



## *Global Challenges in Responsible Business*


Corporate responsibility has gone global. It has secured the attention of business leaders, governments and NGOs to an unprecedented extent. Increasingly, it is argued that business must play a constructive role in addressing massive global challenges. Business is not responsible for causing most of the problems associated with, for example, extreme poverty and hunger, child mortality and HIV/AIDS. However, it is often claimed that business has a responsibility to help ameliorate many of these problems and, indeed, it may be the only institution capable of effectively addressing some of them. *Global Challenges in Responsible Business* addresses the implications for business of corporate responsibility in the context of globalization and the social and environmental problems we face today. Featuring research from Europe, North America, Asia and Africa, it focuses on three major themes: embedding corporate responsibility, corporate responsibility and marketing, and corporate responsibility in developing countries.

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# Global Challenges in Responsible Business

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## Foreword

With the political and media spotlight falling on climate change, sustainability, the ethics of business leaders (and those in the financial services preceding the recession) as well as the other global problems in the under-developed world of poverty, HIV, etc., the business world is beginning to see the necessity of being more socially and ecologically responsible. This is not just about being 'green', but about exploring the full range of socially responsible behaviours. As Theodore Zeldin suggested in his book *An Intimate History of Humanity*: 'The Green Movement could not become a major political force so long as it concerned itself primarily with natural resources rather than with the full range of human desires. Its setbacks are yet another example of idealism being unable to get off the ground because it has not looked broadly enough at human aspirations in their entirety'.<sup>1</sup> This book, edited by Craig Smith and his colleagues, provides the research base to this growing and increasingly important field. They focus on three key issues of corporate responsibility: embedding corporate responsibility, marketing and corporate responsibility and corporate responsibility and developing countries. Their contributors are comprised of some of the leading international scholars in the field from eight different countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, UK and the United States. This volume is based on state of the art research, which illustrates the importance of corporate responsibility, not only in terms of the ethical and environmental challenges but also because of their business imperative. More and more research is indicating that organizations who behave more responsibly, positively impact their bottom line.<sup>2</sup>

This book also supports Malcolm Gladwell's contention, in his book *The Tipping Point*, that change can make a difference: 'look at the world around you. It may seem like an immovable, implacable place. It is not. With the slightest push –in the right place– it can be tipped'.<sup>3</sup> This is the challenge that confronts all businesses, big

and small, and this book provides the evidence of what is possible and achievable. We hope that you will find this book useful in your scholarship, as well as in any change programmes you are considering in your organization, as we all move into a post-recession period of greater social and environmental responsibility.

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> T. Zeldin, *An Intimate History of Humanity* (London: Vintage, 1998).
- <sup>2</sup> E. Bichard and C.L. Cooper, *Positively Responsible: How Business Can Save the Planet* (Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 2008).
- <sup>3</sup> M. Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (London: Abacus, 2000).