

第 10 回 2024 年度英語ライティングコンテスト

【2024 年度テーマ】

*Corporations have responsibilities to a range of stakeholders besides their shareholders.
Consider an example of one or more organizations and explain who the stakeholders are
and to what extent the organization fulfils its social and other responsibilities.*

【2024 年度入賞者】

入 賞	学年	氏 名	入賞作品タイトル
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第 2 位	4 年	Jieun KIM (キム ジウン)	Tesla's Commitment to Profit and Purpose in the Sustainable Era
第 3 位	3 年	Saki SHIBATA (柴田 紗季)	The responsibility that companies have to entire society: Example of Ina Food Industry Co., Ltd.'s effort
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■講評

It is my great pleasure to offer my congratulations to the winners of the English Writing Contest. For this 10th edition, the theme was corporate responsibility and writers had to choose an organization and explain who its stakeholders were and evaluate how well the organization fulfilled its responsibilities to the stakeholders. It was intended to be a timely topic as public awareness is growing of the need for ethical organizations. But it was also a challenging one.

Students considered a wide range of organizations from high tech ones such as NVIDIA or TESLA, to the strongly scented LUSH, the ice-cream company Ben and Jerry's, Starbucks, and Ina Foods. Notably many of the company's chosen seem to have been picked for their high level of social responsibility. So, if there is one thing I would like to see more of in future contests it would be the ability to weigh up criticisms as well as gush over LUSH, as it were. That said, I was impressed with the overall standard of writing which is beginning to stretch the evaluative nature of the rubric used to score the papers.

Writing well in any language, let alone a foreign one, in my experience is never easy. I used to think I was alone in this respect and so was delighted to read the modest description of the experience of writing by the great Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami. Haruki Murakami, to my surprise, said that his ideas for what to write about and how best to express it do not rush out of him in a flow of inspiration, like water flowing out of a spring, as I had imagined. Instead, he used the metaphor of hacking into a rock to try to draw out a scarce resource. Moreover, he does not lead an exotic life but rather a simple, disciplined one that enables him to focus on writing, while keeping healthy by running. Strangely, I found this idea of struggling to find inspiration inspiring.

I mention this because using one's effort to make good use of scarce resources is connected to the writing contest theme of responsible approaches to running organizations but mainly because it is a reminder of the challenge of writing, even in one's own language. We live in an age where if I ask one of the AI bots to produce an essay for me, it will suck in some of the internet's vast resources and churn one out in a matter of minutes, if not seconds. It can be disheartening to see this and if there is one real danger of AI it is that it will discourage us from learning anything because we can find some technology to do it for us. This is clearly the wrong attitude. Whatever way we engage with technology we should be challenging ourselves to more skillfully express ourselves in writing and speaking as those of you who participated in the writing contest and won prizes have done. So, congratulations!

■入賞エッセイ

入賞者全4名のエッセイは、以下ページに公開しております。

Fulfilling Corporate Responsibilities LUSH's Approach to Stakeholder Capitalism

Heeseo YOON

Companies affect various stakeholders in addition to shareholders. Freeman and McVea (2001) highlighted that stakeholders play a significant role in a company's growth. Social problems can arise if a company ignores stakeholders and focuses only on shareholders' interests. For example, Mhlanga (2022) noted that shareholder-centered management overlooks social responsibility and causes income inequality and environmental issues. In response, the World Economic Forum (WEF) emphasized that companies should value stakeholder capitalism that considers various stakeholders. This paper explores how the cosmetics company LUSH fulfills its responsibilities to three key stakeholders: employees, suppliers, and the environment.

