

**Towards sustainable growth –  
a case study in OOH industry**

Nelli Rantamäki



<b>Author</b> Nelli Rantamäki	
<b>Degree Programme</b> Communication Management	
<b>Title</b> Towards sustainable growth – a case study in OOH industry	<b>Number of pages + appendices</b> 60 + 8
<p>This thesis is a case study of an association representing Out of Home (OOH) industry in Finland. The objective of the research is to investigate the current level of environmental responsibility in the member organizations of the association, and to provide recommendations on how the industry can grow sustainably and communicate about it.</p> <p>The theoretical framework covers sustainability, corporate responsibility (CR) and the dimensions of corporate responsibility, with an emphasis on environmental responsibility. In addition, topics such as reputation, stakeholders and stakeholder engagement, responsible supply chain, standards of environmental responsibility, CR communication and how associations can influence their members, will be discussed. These topics will help to understand the concept of CR and what other issues have a strong impact on CR.</p> <p>The empirical part of the thesis is conducted by using qualitative research methods. Both the member organizations of the association, and board members of the association are interviewed. The aim of interviewing the member organizations is to discover the current level of environmental responsibility, and by interviewing the board members it is intended to understand what the association considers important and how they perceive the topic.</p> <p>The interviews reveal, that in all member organizations they value the environment and care about the future of our planet, but the practices are still mostly on personal level. There are some practices on business level as well, like recycling, but it can be concluded that a more strategic touch is lacking from most organizations due to few resources.</p> <p>Recommendations on how to improve towards more sustainable performance are based on the interpretations of the interviews and the literature provided in the theoretical framework. The recommendations have been introduced to the association with a positive feedback, and it is assumed that this thesis project is a starting point at least to the point where environmental issues are discussed more within the industry.</p> <p>I confirm the consistency between this abstract and in the research paper.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Environmental responsibility, sustainable growth, OOH, industry association	

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	OOH in Finland and overseas .....	3
2.1	Ethical codes within marketing communications and OOH industry .....	3
2.2	Outdoor Finland .....	5
2.3	The research problem.....	5
2.4	Research questions .....	6
2.5	Structure and theoretical framework.....	6
3	Sustainable development and corporate responsibility in marketing industry .....	8
3.1	Sustainable development.....	8
3.2	Corporate responsibility (CR) .....	9
3.3	CR and corporate reputation .....	11
3.4	Dimensions of corporate responsibility .....	12
3.5	Associations and CR.....	16
3.6	Strategic corporate responsibility and competitive advantage .....	17
3.7	Stakeholders and CR.....	20
3.8	Engaging stakeholders.....	21
3.9	Communication and CR .....	22
3.10	A responsible supply chain.....	24
3.11	Environmental standards and certificates.....	25
3.12	Conclusions .....	27
4	Research approach and methods .....	29
4.1	A case study .....	29
4.2	Previous knowledge of the industry and phenomenon .....	30
4.3	The research process .....	31
4.4	Interviews.....	32
4.5	Analyzing qualitative data .....	33
4.6	Description of content analysis.....	33
5	Findings .....	35
5.1	Interviews with member organizations .....	35
5.2	Analysis of the interviews with the board.....	40
6	Recommendations .....	43
6.1	Summary of recommendations .....	47
6.2	Feedback received from the board.....	49
7	Conclusions .....	51
7.1	Reliability and validity in qualitative research .....	53
7.2	Reliability .....	54

7.3 Validity .....	54
7.4 Evaluation of own learning .....	54
References .....	56
Appendices .....	61

# 1 Introduction

The demand for sustainability is rapidly increasing as the natural resources are running out and, year by year, we are exceeding the Earth's capacity to provide those resources. Marketing industry, as any industry nowadays should, is taking steps towards sustainable business. Marketing is an essential business function, as it is the interface between the organization and customers. It provides the organization information about the customers, their needs and values, and has the ability to influence the way publics think, feel and behave (Martin & Schouten 2012, 10).

Sustainable marketing, defined by Martin & Schouten (2012, 10-11), is

*“The process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers in such a way that both natural and human capital are preserved or enhanced throughout.”*

Marketing communication, however, has been criticized for promoting continuous consumption and unsustainable behavior. Especially advertising is in the middle of the storm of criticism for its social and environmental impacts. Traditional media, such as TV, radio, print and Out of home, may feel as a wrong choice for marketers promoting sustainable products or services. Despite the criticism, marketing communication is an effective and useful tool for increasing the awareness and knowledge about any product or service, including the ones that promote sustainability (Belz & Peattie 2012, 200-204.)

Out of home (OOH) industry is considered the last mass media and the strength of OOH is that it can't be blocked with ad blockers or by changing a channel – it's a medium that follows people during the day spent outdoors, reminding its existence on the way to work, hobbies, grocery store and home. During the last years, the industry has been in a transformation as the big wave of digitalization has crashed and enabled new OOH devices and ways of purchasing the media space. At the same time, OOH increases its share of media investments year by year, which means that the industry is growing (Outdoor Finland 2019a).

A common and very current trend is, that people are very interested in the environmental issues, and they expect that companies are acting responsibly towards the environment. Even growing amount of responsibly operating companies are requiring that their business partners are doing the same and sharing same ecological values. Values are affecting the choices individuals and organizations make. By aiming at sustainable performance and communicating about it, the organizations operating within OOH industry can provide the valuable information their current and potential clients want and need to make their

decisions regarding media space.

