

# Launching the Second MAP CSR Leadership Challenge

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In today's changing business landscape, where sustainability is as much a requirement as it is a goal, management excellence is no longer defined by organizational performance alone. Rather, it is the combined result of a company's commitment to three important areas: good governance, environmental sustainability, and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Of the three, CSR is probably the most misunderstood by Philippine companies. Unfortunately, I have observed that many companies view CSR as a mere synonym for corporate giving. Corporate giving, of course, is not necessarily a bad thing. CSR, however, goes beyond that.

## Business Model

For a CSR program to be truly meaningful, it has to incorporate the tenets of good governance and sustainability into a company's business model. In this manner, CSR becomes a built-in mechanism that ensures an organization's commitment to the so-called triple bottom line – the financial, environmental and social accountabilities of an organization. CSR binds an organization to the highest principles of integrity and ethics.

I am thus very encouraged by the efforts of the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) to actively promote sustainable CSR models among Filipino companies. In keeping with its aspiration to create a culture of integrity and accountability in the Philippines, MAP is advocating the use of CSR as the model by which Filipino organizations may embrace the principles of integrity and good governance.

To promote and recognize exemplary CSR programs, MAP is holding the CSR Leadership Challenge, a program that aims to cast the spotlight on organizations whose CSR policies, programs, and practices deserve to be emulated.

The CSR Leadership Challenge aims to promote CSR as an important and integral part of good management practice, while at the same time recognizing those organizations that exemplify true corporate citizenship.



## Recognition

It also aims to inspire other companies that share the same ideals and objectives, that they may continue to find new ways to upgrade CSR practices in the Philippines. By going beyond corporate compliance, transparency, and accountability, companies that are equally involved in addressing social and environmental issues confronting the Philippines can be acknowledged.

MAP will give recognition to those companies which successfully integrate CSR into their businesses, and are able to bring their social vision into their internal management systems and programs, starting with their corporate mission and vision, overall corporate strategy, as well as operations. There will also be special awards for companies with exemplary CSR programs in the fields of education, enterprise development, environment and sustainable development, health, and integrated rural area development.

To show the strategic value of CSR to a company's operation, the stories of the winners and participants will be turned into case studies to be used by the Ateneo Graduate School of Businesses. This, I believe, is a good way to perpetuate and learn from their example, while at the same time exploring new models that can work well in the Philippine setting.

As a communication professional, I always stress that communications is an important component of a successful CSR program even if at the outset, it may not seem to be apparent.

#### Ultimate Proof

When I say communications, I am not talking about media write-ups, but rather, continuing and live conversations with stakeholders within and outside the organization. Internal communications is particularly important for CSR to truly become part of an organization's DNA. Messages should be cascaded throughout the organization – from the top level to the rank and file, for them to understand and embrace it. Moreover, this should be clearly stated, understood and communicated by everyone in the organization.

For me, the ultimate proof that the company truly lives by its CSR program is when it is embodied in its business agenda, performance evaluation, budget allocation, human resource programs, as well as in its communications and outreach programs.

Indeed, a meaningful and true CSR program is not an ad-hoc or one-off project that is largely dependent on a company's desire and ability to support it. Rather, it is embedded in the company's thinking and operations, and is rooted in its overall strategy and driven by its business goals. It entails strategic thinking and planning and the commitment of the leaders of a company. Companies with true CSR programs are thought leaders and innovators that deserve to be recognized, that they may be emulated by others.

For more information on the MAP CSR Leadership Challenge, visit [www.csrleadershipchallenge.ph](http://www.csrleadershipchallenge.ph)

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