First, LUSH recognizes the importance of its employees as stakeholders and strongly emphasizes fostering a positive workplace culture. Bussy and Suprawan (2011) argued that employees are the most valuable stakeholders as they greatly contribute to a company's financial performance. In addition, Puri and Borok (2002) suggested that employees are essential for a company's long-term performance and that the company should meet its employees' expectations such as fairness, providing career development opportunities, and active communication. LUSH has applied numerous ways to meet this. To illustrate, LUSH employs employees of various nationalities from 34 countries (Deepanjana & Younsr, 2023). Moreover, according to the LUSH, the proportion of female employees in LUSH UK was 73.22%, which is unusual. In addition, based on a survey conducted by Ashton and Hansson (2011), workers at LUSH Sweden are aware of the organization's value through active communication with executives, which motivates the development of an individual's career. Furthermore, they mentioned that LUSH focuses on the growth of employees by planning work goals for the day, sharing work results during the day, and giving feedback through the 'Daily Chat-in and Out' culture before and after work. Thus, by fulfilling these responsibilities, LUSH improves worker satisfaction and the performance of the organization in the long term.

Second, LUSH fulfills its ethical responsibilities to the suppliers, one of its key stakeholders, by fostering trust and partnership. Suppliers are crucial stakeholders, accounting for up to 75% of the company's initial capital cost, and are directly linked to returns (Govindan, Shankar & Kannan, 2016). Suppliers seek trust and partnership, which companies must fulfill (Yang, Liu & Kholaf, 2022). Therefore, companies should build trust and protect suppliers' interests through transparent communication. Cowan (2015) noted LUSH fosters partnerships through the 'Sustainable LUSH Fund,' enabling communities that produce raw materials to grow. For instance, LUSH is getting cocoa from underdeveloped farms in Colombia (Dolficé, 2022). Collaborating with Colombia's peace

community, LUSH provided farmers with humidity measurement equipment and helped them earn income through education and expertise. Also, Gabbi, who works as a buyer in LUSH, mentioned that the buyer team reports on supply chain conditions and creates a transparent system through extensive communication and feedback (Quality World Magazine, 2015). As ethical practices differentiate brands and strengthen consumer loyalty (Samuel, 2024), protecting the supply chain's interests and sharing information honestly also benefit LUSH. Accordingly, LUSH is adopting a win-win strategy by actively supporting its suppliers.

Lastly, the environment is one of LUSH's main stakeholders, and the company has taken social responsibility through its environmental protection policies. Recently, environmental pollution has become a serious issue. Greenhouse gas emissions have steadily increased over the past decade, with carbon dioxide emissions rising by 54% in 2019 compared to 1990 (Sophie & Clea, 2023). Consequently, Schwab (2021) stressed that companies must recognize the environment as an important stakeholder and take responsibility for it following stakeholder capitalism. Similarly, Liu, Song, Wu, and Zhang (2024) stated that companies should take active responsibility for pollution caused by business activities since environmental governance is a critical stakeholder of them. LUSH works to minimize waste through a strong corporate philosophy. Under the slogan 'Packaging is Rubber', about 66% of LUSH UK's products are sold unpackaged. Additionally, according to Andrişan, Grădinaru, and Toma (2022), LUSH recycles resources in a circular economy, collecting, cleaning, compressing, and converting materials back into packaging. Through the LUSH Green Hub, materials harmful to the environment are recycled and reused (Varshney & Ahmed, 2023). LUSH also eliminates products that adversely affect the environment. Namely, LUSH has removed palm oil from its soap as it is a major cause of rainforest destruction (Moraes, 2018). The study also indicated that since 2007, all proceeds from the Charity Pot product have been donated to social organizations, including those focused on environmental protection. In line with this, Wahba (2007) found that meeting environmental responsibilities positively impacts market value and provides economic benefits for companies. Therefore, LUSH adopts a management strategy that benefits society and itself while taking responsibility for the environment.

In conclusion, LUSH practices stakeholder capitalism through its corporate policies and internal culture. LUSH is not only fulfilling its responsibilities to numerous stakeholders (i.e., employees, suppliers, and the environment), but also advancing its long-term interests by meeting its expectations.

(797 words)

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Tesla's Commitment to Profit and Purpose in the Sustainable Era

Jieun KIM

With climate change posing an increasingly serious threat, companies must actively support social responsibility and pursue profits. Tesla, a leader in electric vehicle manufacturing and energy storage technology, reflects these changes and includes social and environmental responsibility in its goals. This essay focuses on Tesla's key stakeholders, how the company fulfills its social responsibilities, the challenges and limitations it faces, and its impact and future direction.

