tool to also achieve the company's marketing goals, the theme of the campaign should be more related to the company's operations.

3 <https://poradnikprzedsiębiorcy.pl/-csr-wplyw-spolecznej-odpowiedzialnosci-biznesu-na-rozwoj-przedsiębiorstwa> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

4 https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szczyt_Ziemi_2002 (accessed: 12.06.2019).

5 M. Szewczyk, *Odpowiedzialny marketing, czyli marketing społecznie zaangażowany*, "Gospodarka w Praktyce i Teorii" 2017, vol. 47(2), pp. 77–88.

6 *Ibidem*; Fabryka Komunikacji Społecznej, *Cause Related Marketing: wprowadzenie i definicje*, http://marketingspoleczny.pl/artukul.php?id_artukul=261 (accessed: 31.07.2016).

7 <https://www.karierawfinansach.pl/baza-wiedzy/slownik-pojec/csr-co-to-znaczy-csr> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

1	2
Social reports	The preparation of reports is a valuable source of feedback both for the company on the effectiveness of its activities and for external stakeholders. The published reports are a way of presenting the CSR strategy adopted by the company to external entities as well as the activities that have been implemented as part of this strategy. In these publications, companies can clearly demonstrate the reliability and effectiveness of actions over time. They are usually published annually and contain statements about the CSR policy, goals and strategies developed as well as detailed results of analyzes of individual activities.
Management systems (operational, supply chain)	This method of implementing the CSR policy concerns the way of managing the enterprise in the most transparent and optimal way, compliant with the principles of corporate governance. Examples of management systems under CSR may include Quality Management System ISO 9000 (quality management system), Environmental Management System ISO 14000 (environmental management system), Social Accountability SA 8000 (social responsibility management). Rational and optimal management of the supply chain allows you to eliminate the waste of resources and unnecessary energy consumption. Simplifying each of the stages of delivery and implementing appropriate standards create conditions for rational and sustainable management of resources.
Marking of products	Marking products with ecological or social labels is to inform the customer about the specificity of a given product, e.g. whether it is safe for health, ecological, biodegradable. Product labeling helps conscious consumers to easily recognize which product is ecological among those available on the market.
Employee programs	Corporate social responsibility means special care for the company's employees. CSR strategies may include employee development support programs, various competency training, integration programs, equalization projects and educational projects on sustainable living. As part of CSR, companies can implement projects to equalize opportunities in the career development of employees, support for disabled employees or people over 50. Many companies enable employees to participate in CSR activities through employee volunteering or by enabling them to engage in pro-social activities for a certain period of time, implementing flexible working hours, additional medical care, developing principles of culture and health and safety at work, social benefits.
Pro-ecological activities	Undertaking all initiatives supporting the natural environment as part of the environmental policy. Rational management of natural resources in the production of goods and services, the use of renewable energy sources and economical use of energy during production, waste segregation, implementation of modern ecological production processes, reduction of pollutant emissions and greenhouse gases.

Table 8 (cont.)

1	2
Activities for the local community	As part of corporate social responsibility, companies can implement pro-social projects at the local level, cooperating with the local community, non-governmental organizations and local social organizations, engaging in local investments for the benefit of society. Activities include supporting local institutions, solving local social problems, supporting children and young people, local ecological activities or assistance in local investments.

Source: Own study based on: <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/hasla-encyklopedii/spoleczna-odpowiedzialnosc-biznesu-csr/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

It is the combination of CSR activities with marketing that can serve the natural environment and counteract many negative social phenomena. In the marketing context, the CSR concept emphasizes activities aimed at the welfare of consumers, their fair and equal treatment, respecting consumer rights, reliable information and advertising ethics. Through marketing activities, companies educate consumers about the necessity to use products that are ecological, can be easily recycled, the production of which does not require too much use of raw materials and enables rational energy management.

3. Cause-related marketing and building the company's image on the market and co-creating value with the customers

In the context of the changes taking place in the world, international entrepreneurs play a special role, because they, as producers and service providers, have a significant impact on the environment. More and more companies, when developing strategies of action, determine their own actions in the field of corporate social responsibility.

Planning marketing strategies in a manner responsible for sustainable development is becoming a challenge for many companies. An example would be socially engaged marketing. Socially involved marketing, cause-related marketing (CRM) corresponds to both the interests of the company and the interests of society.