This thesis will investigate how the OOH industry can grow sustainably by concentrating into the dimension of environmental responsibility. In Finland, the industry is rather small, and instead of investigating one or two organizations within the industry, it was decided that the research would be conducted as a case study for an association for outdoor advertising, Outdoor Finland. Outdoor Finland represents the OOH industry, aims to develop the industry, the quality of outdoor advertising and to increase the share of OOH in the paid marketing and media field (Outdoor Finland b).

By using qualitative research methods, the aim of the research is to find out the current state and level of environmental responsibility in the member organizations of Outdoor Finland. The growth plans of member organizations and how they have planned to expand their businesses responsibly, is one topic of interests.

Reflecting the results with theory, recommendations are provided on how to improve the industry towards more sustainable performance and what to consider when communicating about the practical improvements.

## **2 OOH in Finland and overseas**

Typical business in companies operating within OOH industry is to provide advertising space in sites that are out of people's home. This means public spaces such as shopping malls, roadsides, public transport, airports, train stations, city bikes, cinemas and city centers, et cetera. Advertising space in these locations is typically posters, billboards, banners, advertisements on buses and trams or digital screens that are maintained by the OOH companies. Outdoor advertising covers whole Finland, but the focus is on the biggest cities.

The maintenance of street furniture (bus stops and poster holders, in the common language within the industry "Abribus" and "Adshels") and change of materials happens manually, if it is out of paper or other tangible material. The campaign time period is typically from 1-2 weeks to several months, depending on the type of device, which means that the posters need to be transported to the different locations nationwide weekly or every two weeks at its best. The posters then have to be disposed of. Digital screens, on the other hand, also need maintenance and electricity.

The industry has been facing the wave of digitalization, and a share of devices have been changed from paper posters to digital screens. The devices are mainly from third party suppliers and manufacturers, which also needs careful consideration.

Considering the industry, its changeability and heavy use and need of logistics, there is a lot to do concerning environment friendly operations. For the industry, environmental responsibility could mean recycling of used posters, usage of reusable materials, usage of electricity that comes from green sources, more efficient logistics and vehicles that use fuel from green sources. Companies operating within the industry also need to assess the responsibility of their suppliers.

### **2.1 Ethical codes within marketing communications and OOH industry**

International Chamber of Commerce provides an ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications code on how to implement ethical marketing and respect good manners. The code is a framework intended for global application, with an objective to guarantee responsible marketing that is truthful, honest and legal, and to protect consumers from misleading or harmful marketing communications. The code underlines social responsibility and the commonly agreed social values such as equality and protection of children, use of violence, the content being decent and truthful (ICC 2019.)

In Finland, the Council of Ethics in Advertising applies the ICC code in its own instructions and have complemented them with additional principles concerning the good manners in marketing. The council proposes that it is against the good manners to present genders in a disrespectful way or use sexual allusions which are out of the context of the advertised product. They also emphasize, that an advertisement is not necessarily breaking the good manners with naked or scantily dressed people, unless they are presented in a disrespectful or degrading light (Kauppakamari 2019.)

Also, the Finnish Association of Marketing, Technology and Creativity (MTL) promotes for ethical instructions for the industry it represents. It is obvious, that organizations must operate under the laws and regulations of each country. These laws and regulations protect consumers from misleading advertising, and they are complemented with ethical principles. The ethical principles are built on five key values: honesty and transparency, respect, reasonability, trustworthiness and excellent level of professionalism. Being a member of MTL requires that an organization follows the ethical principles provided by MTL (MTL 2019.)

Abroad, in Australia, the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) is an industry body for OOH industry. OMA describes their mission as “building a more sustainable industry by promoting the OOH industry and developing constructive relationships with stakeholders” (OMA 2013a). They have created a Code of Ethics, which the association requires all its members to adhere. The Code of Ethics include principles for doing business with advertisers, working with regulators, responsibilities towards communities and the environment (OMA 2019b). The responsibilities towards the environment include efficient recycling, use of fuel-efficient vehicles and reduction of energy, water and natural sources (OMA 2019c).

Out of Home Advertising Association of America (OAAA), highly encourages its members adhering to its Code of Industry Principles. The Code of Industry Principles promotes free speech standards, respect for privacy, protection of children, support of worthy public causes, providing safe and efficient digital billboards and respect of the environment including reduction of waste and energy consumption and use of recyclable materials (OAAA 2019).



## **2.2 Outdoor Finland**

Outdoor Finland is an association for OOH industry in Finland. Outdoor Finland represents the OOH industry, aims to develop the industry, the quality of outdoor advertising and to increase the share of OOH in the paid marketing and media field. Currently, Outdoor Finland has ten member organizations including both large global organizations and local businesses. The board of the association consists of representatives of four of these companies.

OOH advertising is a subject to license. The locations of OOH advertisements are usually owned by cities, municipalities or private landowners, who issue the license to build a site to that specific location. Road safety, for example, is an issue that can decline a permission. (Outdoor Finland 2019b)

Outdoor Finland emphasizes, that the ethical principles and good manners regarding marketing, and provided by the Council of Ethics in Advertising, must be considered when planning outdoor campaigns. Outdoor Finland does not currently provide its own instructions for ethical principles specified for OOH industry. (Outdoor Finland 2019b)

## **2.3 The research problem**

It is mentioned on the website of Outdoor Finland, that the association encourages and expects its members to follow the ethical principles provided by the Council of Ethics in Advertising, but environment and responsibilities concerning the environment are not mentioned at all. It is not clear, if these issues are taken into consideration or not, which provoked the idea of investigating that topic. After contacting the head of the board of Outdoor Finland, it was confirmed that the association considered the topic very important and current. However, the association did not know what kind of practices regarding environmental responsibility their members had, if any.

