

THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SME

In Poland at the end of 2015 in the SME sector was registered 99.89% of all entities. The employment in this group was 5.8 million, which was 68.9% of the total workforce. Compared to the EU sector SME in Poland is really similar share in number of enterprises and number of persons employed [SBA]. That is the reason that over the past several years, highly developed countries as well as emerging economies, having a different political, social and cultural structure, have been devoting much attention to micro, small and medium enterprises (SME). This sector plays a crucial role in the national economies; it is a driving force of business, growth, innovation and competitiveness. One key issue would be to accelerate their development.

Further development of micro, small and medium enterprises depend largely on their financial situation and from information which they collect. J. Penc [Penc, 1994] indicates that a well-taken decision is made up of 80% of the information, 10% of inspiration (creativity) and 10% intuition of manager.

The American Accounting Association (AAA) defined accounting as: "the process of identifying, measuring and communicating economic information to permit informed judgment and decision by users of the information". The definition of 1953 given by American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), indicates that: "Accounting is a service activity. Its function is to provide quantitative information, primarily financial in nature, about economic entities that is intended to be useful in making economic decisions, in making reasoned choices among alternative courses of action" [Accounting].

The accounting system is made it possible because provides the basis of documentation and information to account management from the owner and the enterprise from the society [Świdorska, 2001]. Accounting serves needs of the internal and external users [Gierusz, Martyniuk, 2009], shown in table 1.

Table 1. Users of information delivered by the accounting system

Internal users	External users	
	Government agencies and local government	Other the entities from outside the company
- management of the company - managers the lower levels of management - supervisory board	- ministries and central offices - local government bodies - offices (chambers) tax and fiscal control	- customer - suppliers - creditor and lenders - investors - insurance

- the audit committee of the company - the shareholders' meeting of joint stock company	- national statistics offices - social insurance - other bodies of state control	- trade unions - governmental organizations
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Source: own description based on [Sawicki, 2008].

From the point of view of the information needs of external users, accounting is focused on the preparing of reports mandatory, regulated by law. For internal recipients, preparing reports and information for income tax purposes, social security and tax on goods and services tax, have essentially a secondary nature in relation to the obligation to create in the enterprise useful for the purposes of management information system [Karmańska, 2009]. This system should be able to supply of the complete information to each level of management, contain the selected information at the right time and in such a way that decisions are based on the best available within a reasonable cost to obtain them [Nowak, 2000]. For internal users, it is very important to generate information which will be subjected to appropriate processing constitute a basis for making management decisions. Managers need information and tools to assist with the detection of disturbing signals, tools to help assess current financial condition, techniques to facilitate working capital requirements, and simple procedures for diagnosing the vulnerabilities of their businesses [Jaworski, 2012; Jaworski, 2012a; Martyniuk-Kwiatkowska, 2009].

This is related to the aims that businesses are facing [Stepień, 2008]: maximizing the wealth of owners and ensure the existence of the company. The first group includes: maximizing profit, maximizing the value of the company, maintaining profitability, reduce costs, increasing market share, growth size of the company, development of the company, increasing innovation.

The second group can be distinguished: maintaining liquidity, maintain solvency, avoiding financial problems and bankruptcy. Generally, all of them are connected with the financial stability of the company, which is a necessary condition which allows to undertake activities directed at the pursuit of continuous development and finally financial success. The company with financial stability operates without interruption and is capable of withstanding shocks [Gorczyńska, 2013]. The company and owners not only to fulfill their functions and achieve aims, but they want much more and they are ready for implementing sustainable development. In long period, profit are appeared, not only financially but also in the form of better staffing, new customers or a greater business competitiveness [PARP].

The company which is striving for sustainable development has the opportunity to meet the needs of both internal and external stakeholders.

According to Robert W. Lane, the Chairman and CEO of Deere & Company: “If you don’t have honesty and integrity, you won’t be able to develop effective relationships with any of your stakeholders” [Stakeholders].

Sustainable development is identified with corporate social responsibility (CSR), which is a management strategy, according to enterprises in their activities take into account voluntarily the interests of social, environmental and relationships with various groups of stakeholders, particularly employees. This means investing in human resources, the environment, the relationship with

the surroundings of the company and information about these activities, which contribute to the competitiveness of enterprises and create conditions for sustainable social and economic development [Kaputa, 2013].

According to point 21 in Green Paper: “Being socially responsible means not only fulfilling legal expectations, but also going beyond compliance and investing "more" into human capital, the environment and the relations with stakeholders. The experience with investment in environmentally responsible technologies and business practice suggests that going beyond legal compliance can contribute to a company's competitiveness. Going beyond basic legal obligations in the social area, e.g. training, working conditions, management-employee relations, can also have a direct impact on productivity. It opens a way of managing change and of reconciling social development with improved competitiveness” [Green Paper].

Over recent years, the consumer's way of looking at products and services has changed.

In addition to quality and price, the choice of brand is also driven by the brand image. The awareness of their rights and responsibilities also increased. This translates into their expectations. This new trend is confirmed by the latest CSR 2016 Barometer, conducted by CSR Consulting and Maison&Partners [CSR, 2016]. According to them in Poland, 72% consumers declare that CSR activities inspire their positive feelings towards companies. It is about 10 point percentages more than two years ago. Almost 34% believes that CSR is an innovative approach to business development that actually benefits the community and the company. 30% of consumers believe that this is the way to communicate and build the image of companies, and another 20% recognizes such actions as a necessity for companies wishing to compete. Only 16% considers these actions hypocritical

on the part of companies that are solely committed to maximizing profits.

Involving stakeholders in the dialogue, the company can gain an enormous amount of valuable information. The key aspects of the business also contribute to understanding the strengths and areas for improvement from the perspective of recipients. This makes it easier to plan activities that will help you to better manage the impact of your business on your environment and management within company.

In 1999, Institute of Social and Ethical AccountAbility has introduced the AA1000 Standard

to ensure a proper and effective implementation of the dialogue process with stakeholders [Zarządzanie]. Three main principles are below [AA1000]:

- inclusivity – company knows its stakeholders, their needs and expectations; stakeholders should be incorporated into the company,

- materiality – identify issues that are relevant to the company and its stakeholders,

- responsiveness – the organization should respond to issues raised by its stakeholders.

The AA1000 Standard presents a dialogue scheme in four steps [Zarządzanie]:

- planning – identifying topics for dialogue, impact of stakeholder's groups,

- preparation – determining the entire process and details of stakeholder's meetings which will be conducted,

- implementation – conducting meetings of stakeholder, preparing a report with stakeholder's expectations, preparing a report with company's commitments,

- action, evaluation – preparing a plan to respond to expectations of stakeholders and monitor compliance and communication.

According international standards, CSR in company is becoming an increasing value in developing dialogue with their stakeholders on whole world [Raport].

In the competitive environment, enterprises have to be ready to create programs aimed at local communities, employees and other stakeholders. Using CSR increasingly important way of achieving profit and the accompanying elements development. Therefore such important is education and raising awareness of corporate social responsibility, since its absence, next to the complexity of the subject, is considered a major obstacle in the implementation of CSR. The stakeholders play a crucial role because their attitude and requirements faced by businesses can influence their actions and their willingness to implement CSR by companies.

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