



ABBOTT:

Embedding global citizenship strategy into business strategy

Overview

Founded in 1888 by Chicago physician Dr. Wallace C. Abbott, Abbott has emerged as one of the world’s most diverse healthcare companies. The company has four primary businesses—pharmaceuticals, medical devices, diagnostics, and nutrition products. A critical component of Abbott’s approach to citizenship is the company’s efforts to integrate values-based, sustainable decision making throughout all levels of the organization.

“Abbott has developed a strategic approach to proactively understand, address, and manage the social, environmental, and economic impact of our company—and integrate this thinking into day-to-day operations,” said Tracey Noe, senior director, global citizenship and policy. Abbott’s Global Citizenship Working Group plays an important role helping to integrate Abbott’s global citizenship strategy throughout the company. The working group also informs the company’s citizenship strategy by listening to stakeholders, reporting on progress and performance, and initiating programs that address key societal needs while delivering business value.

Social Responsibility Challenge

Abbott has a long history of leadership in social responsibility and environmental sustainability—and the Public Policy Committee of Abbott’s Board of Directors has reviewed the company’s policies and practices in these areas for decades. Responsibility for advancing the citizenship agenda historically was handled through a decentralized model, with the company’s office of ethics and compliance, environmental health and safety organization, and its non-profit philanthropic fund handling different elements of reporting. However, as stakeholders demand increasingly rigorous measurement systems to track citizenship performance, Abbott has continuously worked to improve its internal processes and procedures to ensure that citizenship strategy is fully embedded in its business strategy.

Solutions

When the company released its first global citizenship report in 2001, the process was almost entirely manual—collecting data from multiple operating units, using several different software programs. “We knew we had to improve and institutionalize the process for tracking and reporting on sustainability programs,” Noe said. The company

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Company name: Abbott
Location: Chicago, Illinois
Web site: www.abbott.com
Founded: 1888
Scope: Global
Employees: Approximately 83,000



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developed a Global Citizenship Working Group representing a broad range of departments and functions to integrate its citizenship programs, develop consistent metrics, and ensure collaboration.

Since then, Abbott has continuously updated the working group’s membership to better represent the breadth and scope of its diverse global business, while breaking down internal silos. Members now include representatives from corporate strategy, corporate purchasing, global EHS, office of ethics and compliance, quality and regulatory affairs, human resources, investor relations, government affairs, and commercial operations.

Measurement

As a result of the Global Citizenship Working Group, Abbott’s citizenship strategy is more effectively integrated across the company. Abbott leaders are accountable for pushing the company’s values deep into the organization, where they can influence the day-to-day decisions that are made across the company and around the world. The company’s citizenship efforts are recognized as world class. The Dow Jones Sustainability Index has listed Abbott among the top 10 percent of the 2,500 largest companies worldwide for five consecutive years.

Other SR Involvement

The Global Citizenship Working Group also has helped to refine Abbott’s citizenship approach in four key areas: advancing medical innovation; enhancing access to healthcare; protecting patients and consumers by promoting quality and safety in its operations; and safeguarding the environment.