The primary research problem was defined as sustainable growth, and how the industry could grow sustainably.

For the industry to become more sustainable, Outdoor Finland should first have a clear understanding of the state of its member organizations' environmental responsibility, and what things to improve. Providing recommendations to its member organizations on how to make sustainable choices when growing the business, can also foster the reputation of the industry.

It was decided that this research would first investigate the current stage of responsibility in member organizations of Outdoor Finland and what kind of values are driving the choices and decisions in member organizations, and reflect the results with theory. It was also considered important to investigate Outdoor Finland's ambitions, what it considers important for the industry it is representing, and in what kind of ways the association itself could support and foster the industry to develop towards more sustainable performance. By finding out how both Outdoor Finland's and its member organizations interests, and current operations meet with each other, recommendations for further development would be provided.

## **2.4 Research questions**

The following research questions were formed to help solving the research problem:

- What issues must OOH industry take into consideration in order to grow sustainably?
- What factors affect the choices member organizations make concerning sustainability of its operations?
- What kind of role can Outdoor Finland take in fostering the sustainable growth of its member organizations?

To get answers to these research questions, two different types of sets of interviews were conducted during summer 2019. Interviewing member organizations of Outdoor Finland would provide answers to the first two research questions, and interviews with the board members of Outdoor Finland were intended to provide answers to the third research question.

## **2.5 Structure and theoretical framework**

The first two chapters of this thesis introduce the Out of Home industry and Outdoor Finland, the association that represents the industry. Some ethical codes and best practices from OOH associations from Australia and America are introduced as well.

In chapter three, the theoretical framework of sustainable development and corporate responsibility will be discussed from various aspects. Topics such as stakeholders, reputation, competitive advantage, communication and the significance of associations

will be covered. These topics were considered important, to gain a full understanding of why CR is important for the industry. This thesis will focus on environmental responsibility, which will be provided with more deeper insights than other dimensions of corporate responsibility.

This thesis is conducted as a case study, and the attributes of a case study will be presented in chapter four. The chapter also introduces the research process, what research methods were used, how the data was gathered, and how the interviews were conducted. Finally, the chapter explains how qualitative data is analyzed in general and how the data for this research was analyzed.

Chapter five presents the key findings of the interviews with both member organizations and members of the board. These two sets of interviews are presented in their own subchapters.

Recommendations based on the research will be reported in chapter six. As it is intended to only provide recommendations for Outdoor Finland, the feedback of the board will be considered as the evaluation of success of the project. It will be for Outdoor Finland to decide, whether they will put the recommendations into practice.

Conclusions will be presented in the final chapter. Furthermore, validity and reliability issues will be discussed in this chapter, as well as the evaluation of own learning.

The interview questions, as well as the presentation created for Outdoor Finland to introduce the findings and recommendations, will be provided in the appendices.

### **3 Sustainable development and corporate responsibility in marketing industry**

Even though the concept of responsibility in the business context is not new, defining a term for it has been difficult. Terms such as corporate social responsibility, corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, sustainability or sustainable development can be confusing, as organizations using the different terms may not always define whether they are implementing one or all three dimensions of responsibility (ecological, economic and social) in their business.

The European Commission defines corporate social responsibility (CSR) as companies voluntarily including efforts concerning the society and the environment in their business and interaction with their stakeholders (Haapala & Aavameri 2008, 17). In this definition, it is important to emphasize that corporate social responsibility is voluntary, and it is not charity. Donating money for associations or those in need does not make a company socially responsible, if at the same time the company is trying to hide its unethical behavior.

Corporate responsibility is the term that will be used in this thesis, as it best implies to the responsibility of organizations. The empirical part of this thesis is focused on the ecological dimension of corporate responsibility, and therefore the term environmental responsibility will be used as well.

The chapter will now introduce sustainable development and different dimensions of Corporate Responsibility (CR), and various areas and aspects that are considered essential to describe the phenomenon and why it is important for organizations to operate responsibly.

#### **3.1 Sustainable development**

Sustainable development is a macro level term commonly used in the context of responsibility. United Nations define sustainable development as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations 2019.)

This widely known and used definition of sustainable development was first presented in Brundtland Report in 1987. A World Commission on Economic Development, also known as Brundtland Commission, was established in 1983 by the United Nations to agree on

“environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development by the year 2000 and beyond” (Blowfield & Murray 2014, 56). Concerns about the environment and sustainability of our planet were increasing, and it was realized that we couldn’t continue neglecting the consumption of the natural resources (Blowfield & Murray 2014, 56-57). In the beginning, sustainable development was more focused on the environment and ecological aspects, but economic, cultural and social dimensions were then added. In the Brundtland Report, the basic idea of sustainable development is that ecological sustainability requires economic and social efforts as well (Haapala & Aavameri 2008, 15.)

In 2015, the UN declared the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Development Goals concerning all three dimensions of sustainability: economic, ecological and social (including cultural). The agenda is expected to be applied in all countries to stop poverty and enable economic growth, support education, health and protection of the people, and to protect the environment and stop the climate change (United Nations 2019.)