Tesla has a variety of stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, regulators, and the community, each with their set of expectations. Tesla's main stakeholders, customers, are central to its business strategy. Tesla's emphasis on producing high-quality electric vehicles (EVs) and energy products demonstrates its dedication to customer satisfaction and ongoing innovation. By launching products like the Model S and Model 3, along with energy storage options and technological advancements, Tesla hopes to meet and exceed customer expectations and wants (J. Li, 2022). Furthermore, Jing's (2020) research emphasizes the importance of Tesla's direct-to-consumer sales model, which not only streamlines the purchasing process but also fosters a closer relationship between the brand and its customers. The exceptional after-sales service Tesla provides is critical to cultivating brand loyalty. This strategy effectively addresses immediate customer needs and concerns, all while staying aligned with the company's core values of sustainability and innovation. Through this approach, Tesla builds a devoted customer base and reinforces its position as a leader in the rapidly evolving automotive and renewable energy markets.

Beyond only producing electric cars, Tesla is committed to environmental sustainability. Through advancements in energy storage and clean transportation, the corporation has long been at the forefront of the renewable energy industry and actively works to reduce global pollution. The company has long been at the forefront of the renewable energy sector, actively working to mitigate global pollution through innovations in clean transportation and energy storage. According to Jiang (2022), Tesla's adherence to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria further emphasizes its commitment to sustainability. Tesla's commitment to transparency in revealing its carbon footprint and giving investors thorough information on its environmental impact is demonstrated by its participation in the Carbon Disclosure Project (Ben-Amar et al., 2015). The company's initiatives to enhance battery technology and reduce resource extraction demonstrate how Tesla effectively minimizes its environmental impact despite facing technological challenges (Jing, 2020). According to research by P. Li (2022), one of the main pillars of Tesla's overall plan to promote a cleaner and more sustainable future is the company's continuous efforts to increase battery efficiency. Additionally,

Tesla has prioritized sustainability by focusing on building electric cars and deploying renewable energy sources to fight pollution worldwide. These programs support Tesla's objective to be a leader in environmentally friendly technology while tackling issues that affect present and future generations.

Beyond its commitment to sustainability, Tesla faces several critical business challenges. The overvaluation of its stock, new rivalry, lower net profits compared to revenue, and ambiguous corporate positioning are just a few of the major issues facing the company (Qingren, 2023). These challenges pose risks to long-term financial health and market position, so Tesla must navigate competitive pressures, internal efficiencies, and changing consumer expectations. Tesla's efforts to innovate and maintain leadership in electric vehicles and renewables must confront these business challenges. Despite the obstacles, Tesla is committed to its mission, but it must address those challenges to maintain its edge in a fast-changing industry. Tesla's workforce represents a vital stakeholder in the company's overall success. As noted by Minchin (2021), Tesla has encountered several challenges related to employee management, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to operational disruptions and workforce reductions. Nevertheless, the company has acknowledged the importance of investing in its employees, as demonstrated by its talent voyage program to cultivate and retain skilled workers. The research conducted by Shao, Wang, and Yang (2021) emphasizes that Tesla's commitment to employee development and global operations is essential for building a resilient workforce. Despite these efforts, Tesla still faces difficulties with labor relations, employee retention, and workforce diversity management as it grows internationally.

In conclusion, Tesla succeeds by pioneering new technologies and actively incorporating ethics and sustainability into its business model. Tesla has set the standard for other businesses looking to become purpose-driven by prioritizing societal impact, employee well-being, customer satisfaction, and environmental responsibility. According to the studies cited in this essay, Tesla has succeeded in a market that is becoming increasingly competitive because of its dedication to moral principles. As Tesla continues to innovate and expand, its ability to harmonize its business practices with its overarching mission will secure its lasting influence on the global shift toward sustainability.