As noted by P. Kotler,⁸ the idea of social marketing assumes such activities of enterprises that are oriented at meeting the needs of consumers and market

8 P. Kotler, *Marketing*, Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, Poznań 2015.

customers while increasing the welfare of society, taking into account all ethical principles. In addition to increasing the company's profit and meeting customer expectations, the goal of social marketing is to care for the social interest. Social marketing includes a number of activities promoting positive pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes, including using a social campaign and social advertising. Social marketing conducted by companies takes into account, apart from the company's interests, the interests of non-governmental organizations that are responsible for solving various social problems. The company's openness to all pro-social activities and inviting social organizations and other external stakeholders to consultations in the field of consultations on implemented projects is welcomed in the eyes of an increasing number of informed consumers, and it undoubtedly improves the company's image on the market. Obviously, this also translates into increased interest on the part of investors. Large business organizations pay increasing attention to whether the company operates in a transparent and socially responsible manner.⁹

Well-designed social marketing activities can result in business benefits in the form of acquiring new clients and contractors. Companies engaging in CSR activities benefit also in the eyes of conscious consumers, for whom the environment and helping others are important. CSR activities may also turn out to be the key to building lasting and long-term relationships with clients based on trust and the pursuit of common goals. Often, conscious clients want to contribute to pro-social and pro-environmental activities. By buying pro-ecological products or products where part of the income is intended to help people in a difficult life situation, on the one hand, consumers satisfy their own needs of help and in providing support to other people and not being passive in the face of problems arising in the world, on the other hand, they pursue the other company's marketing goals, such as sales growth.

To sum up, cause-related marketing (CRM) can be defined as any commercial and marketing activities of enterprises that combine their own marketing goals with activities supporting combating social problems. Cause-related marketing enables the co-creation of value with external stakeholders of the company. By using the products or services offered by the company, customers indirectly help in the fight against the problematic social phenomenon, co-creating added value together with the company. Consumers co-create value with the enterprise by buying products and using the services of a pro-social company. They also increase its profits and thus the reach and position on the market, enable the implementation of further social projects, indirectly financing them, and promote their attitude towards environmental protection or sustainable development

9 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/hasla-encyklopedii/spoleczna-odpowiedzialnosc-biznesu-csr/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

activities. Customers can participate in the co-creation of marketing and social values with the company by choosing ecological and proven products, as well as by engaging in social advertising by recommending products and services to others directly or via media, e.g. social networks.

All this translates, in the long term, into increased sales, better sales profitability, increased social awareness among employees and greater motivation to implement further projects.¹⁰

Social marketing combines the activities of entrepreneurs, consumers and social organizations to achieve a common goal. Although large international companies responded first to the UN appeal of 1983, CSR strategies, due to the benefits of their implementation, are also becoming increasingly popular among smaller entrepreneurs.

4. CSR strategies implemented by IKEA and examples of best practices of using CSR in their marketing management

IKEA is an example of a large international company that by combining CSR strategies and implementing pro-ecological and pro-social ones at the international and local level has become recognizable all over the world and has achieved incredible market success.

IKEA is one of the largest companies in the furniture industry. The company sells and produces furniture and decorations for interior design. All companies that make up the IKEA group are owned by the Dutch INGKA Holding concern, the owner of these companies is the Stichting INGKA foundation. The company was founded by Ingvar Kamprad in 1943.¹¹ At the beginning, the company dealt mainly with the sale of pencils, wallets, picture frames, watches. In 1950, IKEA introduced furniture to its offer, which was produced by local manufacturers. In 1951, Ingvar Kamprad presented the catalog, which was initially used for mail orders, but in later years became the most important source of inspiration and knowledge about IKEA products. In the same year, the founder of IKEA saw the potential to sell furniture on a larger scale and decided to focus on the production and distribution of cheaper furniture and recall the remaining products. In this way, the idea of the company's strategy was created and is known to this day. The

10 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/hasla-encyklopedii/spoleczna-odpowiedzialnosc-biznesu-csr/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

11 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/targicsr/targicsr2016/IKEA/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

company expanded the reach of its activities abroad in 1963. Then, the first store in Norway was opened, ten years later the first store outside Scandinavia was opened. In turn, the first IKEA store in Poland was opened in 1990 in Warsaw. Today, IKEA is the world's largest furniture retailer. Every year, this brand's stores are visited by millions of people around the world. The company has about 350 stores in 29 countries belonging to the IKEA Group and employs over 149,000 employees, which makes it a leader in the furniture industry.¹²