Sustainable development is focused on the future. From sustainable development point of view, organizations must take the three dimensions of sustainability into consideration and keep them in balance in their decision making they do today, to secure the future generations’ needs in their businesses (Rohweder 2004, 16.) Juutinen & Steiner (2010, 20) claim that an organization that follows the principles of sustainable development, is responsible in its business.

### **3.2 Corporate responsibility (CR)**

In the early 1930’s, academic writers focused on the responsibilities of individual business leaders with a common idea of success and responsibility going hand in hand (Blowfield & Murray 2014, 40). Davis (1973 in Blowfield & Murray 2014, 42), one of the first corporate responsibility theorists, argued that the responsible actions of a business leader should rather be considered as corporate responsibility. Around that time, it was also recognized that responsible behavior might in the long run benefit a company economically (Blowfield & Murray 2014, 42).

Organizations have a huge effect on the society: we consume food, medicine, energy, clothes and services provided by organizations. Organizations create jobs, infrastructure and houses for us to call our homes – they are members of the society (Koipijärvi & Kuvaja 2017, 17.)

As members of the society, organizations have been given the legal and political rights. The term, corporate citizenship, refers to the portfolio of activities that organizations

undertake to fulfil their perceived duties as members of the society (Cornelissen 2017, 254). Like individuals, along with the legal and political rights and duties they have, organizations as well are legally responsible for their actions (Harmaala & Jallinoja 2012, 15).

Davis (1973 in Blowfield & Murray 2014, 7) argues that corporate responsibility begins where the law ends. This idea emphasizes the nature and values of an organization – what the organization is willing to do for the benefit of the society and its stakeholders. Juutinen & Steiner (2010, 23-25) agree with this. They claim that international legislation, regulations, standards and international declarations, for example, define the guidelines organizations must follow in their operations. However, considering corporate responsibility it is not enough to follow these guidelines. In corporate responsibility, it is essential to also consider an organization's stakeholders and their expectations, minimizing disadvantages and maximizing advantages that the operations of an organization might cause to its stakeholders.

Stakeholders are any individuals or groups that are affected by or can affect an organization and its operations (Freeman 1984 in Rawlins 2006, 2). Stakeholders and their relationship to CR will be discussed further in subchapter 3.7. Harmaala & Jallinoja (2012, 16) consider stakeholders of an organization very important in the context of corporate responsibility. They argue that corporate responsibility is about organizations working together with society towards social and environmental well-being, with an emphasis on their stakeholders.

Transparency in business and in business operations is getting more important all the time. Stakeholders have a right to demand information from organizations, and organizations are obliged to provide that information. Consumers need information about organizations, to define what to expect from them, which then can affect on factors that are important for an organization: reputation, trust, approval or even responsibility (Juholin 2017, 43-44.) Transparency and brand reputation have a huge influence on how a brand or organization is perceived by the consumers.

Bad reputation resulting from unethical business, for example, can be fatal for an organization. Internet and social media are speeding up the flow of information, and therefore it is important for organizations to communicate transparently and truthfully about their actions, to avoid misinformation. Haapala & Aavameri (2008, 70-71) remind that transparency is a way of thinking: to live in the truth and being brave about talking about issues with their real names. Greenwashing can be as fatal as pure lying, when the truth is to be found out. Friend (2009, 68) also emphasizes the importance of telling the

truth. Greenwashing, overstating or misrepresenting green claims untruthfully, may quickly cause trouble.

Friend (2009, 70) presents a quote by the author Mark Twain, that concludes the essence of telling the truth versus lying and fear of getting into trouble:

“If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.”

The next subchapter will discuss how CR activities affect the perceptions stakeholders have of an organization.

### **3.3 CR and corporate reputation**

Reputation is an evaluation of an organization, how well it performs in its own industry and is it trustworthy or not (Juholin 2017, 170). Stakeholders have expectations for organizations, their activities and performance. Expectations can raise emotions such as appreciation, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, disappointment, shame and anger. Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand their stakeholders' expectations and try to meet with them. Understanding the expectations might also help organizations to identify why stakeholders react to their activities the way they do. Ignoring the expectations might have a negative impact on the organization's reputation (Luoma-aho & Olkkonen 2014, 224; 226.)

Fombrun & Low (2011, 21-22) argue, that well managed reputation can contribute to competitive advantage and economic value. Managing reputation can be difficult, as reputation is about perceptions, image and knowledge stakeholders have of an organization. Therefore, transparency and communication play a big role in maintaining the reputation.

The way an organization operates in its industry and the actions it takes, including communication efforts, can affect its reputation. Corporate reputation has an influence on whether stakeholders consider an organization trustworthy or not, and the dimensions of corporate responsibility – social, ecological and environmental – are important factors affecting the corporate reputation. In their study, Hasan & Yun (2017, 83-85) found that there's a positive relationship between corporate responsibility and corporate reputation.

Using multiple sources in their report, Axjonow, Ernstberger & Pott (2018, 432) also conclude that CR actions and communicating about them can result in stakeholders associating the company as a good one, and therefore affects its reputation in a positive way. Axjonow et al. (2018) found that companies need to provide appropriate information

for stakeholders' needs and use platforms these stakeholders use as a source of information. For non-professional stakeholders, such as customers, employees and general public, CR reports might be too overwhelming with the amount of information. On the other hand, information provided on company websites, for example, were found to have a positive impact on the corporate reputation. In addition, the performance of the company needs to be in line with what is communicated outside the company (Axjonow et al. 2018, 432; 447.)