(763 words)

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The responsibility that companies have to entire society Example of Ina Food Industry Co., Ltd.'s effort

Saki SHIBATA

Recently, management policies that pursue not only the profits of the company and its shareholders, but also social responsibility, have become increasingly important. This is called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and according to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), CSR is defined as a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. In other words, it means how much companies are taking the SDGs into account in their management. In fact, the percentage of Japanese companies that are active in the SDGs is increasing, reaching a high of 54.5% last year (TEIKOKU DATABANK, LTD, 2024). However, about half of companies, mainly small and medium-sized businesses, still do not deal with CSR. This essay shows the importance of being responsible not only for their shareholders but also for a wide range of stakeholders, and what responsibilities are being fulfilled with the example of Ina Food Industry Co., Ltd. (IFI), a Japanese company that has been coping with CSR long before the importance of the SDGs became a focus of attention.

When it comes to social responsibility, companies tend to focus on the product itself or outside of them, but IFI cherishes their employees who are the core of the company for their sustainable management. Their CSR report in 2023 states, they have been following an annual management policy for 50 years, which aims for steady growth of the company every year. In fact, they have created a secure working environment for their employees by increasing their salaries every year and offering reemployment opportunities in addition to the lifetime employment system. In addition, the company has been proactively implementing gender-related initiatives, such as increasing the maternity leave utilization rate to 100% over the past 10 years and establishing a three-year plan for women's advancement starting in 2021 (IFI, 2023). Refer to the CEO's words in the report, "The objective of management is to make employees happy. In other words, it is about the wellbeing of our employees", by caring about its employees, IFI is building the foundation for working on CSR.

IFI's efforts do not stop within the company. They also emphasize the importance of sustainable use of natural resources in their interactions with suppliers and importers. Recently, it is said that changes in economic structure due to disasters, outbreaks of infectious diseases, tariffs, and trade restrictions are particularly likely to occur in Japan, which is located in Asia, making the establishment of a stable supply chain a major challenge for companies (METI, 2021). However, IFI has established

stable resource procurement methods by importing for development since the 1970s and building friendly relationships with overseas suppliers. Also, they declare that they value their old suppliers and do not change them just because others are cheaper. In addition, because IFI have provided guidance on seaweed cultivation technology and agar manufacturing technology, rather than simply purchasing ingredients, their suppliers are running stable businesses, and as a result, they are contributing to the local economies of each country (IFI, 2023). In short, IFI fulfills its broad social responsibility for stable service offerings and economic growth in each country by taking care of all those involved in the procurement of resources.

Finally, as an approach to society as a whole, IFI is addressing a number of issues such as environmental problems and labor shortages in agriculture. For example, for environmental issues, since 2015, IFI has been producing edible plastic film used in instant noodles and other products to make them plastic-free. The company is also preventing environmental pollution by producing fertilizers that reuse the seaweed residue from the agar production process. Furthermore, in the aspect of human resource development, the company has established a group company, Papanan Farm, with the aim of pioneering new farming practices and create young leaders for making the community more active. They aim to achieve sixth industrialization, which means to sustain rural communities and revitalize the rural economy (IFI, 2023). In summary, IFI recognizes whole society as a stakeholder and always manage their business in a way that contributes to the environment and the economy.

To conclude, Although the SDGs have only recently come into the spotlight, IFI have been constantly pursuing management responsibility not only to employees of internal organizations and business partners of external organizations, but also to society as a whole for many years. Of course, stakeholders differ from company to company, but ideally, all companies should have a sustainable management policy for society as a whole, and the most important thing is to focus on the areas where the company can or must have the greatest impact. From this perspective, IFI is a true CSR company, as it manages its business in a sustainable manner with an altruistic spirit toward a wide range of stakeholders.

