

## The growing field of Corporate Social Responsibility

By: June Rogers

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a hotly growing field — one that recent MBA grad, Peter Myers, believes is in particular demand within the mining industry.

“CSR has the most impact in the mining industry because when something goes wrong,” says Myers, “it’s the most damaging to the community and to the corporation.”

Myers is hoping that his MBA degree from the Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University with a specialty in mining and corporate social responsibility, a one-of-a kind course introduced by the university last January, will give him an advantage in his search for a full-time position.

CSR is more than buying paintings from local artists or building roof-top gardens. Gone are the days when a company set up shop in a community, paid its taxes, complied with the law, adhered to government regulations and nothing more, says Ryerson University professor Kernaghan Webb, founding director of the Institute for the Study of Corporate Social Responsibility.

As governments can no longer afford to provide extensive regulatory oversight, companies must now step up to the plate to manage their own social risks, sustainability, environmental stewardship and health and safety conditions in their pursuit of profits.

Says Webb: “Corporations in all industries today must adhere to the triple bottom line: people, profit and planet.” Now more than ever, he adds, MBA graduates need to know how to deliver on those commitments.

Post-secondary schools offering MBAs that embed CSR into their curriculum include Schulich School of Business at York University and Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, among others.

Schulich's Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business is a global leader in creating and disseminating new knowledge about the social, ethical, environmental and political responsibilities of business. The Aspen Institute ranked Schulich No. 1 in the world in research within this field in its last two global surveys.

"Research shows that companies that focus on the social and environmental bottom line as well as the financial bottom line create greater shareholder value on average over the mid-to-long term," says Dezső J. Horváth, dean of the Schulich School of Business. "Adopting a broad triple bottom line approach is more than just good corporate citizenship — it's simply good business management."

Programs at Rotman also support current and future business leaders to integrate CSR into business strategy and practices, says Rod Lohin, executive director at Rotman's Michael Lee-Chin Family Institute for Corporate Citizenship.

“Using model-based decision-making, students look at issues across the traditional business disciplines — strategic, marketing, finance — to find better solutions,” he says. “CSR/corporate citizenship questions,” he adds, “are among the most complex issues business leaders face, and we believe our approach to problem-solving helps them find solutions to these complex problems better.”

Ryerson's approach to CSR in the mining sector is innovative. Says Webb: "Mining is where the first CSR light bulb went off." The industry knows it has the most immediate impact, he adds, given such issues as the current upheaval in communities affected by the oil sands and pipelines, and the Imperial Metals tailings pond breach at Mount Polley, B.C.

"The innovative model of CSR we're building at Ryerson now could likely extend to all industries in the foreseeable future," he says.

Although MBA grad Myers had his choice of several scholarships from other universities, he chose Ryerson because of the smaller classes and the hands-on experience he received from professors Webb and Bernarda Elizalde, principal at Responsible Mineral Development Consultants, Inc. in Oakville, where she works with a variety of international corporations in the mining sector.

"I bring my 18 years' experience as a CSR consultant to the classroom," says Elizalde, "where we work on some of my real-life case studies and learn from them."

For example, she was hired by a nickel mining interest in Guatemala to conduct a study of the community and their perceptions of the company. She started knocking on doors and asking residents what they thought of the mine. The next day, she was told she could no longer canvass the community without the express permission of the community leaders. She asked them to gather an assembly of the residents and apologized for her actions.

From then on, she was accepted by the community and proceeded to file a comprehensive study on the social risks to the company.

In Canada, Aboriginal communities in remote areas are also impacted by the mining industry. According to the Mining Association of Canada, the mining sector proportionally employs more Aboriginal peoples than any other industry, a figure set to increase in the near future.

Elizalde, who is currently working with the Kitikmeut Inuit Association on the right of access by mining and exploration interests to their lands, knows firsthand how to successfully negotiate with Aboriginal communities.

"CSR is all about incorporating respect, transparency and inclusion of the community. It's like a three-legged stool. If one leg is missing, the stool won't stand up."

It's that kind of boots-on-the-ground experience that lured Myers to the Ryerson MBA program. The fact that 60 per cent of the mining corporations of the world have their headquarters in Toronto also influenced his decision. The proximity of the head offices to Ryerson allowed Myers and two of his fellow students to make a presentation to the CEO and CFO of McEwen Mining regarding the feasibility of acquiring another goldmine.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to be able to hear feedback from the C-suite," Myers says.