Arendt & Brettel (2010) have investigated the impact of CR in terms of company success, reputation and attractiveness in both service- and product-based industries. In their study, they state that CR does strengthen the positive image stakeholders have of an organization implementing CR activities in their business. They emphasize that in smaller businesses the effect of positive image caused by CR activities is as much or even greater than in larger organizations, as it can be perceived that in smaller companies the implementation of CR is moral based rather than strategic acts (Arendt & Brettel 2010, 1477; 1483.)

### 3.4 Dimensions of corporate responsibility

Corporate social responsibility was broken down into a triple bottom line -model created by John Elkington. The model presents that responsibility consists of three dimensions: social, economic and ecological dimensions. Often a fourth dimension from sustainable development, cultural (which can also be included in social responsibility) is added to the model (Koipijärvi & Kuvaja 2017, 18).

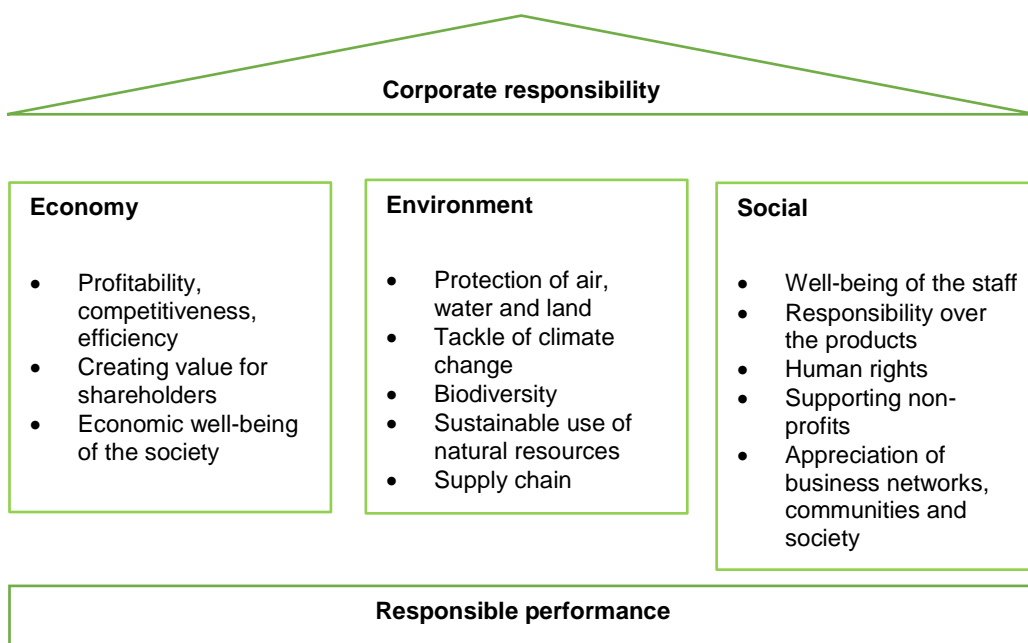


Figure 1. Triple bottom line by John Elkington. Source: Koipijärvi & Kuvaja 2017, 19.



25 years after introducing the triple bottom line -model, John Elkington explains that the model was intended to encourage companies thinking further of capitalism and consider more economic – not just financial effects of the company’s activities. He says that sustainability can’t be only about measuring the profits or losses, but also considering the well-being of people and our planet. In his recall, Elkington highlights that the model was indeed designed to provoke thinking from creating financial profits to a more comprehensive perspective of doing good for the world (Elkington 2018.)

**Economic responsibility** is visible to stakeholders in different ways, and it can be direct or indirect. Direct responsibility is to pay salaries to employees, taxes to the government and dividends to shareholders and owners. Indirect responsibilities can be, for example, affecting the political economy by significant innovations or providing work through supply chains. Considering sustainable development, organizations can’t only try to reach economic advantages, but environmental and social aspects need to be considered as well (Rohweder 2004, 97-99). However, being economically profitable is the only way to ensure ecological and social efforts.

**Social responsibility** is focused on people and the direct impacts are on well-being and training at work. Also, respecting different cultures, values and diversity at the work environment is part of social responsibility, as well as providing safety at working sites, health care for all employees, taking care of the motivation of employees by providing decent salary, training possibilities and development opportunities.

Indirect social responsibility involves dialogue with different stakeholders such as communities, authorities and political decision makers. Safety and quality of the organization’s products and ethical advertising are also part of social responsibility, as well as providing work and paying taxes to the cities and communities (Rohweder 2004, 103-104.)

Global problems concerning the limits of the non-renewable natural resources and limited production of renewable natural resources are in the center of **ecological responsibility**. Direct responsibility regarding ecological performance means that an organization must consider the impacts they directly have on the environmental issues, control and maintain the environmental risks and sustainable use of natural resources. Responsibly operating organization plans its operations so that it uses the needed resources and energy appropriately, minimizes waste and emissions, and executes the plans accordingly. An organization must also take care that the whole supply chain; production, product development, logistics, consuming and recycling operates accordingly. Indirect

responsibility can include taking part in projects that aim to protect the nature and biodiversity of the globe (Rohweder 2004, 99-100.)