The company's vision is to create better conditions for everyday life for many people. The company's mission is focused on offering a wide selection of well-designed, useful products that are also affordable for the customer. The company's operations are based on values such as a sense of community, care for people and the planet, cost awareness, simplicity, searching for improvements and new solutions, unconventional thinking, giving and taking responsibility. While the company has historically focused on cost efficiency, its current projects are aimed at "creating a better everyday life for many people [...] and offering a wide range of home furnishings at low prices".¹³ IKEA's declared ambition is to take into account social and environmental aspects in its daily activities in order to "produce products that have a minimal impact on the environment and produce them in a socially responsible manner".¹⁴

IKEA products are characterized by a competitive price, relative simplicity, usability, high quality and high durability at the same time. The company aims to reduce production and transport costs by offering furniture for self-assembly, as well as the production of high-quality furniture, durability and interesting design while using ecological materials. The company also provides home furniture delivery and assembly, kitchen installation, product servicing, assistance in planning, arranging and dimensioning interiors. IKEA products and services are available both in stationary stores and online. In addition, IKEA has its own restaurants located in the store area, where you can taste Swedish cuisine.¹⁵ One of the company's goals is to build long-term relationships with customers. In addition, the company aims to increase the level of customer satisfaction, inter alia, by providing good quality products and services at low prices, and by constantly introducing interesting, innovative solutions and inspiration in interior design.

IKEA pays special attention to the so-called good business practice. Its aim is to care for the environment, support the development of the youngest, counteract hunger and poverty in the world, and increase people's living standards. All social

12 https://www.IKEA.com/ms/pl_PL/pdf/YS_2017/IKEA_YS_FY17_digital_FINAL_version.pdf (accessed: 12.06.2019).

13 <https://ikea.jobs.cz/en/vision-culture-and-values/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

14 F. Maon, A. Lindgreen, V. Swaen, *IKEA's Road to Corporate Social Responsibility*, European Retail Digest.

15 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/dobre-praktyki/IKEA-food/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

activities in which IKEA is involved result from the People & Planet Positive strategy, which focuses on activities in the field of combating climate change, social inequality and the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources. The People & Planet Positive strategy focuses on sustainable production using renewable raw materials and energy sources, sustainable supply chain management and optimization of sales processes. IKEA's ambition is that by 2030, 100 percent of the materials used are renewable and/or materials-derived.¹⁶ From 2020, IKEA has withdrawn all single-use products, and thanks to its sustainable approach, in 2019 it was possible to save over 47 million products by repackaging them and reselling through the Occasional Sales Departments in stores.¹⁷ Taking care of the natural environment, IKEA conducts activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase energy efficiency, an example of which may be the company's active participation in environmental events, such as the 2018 climate summit in Katowice. By 2020, they assumed to generate as much green energy as consumed by its shops, offices or other rooms. In 2019, IKEA financed photovoltaic installations for six schools in these towns, focusing on green energy, savings and environmental education. IKEA aims to educate people in the field of good practices, increase awareness of the need to counteract social and environmental threats, both at the local and global level. Acting locally, IKEA educates children and young people in the field of care for the environment, an example of which can be the organization of competitions such as the one in Poland, entitled "Sunny schools for a better city".¹⁸ Globally, IKEA has invested nearly 2.5 billion euros in the development of renewable energy sources (RES), including onshore and offshore wind and solar energy.¹⁹ Energy is also produced by wind farms belonging to the IKEA Group. Since 2016, there are 80 wind turbines operating on six farms in Poland. This allows for a reduction of CO₂ emissions by approximately 450,000 tons per year.²⁰ In addition, the company offers customers the option of electric vehicle charging. IKEA also enables people to lead a sustainable life at home, offering products that use energy-saving LED technology.²¹ Other activities in the field of sustainable development promoted by the company include minimizing waste, saving water and energy or growing plants and vegetables on their own, as well as increasing

16 <http://biuroprasowe.IKEA.pl/55344-IKEA-publikuje-raport-zrownowazonego-rozwoju-za-2018-r> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

17 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/aktualno%C5%9Bci/IKEA-publikuje-raport-made-in-poland/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

18 <http://www.outsourcingportal.eu/pl/IKEA-pozytywnie-dla-ludzi-i-planety> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

19 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/aktualno%C5%9Bci/IKEA-publikuje-raport-made-in-poland/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

20 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/aktualno%C5%9Bci/IKEA-publikuje-raport-made-in-poland/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

