



For immediate release

Only 2 sustainable development reports published by CAC 40 companies make staff training and development a central focus

September 18, 2007 – Paris, FRANCE – Novethic and Des Enjeux et Des Hommes today present the findings of a survey on the role of employee engagement in the sustainable development communications of companies included in the CAC 40 index. The survey's main conclusions suggest that businesses do not yet consider staff awareness and training to be a major stake in their CSR strategy.

For more than half of the CAC 40 companies, staff training and awareness in the area of sustainable development is not one of the stated objectives

At a time when CAC 40 companies are communicating more extensively on their CSR strategy, staff training does not emerge as a strategic issue. Only **11 CEOs** of CAC 40 companies mention the importance of employee engagement in their editorial statement, **8 companies** have set formal objectives for integrating sustainable development values into their corporate culture and practices, and **22 do not refer to any objective** related to raising staff awareness and providing training as one of their priorities for the year

Limited progress

While there are still **7 companies that provide no information** on their in-house initiatives, this is an improvement over last year (16). Out of the 40 reports reviewed, 22 refer to "one-off" or ad hoc initiatives on a theme related to CSR (environmental health and safety, compliance, responsible procurement, eco-design, etc.) or a particular population group (the sustainable development network, purchasing staff, managers, etc.), which is 7 more than was the case in 2005 reports. In terms of quality, although communications on staff training on the impacts that sustainable development strategies have on their business is improving, there is still major progress to be made. Just over one-fourth of the companies covered in the survey received a score that was above average on their sustainable development communications. And **only two** companies make this aspect a central focus.

Actions of limited scope and not much quantitative data

When specific initiatives are mentioned, they are usually of limited scope, either geographically (limited to employees in France), in terms of the intended target (a particular department or production unit), or in terms of the duration of the program (limited to the annual sustainable development week). **Only two companies present programs for all staff.** In many cases, they cover just a few CSR topics, with the environment, ethics and diversity being the most oft-cited themes in 2006 reports. 90% of the data disclosed is qualitative. There are practically no figures given on the duration of training, the number of courses offered or the number of employees who receive such training. Some **21 companies provide no data at all.** Moreover, when training and awareness raising initiatives are mentioned, there is almost no data that can be used to assess the magnitude, the impact or the growth year-over-year of such programs.

Deploying sustainable development—a strategic challenge

CSR is gradually gaining hold in large business organizations, as attested to in sustainable development reporting. But this does not mean that the issues are well understood and that they have been appropriated by a majority of employees. More often than not, only decision-makers at the top levels and staff who are directly in charge of sustainable development have really understood the importance of the issue and the need for change in this area. For most other employees, particularly those on the operations side, CSR remains a fuzzy concept that is difficult to implement. The problem is that corporate commitments in this area will only be truly effective when CSR is firmly anchored in the professional practices and behaviors of each business line and function. Deployment is the key factor driving the credibility of a company's commitments to sustainable development.

About Novethic: A subsidiary of Caisse des Dépôts, Novethic is a leading center for research, information and expertise pertaining to SRI (socially responsible investment) and CSR (corporate social and environmental responsibility). Its web site, www.novethic.fr, is a comprehensive source of information for responsible economic actors.

About Des Enjeux et Des Hommes: A staff training, development and consulting firm specializing in mobilizing employees for the deployment of sustainable development policies in professional practices and attitudes.