Protecting the environment is typically seen as anthropocentric, human-centered, which claims that people are only interested in the kind of environmental protection that have an impact on their interests and values as well as moral relationships with other people. Anthropocentric way of protecting the environment means that people make decisions that foster their well-being, including economic and ecological factors. Therefore, protecting the environment concerns protecting the well-being of both people and environment, and supports the ecologically sustainable development (Rohweder 2004, 46.) Staib (2005, 34-35) explains, that anthropocentric way of thinking may not always consider the environment first, but the well-being of people. The fear of acting unethically and being accused for it by stakeholders or causing direct danger for people by dumping toxic waste, for example, to the nature might be reasons for acting environmentally responsibly. On the other hand, if an action is considered not too serious for the nature or ecosystem, but profitable for the company, the benefit over the cost might be a reason for making an irresponsible decision.

Ecocentric philosophy does not justify doing harm to the nature for the benefit of a company or people. Ecocentrism emphasizes, that humans are just another species among the others and have no privilege over the nature. Additionally, there's an idea that humans don't know enough about how the ecosystem works and therefore the nature knows best (Staib 2005, 36).

Awareness and some concerns about the environment and business growth affecting the environment negatively began slowly to evolve in the 1960's. During the time it was still a common mind-set, that the significance of protecting the environment and growing business were issues that could not be reconciled. This was a problem for business managers trying to grow their business, especially as regulations and laws concerning the environment started to come into effect. In the early 1970's until mid-80's there could be seen resistance to environmentally responsible behavior in companies, as they tried to fight against these regulations. 1980's was a time for changing the attitude and finding solutions to prevent environmental offenses instead of punishing companies that operated in such ways. Concerns about the environment increased, and the Brundtland report was released in 1987, after which the approach in environmental responsibility in companies started to shift towards the idea of receiving a win-win situation combining protecting the environment and business growth. A win-win situation, in this context, could mean that changing processes towards more eco-efficient way would save money. Changing

machinery, for example, to newer technology using cleaner engines and causing less pollution, would in the long run save costs in resources (Argenti 2016, 76-78.)

In the 1990's it became more clear that greener business, finding eco-efficient ways of doing business, could be a strategic opportunity to influence the economy of a company as well. However, eco-efficiency was criticized for only doing less damage to the environment, and that eco-effectiveness was the way to go. Eco-effective approach seeks doing more good for the environment than just decreasing the harms of already existing operations (Argenti 2016, 79-80.)

Awareness and concerns about the environment and our planet have only increased during the years. Organizations and people are not doing enough for the environment. After the release of the two latest reports by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018 and August 2019, the accuracy and seriousness of the issue have been noticed in the media, it has affected the politics world-wide and made consumers more conscious.

In 2015, the Paris Agreement declared that the global average temperature should be limited to below 2°C, preferably 1,5°C increase from the pre-industrial levels. The IPCC report released in August 2019 showed that for that goal to be achieved, better land management and reduce of greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors are required (IPPC 2019.)

There are several guidelines provided for organizations to help and guide them in responsible performance, such as United Nation's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Global Compact for supporting human rights, providing principles in work life and protecting the environment, and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) which provides guidelines for what efforts are essential for organizations to report (Koipijärvi & Kuvaja 2017, 40-42.)

Rohweder (2004, 77) reminds that all three dimensions of corporate responsibility are linked with each other. An organization must be economically responsible to ensure its ability to be socially and environmentally responsible, which then affect the profitability of the organization.

Organizations operating within specific industries can have unequal resources considering their abilities to focus on the different dimensions of CR. An association representing an industry can also take the lead in guiding and shaping its member organizations activities, which can then affect the performance, reputation and competitiveness of the whole industry. The next subchapter discusses the characteristics of trade associations representing specific industries, and whether an association can or should influence the operations of its member organizations.

### **3.5 Associations and CR**

Schmitter & Streeck (1999 in Kerrigan & Schaefer 2008, 173) argue that in homogeneous industries, the interests are very similar but the likelihood of competing directly with each other rather than finding mutual benefits is bigger. Unequal resources, due to the size of member organizations, is also considered a factor that might prevent new potential members to join an association. However, factors such as external competition, state intervention, complementary of members and social cohesion might be intriguing enough to associate.

Associations are more likely to influence the industry they represent, if the member organizations have a high degree of cohesion and communality, and they have less competition over each other. Being dependent on similar sources of support and experiencing pressure of external competition make member organizations more susceptible to the influence of the association. (Kerrigan & Schaefer 2008, 173)

In case of a whole industry being criticized or accused of something, for example causing too much light pollution, it might be more efficient for an association to lead the industry through the public pressure and provide guidance for the member organizations on how to develop the issue (Gupta & Brubaker 1990 in Kerrigan & Schaefer 2008, 174). In their research, Kerrigan & Schaefer (2008, 193) found the suggestion by Gupta & Brubaker applicable, and argue that industry associations can contribute to the pressure coming from societal expectations by shaping the member organization's activities in a positive way.

Bansal (2005 in Galan, Moura-Leite & Padgett 2012, 1204) argues that CR activities in organizations are strongly linked with the resources the organization has. CR activities take financial and/or human resources, as new technologies, suppliers or processes need to be identified. For this reason, organizations operating within the same industry might vary with their CR activities, depending on how successful they are financially or how

much staff they have. This inequality of resources can easily result in other companies achieving competitive advantage.