21 N. Witkowska, *IKEA opublikowała nowy Raport Zrównowazonego Rozwoju*, <http://raportcsr.pl/IKEA-opublikowala-nowy-raport-zrownowazonego-rozwoju/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

consumer awareness of the need to care for the natural environment.²² In its Food Waste Watcher program, IKEA strives to reduce food waste. The company also offers containers for longer storage of food.²³

It is also reflected in the positive image of the brand in the eyes of consumers, who increasingly pay attention to products whose production is based on the idea of sustainable development.²⁴ In line with the CSR strategy, the company uses natural plastics or recycled materials in the production of furniture. The company emphasizes this fact many times in numerous advertising campaigns and on its own website. In 2018, they reached the level of 60 percent of IKEA's range of products made of renewable materials, and 10 percent contained recycled material. In the same year, 100 percent cotton and 85 percent wood used by IKEA came from sustainable sources, certified by BCS and FSC.²⁵ It is worth noting that the largest supplier of wood products for IKEA is Poland, from which 32 percent of this raw material came in 2018. By purchasing IKEA products, customers are convinced that they are buying things that will provide them with comfort, safety, are good for the environment and can change their lives. Building such a brand image, the company uses elements directly related to the above-mentioned values in the displayed advertisements on the website of the online store and in the edited catalog. Taking care of the best possible relationship with customers, IKEA implements not only the above-mentioned social and development goals, but above all, their marketing goals. Undoubtedly, the company covers many countries today and is recognizable among many customers due to properly conducted marketing, combining CSR strategies with public relations activities.

The company's business model includes such assumptions as a closed business by 2030 and a climate neutral business by 2030. The model is based on taking control of strategic resources, in particular through the logistical coordination of a network of 1,500 suppliers in 50 (often developing and emerging) countries. These suppliers ignore middlemen and deliver goods directly to IKEA, which minimizes the seller's costs and allows IKEA to offer cheap furniture. In the perspective of the progressive degradation of the natural environment and destruction of forests, IKEA as a furniture company takes into account the issues of sustainable development, especially in its CSR policies.²⁶ Despite significant savings in the management of raw materials, IKEA products are made of good quality materials, which the company emphasizes many times during its promotional activities. The

22 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/targicsr/targicsr2016/IKEA/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

23 <https://publicrelations.pl/jak-IKEA-zapobiega-marnowaniu-zywnosci-csr/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

24 <https://www.pulshr.pl/csr/klienci-docenaja-idee-zrownowazonego-rozwoju-IKEA-umie-z-tego-korzystac,59792.html> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

25 <http://biurop prasowe.IKEA.pl/55344-IKEA-publikuje-raport-zrownowazonego-rozwoju-za-2018-r> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

26 <https://crb.savethechildren.se/business-practice/IKEA> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

company's products are intended for self-assembly by the customer (in accordance with the instructions attached to them). The company therefore engages the customer in the process of product development. In order to fully implement the circular economy model, the company presented nine principles of "Circular Design", according to which all new products will be designed so that they can be reused, repaired, processed or resold.²⁷

These CSR policies that IKEA has established for itself are derived from the dominant norms and institutional relationships common in the Scandinavian countries. Enterprises as well as other business and non-governmental organizations in the Scandinavian countries attach great importance to ethical values in the production processes of products, taking into account the protection of the climate, the environment and rational resource management. The pressure on the furniture company in terms of ecological activities is quite high, considering how important the profitability of the production of products is for the company, but it should be noted that the company operates mainly in developing countries. IKEA has come under scrutiny for child labor in Asia, working conditions in Eastern Europe and Asia, and timber from questionable forests in Indonesia and Russia. In the 1990s, the company's actions received much criticism because some of its sub-contractors in India and South-East Asia used child labor. In response, IKEA addressed the problem by developing a special code of conduct, as well as large-scale programs and initiatives in co-operation with organizations such as UNICEF and Save the Children. The Soft Toys Campaign aims to improve the education of the most disadvantaged children, while recognizing that education is one of the best investments for them. Save the Children programs focus on children from ethnic minorities and children with disabilities. Today it can be considered that IKEA is also one of the leaders in corporate activities for human rights and sustainable development. The company carries out various employee projects, at the same time building a friendly, safe and unbiased working environment and providing employees with a wide range of development and support opportunities.²⁸ The energy deficits projected in the coming years, combined with the drought and the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, require further actions to help prepare for these future threats. Ingka Group has joined the Green Recovery Alliance to implement even more effectively plans to support the return of the economy to the pre-coronavirus pandemic, categorically taking into account sustainable development priorities.²⁹ According to media reports, implementing the global assumptions of the "People & Planet Positive" strategy, companies belonging to the Ingka Group strive to provide help to local communities facing drought, energy crisis and the effects of the coronavirus

27 <http://www.outsourcingportal.eu/pl/IKEA-pozytywnie-dla-ludzi-i-planety> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

28 *Ibidem*.

