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NAVIGATING THE CROSSROADS OF CRITICISM: BUDBEE'S CSR JOURNEY IN LAST-MILE LOGISTICS

Introduction

My exploration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was initiated through my assignment as a student and while doing so, I have realized that CSR is not exactly one amongst those buzzwords. It reflects its duty to operate ethically in terms of sociological motives and with respect for the environment. The readings this week help define that position, explaining CSR is a voluntary initiative of an organization to and engage in some kind of business activity which will also benefit the society while they run their operations ethically So as per now we know PESTLE factors have significant implications regarding how businesses should strategize around these issues is a “company's sense of responsibility toward the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates” (*Montgomery, 2024*). Businesses are incentivized to evaluate their own contributions to the world, not only from an economic sense but also any broader impact they may have socially and environmentally. Organizations which promote CSR, also known as corporate citizenship, can benefit by enhancing positive impacts on the environment and by reducing negative impacts caused from its operation. Organizations carry out these

programs and initiatives to contribute something positive towards their communities as well the environment they exist in while conducting business operations ethically and sustainably (*Fernando, 2024*). With this understanding, I chose to examine Budbee a Swedish logistics company that has faced significant public scrutiny.

Founded in 2015 Budbee has swiftly become a prominent participant in the last-mile delivery business. The firm strives to establish the most sustainable and customer-centric last-mile delivery service globally. Budbee delivers effective eco-friendly delivery solutions for e-commerce enterprises concentrating on metropolitan regions across Northern Europe (*Magazine, 2021*). Despite its ambitious goals Budbee has encountered criticism from various stakeholders challenging the company to align its practices more closely with its stated mission.

Environmental activists constitute a primary stakeholder group voicing concerns about Budbee's operations. These groups have criticized the company for contributing to urban air pollution and carbon emissions. While Budbee promotes its use of electric vehicles and bicycles for deliveries activists argue that the company's rapid growth has increased overall traffic and emissions in city centers. They claim the convenience of fast deliveries comes at an environmental cost contradicting Budbee's sustainability claims.

Labor unions represent another critical stakeholder group raising issues with Budbee's business model. The company relies heavily on gig economy workers sparking debates about job security, fair wages and workers' rights. Unions argue that flexible work arrangements often result in precarious employment conditions and a lack of benefits for delivery personnel. They contend Budbee's success rests on a workforce that doesn't enjoy the protections of traditional employment.

Local communities, particularly residents in dense urban areas have also expressed concerns. The increase in delivery vehicles even if electric has led to complaints about traffic congestion and noise pollution. Some neighborhood associations report that the constant flow of deliveries disrupts local life and poses safety risks, especially in residential areas not designed for high-volume traffic.

Budbee has taken several steps to address stakeholder concerns and reinforce its commitment to CSR. To tackle environmental issues the company has accelerated its transition to a fully electric vehicle fleet and invested in advanced route optimization technology to reduce unnecessary mileage. Budbee has also partnered with urban planners to establish more efficient delivery hubs to decrease inner-city traffic (*Magazine, 2021*).

Addressing labor practices Budbee has initiated dialogue with workers' representatives to explore ways to improve conditions for its gig workers. The company introduced a benefits package for regular contractors and is piloting a program offering pathways to permanent employment for long-term delivery partners. While these measures haven't fully satisfied union demands they represent progress in addressing the most pressing concerns.

To mitigate community impact Budbee launched a "Silent Delivery" initiative using noise-reducing equipment and adjusting delivery times to minimize disturbances in residential areas. The company has also engaged in community outreach programs sponsoring local events and seeking input from residents on how to improve their service while reducing negative impacts. They have also started to put their boxes in departmental store in the vicinity of such neighborhoods and packets are all delivered to the box with unique codes for customers to open and get their parcels at their own convenience.

These replies illustrate Budbee's acknowledgment of stakeholder engagement's relevance in creating its CSR approach. By constantly addressing complaints and adjusting its procedures the firm seeks to match its operations more closely with its declared objective of sustainability and customer-centricity.

Budbee's story demonstrates that the route to effective CSR frequently offers hurdles notably for fast developing firms in innovative sectors. The criticisms Budbee has faced highlight the complex interplay between business growth environmental sustainability labor rights and community well-being. While the company's replies demonstrate a commitment to deal with these challenges the effectiveness of their initiatives will only become clear over time.

This case study illustrates the changing nature of CSR in today's corporate landscape. Companies like Budbee must consistently modify their methods to satisfy shifting stakeholder expectations and social demands. As future company leaders, we must learn from these instances knowing that genuine corporate responsibility demands constant dedication creativity and readiness to participate in open communication with all stakeholders.

Conclusion

Budbee's experience highlights the obstacles and possibilities inherent in implementing CSR in a fast-paced competitive business. While the corporation has taken measures to address critiques the key test will be its long-term ability to reconcile expansion with good operations. As the logistics sector evolves Budbee's response to these challenges may set a precedent for how companies navigate the complex landscape of corporate social responsibility in the age of e-commerce and urban delivery.

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