An industry association can be beneficial for organizations with limited resources, as it can potentially share the competitive characteristics for all members. Organizations with less resources can then imitate the activities other organizations have found or created, which on the other hand narrows down the competitive gaps and competition between organizations within the same industry, but on the other hand can benefit the whole industry. (Galan et al. 2012, 1204)

DiMaggio & Powell (1983 in Galan et al. 2012, 1205) argue, that similar organizations operating within the same industry typically tend to develop similar competitive strategies, as they share so many common influences and characteristics of the industry.

Based on their study, Galan et al. (2012, 1214) suggest that both industry- and firm-specific factors should be considered simultaneously. They explain, that when evaluating the performance of an organization, it should be placed in the context of the industry the organization is operating in. This simultaneous evaluation might put the subject in a new perspective. Therefore, for some industries it might be important to consider which is more important – competition within the industry or developing the industry together for common good.

### **3.6 Strategic corporate responsibility and competitive advantage**

CR is considered strategic, when it is part of an organization's values, business model, business strategies and operations. Corporate responsibility also can help an organization achieving competitive advantage by finding new products or services, that meets with stakeholders' needs (Juutinen & Steiner 2010, 39.)

Argenti (2016, 51-52) explains that strategic CR differs from responsive CR by aiming to create shared value and expanding the connections between societal and economic issues. Strategic CR can make a company more profitable and increase growth, if new markets or ways to differentiate from others are identified.

Corporate responsibility can make an organization

- Competitive
  - new products and/services for customers' needs
  - attractive in the eyes of new recruits and investors
  - committed employees

- efficient risk management
- More efficient in networking and communicating
  - listening to stakeholders needs
  - product development
- More efficient processes
  - cost-effectiveness
  - effective use and saving of energy, water, logistics, materials
- Focus on values
  - customers and employees are more and more interested in sharing the same values with the company they are doing business or working with

(Juutinen & Steiner 2010, 40).

Environmental issues and concerns about the future of our planet are topics that we constantly see the media writing about, but not all companies are reacting to them. This might be because of the lack of resources or knowledge. But as the consumers are getting more and more conscious and educated about the issues, their behavior and attitudes are assumed to be changed as well. This will affect the organizations in different industries and force them to think in a new greener way. This is the time, when organizations can achieve competitive advantage by listening to stakeholders and their needs – and differentiate from the competitors. Juholin (2017, 178) argues that responsible business doesn't bring significant competitive advantage anymore, as it should be a prerequisite for business. However, not doing anything is another way to differentiate, but in a negative way. Fisk (2010, 42) concludes, that differentiation needs to be relevant and important for the stakeholders.

Rohweder (2004, 133-134) reminds that a business strategy is based on a company's values. In a business strategy, corporate responsibility is not just a separate dimension or one part of the strategy, but comprehensively integrated into all operations in the business model. Fisk (2010, 39-40) agrees and emphasizes that it is not essential to create a sustainability strategy, but a business strategy that embraces sustainability at its core. In his book, Fisk represents a business strategy for sustainable growth. The model of business strategy for sustainable growth consists of three questions: where, what and how?



Figure 2. Business strategy for sustainable growth. Source: Fisk 2010, 40.

When creating a strategy, it can be useful to evaluate the current situation of the organization: the current existing markets, consumers and clients, technologies and processes used and the expectations of stakeholders, imagine what the world will be like from these aspects in five or ten years, and then plan how to get there (Fisk 2010, 41.)

Achieving competitive advantage of corporate responsibility is strongly linked with the needs and expectations of the society and stakeholders. Fisk (2010, 42-45) claims, that as social and environmental issues are important topics for the consumers of today, these areas also offer the most opportunities to differentiate in and achieve competitive advantage. Doing good does not mean that the consumers should compromise, or the organization should do less money with its business – it means to do good for the business and for others.

In today's world, the flow of information is incredibly rapid. The power of media and social media is stronger than ever, and they affect people's opinions and values. For companies, it is important to understand what is expected from them and to react accordingly. In the end, stakeholders provide the license for businesses to operate – or fail.

### **3.7 Stakeholders and CR**

To whom is business responsible? If we would've asked this question in the 1960's from the economist Milton Friedman, the answer would've been "to the law and its shareholders" (Blowfield & Murray 2014, 46.) However, the way of thinking has changed from those times and shifted more from shareholders towards stakeholders. It can be assumed, that companies require a license to operate, an approval from their stakeholders and the society to function properly and efficiently. (Blowfield & Murray 2014, 46-47) And as the approval has been received, companies are expected to operate accordingly.

An organization is obliged to consider its stakeholders' expectations, needs and values in its operations. By respecting the stakeholders, an organization justifies its existing and acts responsibly. (Kujala & Kuvaja 2002, 84)

Chandler (2017, 92-94) considers organizations to practice corporate stakeholder responsibility. He claims that organizations reflect the reactions of stakeholders in its actions and that stakeholders actually define how the organizations should create value for them. This means, that organizations can't afford performing irresponsibly towards the environment, for example, if stakeholders consider that important.

When considering the stakeholders from CR point of view, it is important to consider which stakeholders are directly or indirectly affected by the actions of the organization, and which stakeholders are accordingly affecting the organization itself. An organization's view about the relationship with the stakeholder group and what the stakeholders are expecting from it, is also very important to consider. On the other hand, how does the stakeholder group understand the relationship and what is expected from it?