29 <https://raportcsr.pl/zrownowazony-rozwoj-z-IKEA/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

pandemic. In Poland, IKEA allocated a budget of EUR 1 million to support that. First of all, support was provided to people from high-risk groups and people who help in the fight against the coronavirus epidemic. As part of the #Pomagamy Razem campaign, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Administration, IKEA supported the equipment of municipal quarantine centers, and together with the Ministry of State Assets, it provided over 2,000 equipment products for critical infrastructure facilities in Poland.³⁰ Assistance under the funds provided is carried out in the form of providing necessary products for the health service, municipalities creating quarantine centers (about 40 municipalities already covered by the aid) or non-governmental organizations, e.g. helping the homeless.³¹

5. CSR and marketing communication of IKEA

Proper marketing communication of the company with external stakeholders is the basis for the reliable implementation of the strategy and CSR models at a high level. Among CSR stakeholders there are not only ordinary consumers, but also other companies, various business suppliers and non-governmental organizations, who put pressure on the company to operate in an environmentally friendly and socially engaged manner. The stakeholder-oriented approach to CSR emphasizes that organizations exist in large networks of stakeholders, all of which make claims against the organization. Within the organization, managers must involve stakeholders in the decision-making process, convince them to support the corporate strategic course, and facilitate multilateral participation. When it comes to the impact of various external stakeholders on the development of IKEA's CSR policies, three elements can be seen: (1) the role of external stakeholders in developing socially and environmentally responsible business practices and codes of conduct, (2) the role of NGOs in implementing and enforcing agreements and codes of conduct in terms of CSR, and (3) a combination of reactive and proactive activities undertaken by IKEA.³²

External stakeholders play a key role in creating IKEA's CSR policy, such as the International Federation of Construction and Timber Workers (IFBWW). To learn about CSR development and to facilitate its CSR commitments, IKEA has established relationships with various NGOs. For example, since wood accounts for 70 percent of IKEA's raw materials, environmental issues related to forestry are

30 <http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/aktualno%C5%9Bci/IKEA-publikuje-raport-made-in-poland/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

31 *Ibidem*.

32 F. Maon, A. Lindgreen, V. Swaen, *op. cit.*

among the organization's main concerns, as evidenced by its certification efforts, planning operations and partnerships with Global Forest Watch, Greenpeace, a Swedish university and WWF.

IKEA's local purchasing departments monitor the implementation of their CSR agreements and codes of conduct (IKEA Way or "IWAY"), e.g. whether suppliers are complying with IKEA requirements, while its internal Compliance and Monitoring group tracks changes worldwide. Monitoring is verified by independent audit companies, which also play an advisory role in the implementation of codes of conduct. Third party verification is an important part of the internal audit process. At twice-yearly meetings, IKEA communicates the results of the IFBWW audit and, in an abbreviated form, to the wider public through its annual social and environmental reports. Independent organizations constantly evaluate and question the social and environmental measures implemented by IKEA.

As a result of these external pressures, IKEA has incorporated its CSR objectives more systematically into its management philosophy and business operations. For example, IKEA has decided to adapt in response to public demands from regulatory bodies (e.g. in Denmark and Germany), trade unions (e.g. IFBWW, FNV), media and NGOs (e.g. Greenpeace, Robin Wood, Save the Children. IKEA is also a member of various business networks including Business for Social Responsibility and Global Compact.

Before 2005, IKEA presented its position and its activities in the field of CSR using its stores, product catalogs and product packaging. The stores contained information on the conducted social marketing campaigns as well as the so-called green panels where customers could obtain information on good consumption practices. In later years, the main source of information on IKEA CSR activities became websites where you can find brochures, reports and codes of conduct on the company's CSR. Since 2004, IKEA has been publishing reports on its activities as part of social and environmental responsibility every year. Annual CSR reports and audits published on the company's website are the basis for the company's communication on CSR activities. Although trade unions and organizations are quite critical and skeptical about the ways in which IKEA communicates its CSR activities, customers generally perceive IKEA's reports positively.³³ NGOs or other organizations that have long-term cooperation with IKEA on social, socio-economic and environmental issues on a large scale and in a formal manner. This is due to the fact that they have some access to privileged information that is not available to the general public that positively perceives IKEA's obligations in the field of CSR and places their hope in the company's commitments. The company's marketing communication with local organizations is focused around local IKEA investments. Local authorities are usually open to cooperation with a company that creates new jobs. IKEA does not feel the need to advertise its own CSR activities.