(799 words)

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特別賞

Diverse Stakeholders and Social Responsibility Initiatives

Kanna YAMAMOTO

The demand for semiconductors is growing rapidly in a variety of industries, and NVIDIA is a pioneer in this field. Founded in 1993 with the vision of providing 3D graphics for the gaming and multimedia industries, NVIDIA has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past few decades. Today, the company offers AI technology used by more than 40,000 companies. This success is closely tied to how well it addresses the needs of its stakeholders, an essential criterion for measuring corporate success. This paper will consider NVIDIA's stakeholders: employees, suppliers, the local community, and the environment, and evaluate how well NVIDIA fulfills its responsibilities to them.

One of NVIDIA's crucial stakeholders is its business partner. Especially, in manufacturing its products, NVIDIA involves many suppliers, including those in chip production. NVIDIA fulfills its human rights and environmental responsibilities to its involved companies through the NVIDIA Human Rights Policy, which prevents human rights abuses and ensures respect for human rights. This policy applies to all business partners and suppliers. Additionally, NVIDIA collaborates with its suppliers to improve environmental standards and is a member of the Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC). The EICC was established to address social, environmental, and ethical issues in the electronics industry. NVIDIA adheres to this code and expects its suppliers to respect it, thereby ensuring compliance with environmental standards and protection of labor and human rights. Through these actions, NVIDIA demonstrates a strong commitment to its supply chain responsibilities.

Another vital stakeholder group for NVIDIA is its employees. NVIDIA is responsible for providing fair wages and benefits, ensuring a safe work environment, offering opportunities for professional growth, and promoting diversity and inclusion. As a result, NVIDIA has been named to the Great Place to Work list for its excellent work environment. The high satisfaction benefits and a welcoming environment for all contribute to this recognition. NVIDIA provides its employees with an employee stock purchase plan (ESPP) and 22 weeks of paid time off. The ESPP allows employees to purchase company shares at a discounted rate, which is a highly valued benefit. Through the NVIDIA Global Ethics and Compliance Program, the company promotes and enforces ethical behavior among its employees. The "NVIDIA Inclusion & Diversity" program ensures that people of diverse backgrounds, including gender, race, age, and disability, are treated fairly within the company. This comprehensive approach demonstrates how well NVIDIA fulfills its responsibilities to its employees.

Additionally, NVIDIA also places great importance on its social responsibility to local communities. By leveraging its strength in AI technology, NVIDIA is working to solve local issues in healthcare, transportation, agriculture, and education. The NVIDIA Foundation, a charitable organization, aims to promote the advancement of science and technology, particularly in AI, data science, and robotics. The foundation promotes STEM (science, technology, engineering, and

mathematics) education and offers educational programs in AI and data science, along with workshops and seminars for students and educators. Furthermore, the "AI for Earth" program uses AI technology to protect the global environment and create a sustainable future by focusing on environmental protection, agriculture, water resources management, and climate change research. NVIDIA also encourages employees to volunteer in their local communities, participating in activities at local schools and non-profit organizations to help solve social issues. These initiatives illustrate NVIDIA's proactive approach to fulfilling its responsibilities to local communities.

Lastly, NVIDIA's environmental responsibilities are another pivotal area of focus. NVIDIA has set goals to enhance sustainability, reduce carbon emissions, promote sustainable practices, and minimize electronic waste. The company aims to become carbon negative by 2030 by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing a carbon offset program. NVIDIA focuses on energy efficient chip designs and data center operations and promoting the use of renewable energy sources. The company is committed to reducing the environmental impact of its products throughout their lifecycle through a comprehensive recycling program designed to minimize electronic waste. NVIDIA's ambitious environmental goals and proactive efforts demonstrate its commitment to fulfilling its environmental responsibilities.

In conclusion, NVIDIA's success underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the needs of its diverse stakeholders. Its commitment to human rights and environmental standards in its business partner and to creating a supportive and inclusive work environment for its employees make NVIDIA a model of a company that balances profit and social responsibility. In addition, its commitment to the community through initiatives demonstrates a proactive approach to using its technology for charitable purposes. Furthermore, NVIDIA's goals for the environment demonstrate a proactive stance toward improving current international issues that prioritize sustainability and long-term impact. In this way, NVIDIA's efforts are a model of how a company can thrive while actively contributing the society and the environment. (772 words)

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