
News and Information

For Immediate Release

January 25, 2010

Contact:

Marcia McDougall, Hewitt Associates, (416) 227-5713, marcia.mcdougall@hewitt.com

Robyn Hall, Canadian Business for Social Responsibility, (416) 703-7435, robyn@cbsr.ca

Research from Best Employers in Canada Study Builds Business Case for Investment in Corporate Social Responsibility

Hewitt and CCSR Data Establishes Strong Relationship between Employee Engagement and Views on CSR

TORONTO—Results from the 2010 Best Employers in Canada study indicate that executives of Canadian employers believe the return on investment in socially and environmentally responsible practices justifies the expenditure. Their instincts are correct: there is a strong correlation between employee engagement and employee views of their employers' record on corporate social responsibility.

Hewitt Associates, the global human resources consulting and outsourcing company that conducts the Best Employers in Canada study each year, partnered with Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (CCSR) to understand the relationships between CSR perceptions, engagement and other work environment factors. Between the Best Employers in Canada study and the companion Best Small & Medium Employers in Canada study for smaller organizations, Hewitt and CCSR gathered opinions from over 100,000 employees and 2,000 leaders at more than 230 workplaces.

“This is the first large-scale quantitative Canadian study to investigate the relationship between employee engagement and perceptions of corporate social responsibility,” said Neil Crawford, Hewitt’s leader of the Best Employers in Canada study. “The findings demonstrate that organizations with high employee engagement have a higher degree of readiness to focus on CSR as a strategy to improve overall organizational performance and better meet the needs of employees and external stakeholders. “

When executives were asked what they viewed as the potential benefits of investing in or pursuing socially and environmentally responsible practices, their top three responses were a positive organizational reputation, higher or sustained employee engagement, and eliminating waste/reducing their impact on the environment. Eighty-six per cent of employees at organizations

with high engagement agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they worked for an employer that was socially and environmentally responsible. That figure was 71 per cent at employers with moderate engagement and only 60 per cent at those with low engagement.

The most frequently implemented CSR initiatives for Canadian employers are:

- Community investment - fundraising and sponsorships
- Waste reduction – recycling, reduced usage
- Business travel reduction – use of videoconferencing or teleconferencing
- Responsible purchasing – equipment and supplies

CSR initiatives least frequently employed include:

- Offsetting business travel – carbon offsets
- Subsidizing low carbon travel - public transit or parking for alternative fuels vehicles

“Not only do the results establish the strong connection between CSR and employee engagement, we’ve learned that declining employee perceptions of CSR within an organization can be a significant threat to engagement for over a third of organizations,” said Barb Steele, Director of Membership, CBSR. “Combined initiatives to sustain both employee engagement and support CSR transformation will likely yield a better return on investment than individual non-coordinated efforts.”

Results from the Hewitt-CBSR research will be discussed in greater detail in a Webcast on January 27, 2010. To register for the Webcast or for more information, contact Marcia McDougall, Hewitt Associates, tel.: 416-227-5713, email: marcia.mcdougall@hewitt.com.

About Hewitt Associates

Hewitt Associates (NYSE: HEW) provides leading organizations around the world with expert human resources consulting and outsourcing solutions to help them anticipate and solve their most complex benefits, talent, and related financial challenges. Hewitt consults with companies to design and implement a wide range of human resources, retirement, investment management, health management, compensation, and talent management strategies. As a leading outsourcing provider, Hewitt administers health care, retirement, payroll, and other HR programs to millions of employees, their families, and retirees. With a history of exceptional client service since 1940, Hewitt has offices in 33 countries, including Canadian offices in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Regina, and employs approximately 23,000 associates who are helping make the world a better place to work. For more information, please visit www.hewitt.com/canada.

About CBSR

Founded in 1995, CBSR is a business-led, non-profit CSR consultancy and peer-to-peer learning organization that provides its members with candid counsel and customized advisory services as they formulate powerful business decisions that improve performance and contribute to a better world. For more information please visit www.cbsr.ca.

###