33 *Ibidem*.

6. Conclusion

Nowadays, being a socially responsible organization seems to be a necessary criterion for achieving market success. With the emergence of concepts such as sustainable development and global business citizenship in recent times, pressures and demands from various stakeholders help to explain the key role of CSR in the development of a business. Social awareness of the need to care for the natural environment and the fight for human rights to a dignified life is growing. More and more aware customers pay attention to whether the products they buy, not only meet expectations, are safe for health, but also under what conditions they were produced and whether they are environmentally friendly.

The IKEA experience in the field of CSR presented in the article may be a signpost of activities in this area for other companies, serving as an example of developing consistent and transparent CSR strategies, as well as ways of conducting marketing communication with external stakeholders. The best CSR practices that contributed to the strengthening of marketing communication with customers were in the focus of interest of various IKEA stakeholder groups. They had a positive impact on the company's image and resulted in the growth of good business relations with consumers and business partners based on the will to achieve common goals and share common values. The long list of activities includes actions to protect children's rights, actions to protect the natural environment, implementation of innovative energy-saving production methods and distribution models, care for the health and safety of employees, activities for a more sustainable everyday life of people, investing in achieving energy independence and sourcing raw materials from sustainable sources and effective waste management, activities for the benefit of the local community as well as cyclical informing the society about the implementation of activities by publishing reports in CSR.³⁴

References

- Fabryka Komunikacji Społecznej, *Cause Related Marketing: wprowadzenie i definicje*, http://marketingspoleczny.pl/artukul.php?id_artukul=261 (accessed: 31.07.2016).
 Kotler P., *Marketing*, transl. M. Zawiślak, J. Środa, Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, Poznań 2015.
 Maon F., Lindgreen A., Swaen V., *IKEA's Road to Corporate Social Responsibility*, European Retail Digest.

³⁴ https://prowlly-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/landing_page_image/image/33261/raport_IKEA.pdf (accessed: 26.06.2019).

Szewczyk M., *Odpowiedzialny marketing, czyli marketing społecznie zaangażowany*, "Gospodarka w Praktyce i Teorii", vol. 47(2), pp. 77–88.

Witkowska N., *IKEA opublikowała nowy Raport Zrównoważonego Rozwoju*, <http://raportcsr.pl/IKEA-opublikowala-nowy-raport-zrownowazonego-rozwoju/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

Online sources

<http://biuroprasowe.IKEA.pl/55344-IKEA-publikuje-raport-zrownowazonego-rozwoju-za-2018-r> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/aktualno%C5%9Bci/IKEA-publikuje-raport-made-in-poland/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/dobre-praktyki/IKEA-food/> (accessed: 26.06.2019).

<http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/hasla-encyklopedii/spoleczna-odpowiedzialnosc-biznesu-csr/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/targicsr/targicsr2016/IKEA/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<http://www.outsourcingportal.eu/pl/IKEA-pozytywnie-dla-ludzi-i-planety> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://crb.savethechildren.se/business-practice/IKEA> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://ikea.jobs.cz/en/vision-culture-and-values/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szczyt_Ziemi_2002 (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://poradnikprzedsiębiorcy.pl/-csr-wplyw-spoecznej-odpowiedzialnosc-biznesu-na-rozwoj-przedsiębiorstwa> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://publicrelations.pl/jak-IKEA-zapobiega-marnowaniu-zywnosci-csr/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://raportcsr.pl/zrownowazony-rozwoj-z-IKEA/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://www.ekologia.pl/wiedza/slowniki/leksykon-ekologii-i-ochrony-srodowiska/zrownowazony-rozwoj> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

https://www.IKEA.com/ms/pl_PL/pdf/YS_2017/IKEA_YS_FY17_digital_FINAL_version.pdf (access: 12.06.2019).

<https://www.karierawfinansach.pl/baza-wiedzy/slownik-pojec/csr-co-to-znaczy-csr> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://www.pulshr.pl/csr/klienci-doceniaja-idee-zrownowazonego-rozwoju-IKEA-umie-z-tego-korzystac,59792.html> (accessed: 12.06.2019).

<https://www.unesco.pl/rio-20/> (accessed: 12.06.2019).