CR might widen the traditional group of stakeholders or potential stakeholders, and when communicating with them it is important to talk about the topic that interests that particular stakeholder group (Hillgrén 2014.)



### 3.8 Engaging stakeholders

Cornelissen (2017, 65) summarizes that having stakes – financial or other interests – in an organization should be inclusive, which means that organizations should communicate and engage with all stakeholders. He argues that this inclusiveness is emphasized especially in an organization's CSR initiatives. Stakeholders and organizations are interdependent with each other. Stakeholders are affected by the operations of an organization, but they can also influence the operations of an organization. According to Juholin (2017, 149), responsible dialogue between a stakeholder and organization indicates of engagement and doing good. Additionally, a good dialogue benefits all.

A model of strategic stakeholder communication and strategic work community communication, both presented by Juholin (2017, 122; 148), suggests that these strategic practices consist of planned and led conversations, communication that emphasizes and strengthens the community, clear and factual messages and responsible dialogue.

Planned and led conversations are well prepared, focusing on a specific theme or themes. The objective in these conversations is for the stakeholders to understand the strategy and legitimacy of the organization and provide them the opportunity to give feedback and contribute with ideas.

The members need to feel that they are working together for the common good, their contribution is valued and ideas more than welcome. Messages that are communicated to them, need to be clear and understandable. Communication that strengthens the community can be for example events, workshops or seminars that gather everyone together. It is important to feel committed and engaged.

Dialogue increases understanding and engagement to the subject. Having open dialogue is very useful for all parties: everyone has the opportunity to hear and be heard and share thoughts and ideas. Responsible dialogue is for everyone to present their interests and concerns, no one to manipulate the conversation or hide important information (Juholin 2017, 148-150.)

Engaging stakeholders involve two-way communication, finding mutual understanding and desire to develop together. The objective of engaging stakeholders is to build long-term partnerships and fruitful collaboration with them. Stakeholder engagement emphasizes mutual benefits, creating new opportunities together, exceeding stakeholders' expectations and regulatory requirements in the industry an organization is operating (Cornelissen 2017, 75-76.)

Cornelissen (2017, 259) introduces three communication strategies for CR, that organizations might find useful. The first strategy is informational and aims to objectively provide information on an organization's responsibility activities. Since this strategy is one-sided and can also be perceived as persuasive or even marketing, it can be risky to use (Cornelissen 2017, 259.)

A stakeholder response strategy invites stakeholders to give feedback and present their opinions and expectations on an organization's responsibility activities. The downside to this strategy is, that the decisions are already made by the organization, and the stakeholders do not have that much influence on the activities. Although the stakeholder response strategy is considered two-way communication, in the end it can be more one-sided than two-way (Cornelissen 2017, 259.)

Stakeholder involvement strategy provides real dialogue between an organization and its stakeholders. It is about the organization trying to meet or even exceed the expectations of stakeholders and being influenced by them, as well as influencing the stakeholders. By involving stakeholders, and organization engages with them and approves that the company may change according to stakeholder expectations in the future. (Cornelissen 2017, 259-260)

### **3.9 Communication and CR**

Earlier CR communication was considered crisis communication and as a reactive action or response to something negative. Today, CR communication is more proactive and considered as reputation management and an activity creating competitive advantage for an organization (Hillgrén 2014.) Also Harmaala & Jallinoja (2012, 162) claim that CR communication is marketing communication, when the content includes CR related elements and activities. In addition to building a brand image or achieving competitive advantage, communicating about CR activities can increase interaction between stakeholders and result in product development, development of processes or improvements and efficiency in logistics, for example (Hillgrén 2014.)

Also reporting is considered CR communication, which is voluntary and intended to both internal and external use. Reporting about CR activities is a way to provide facts and information for supporting decision making, but it also fosters openness and transparency. Reporting about CR has sometimes been criticized for being primarily provided for commercial needs, which is difficult to argue against. The objectives of CR communication are typically to inform, create awareness or build dialogue with different stakeholders. Another issue for criticism is, that when the yearly reports are published, the information in

them is already old (Harmaala & Jallinoja 2012, 166-167; 221-223.) Annually published CR reports that provide a comprehensive view of the big picture and long-term activities is not enough. Stakeholders also need fresh updates and current validated information, which can be provided by integrated reporting – short reports that highlight information that is essential and interesting for specific stakeholders (Juholin 2017, 178.)

Communicating about organization's CR actions requires, that something has already been done. Messages need to be truthful and based on real facts. In the beginning, the organization needs to know the starting point and current level where they are operating (including all operations, not only CR activities) and create trustworthy content and messages for communication (Hillgrén 2014.)

In the context of ecological responsibility, the activities an organization has concerning the environment can include, for example, minimizing emissions, decreasing waste and focusing more on the responsibility of the supply chain. These issues can be difficult for stakeholders to understand, and when communicating about them, the messages need to be understandable and simplified, and targeted to the right stakeholders that find the information relevant (Hillgrén 2014.)

Additionally, the facts that are presented in communication messages, must be able to be verified. Friend (2009, 68) reminds that messaging about green activities is an easy way to get into trouble, if the content is disconnected with reality. Consumers and other stakeholders are more aware of the environmental issues and are searching for information about organizations and their environmental actions and can easily identify messages that aim to greenwashing. For the sake of credibility and reputation, it would be important for organizations to provide information that can be trusted.

Greenwashing means to gloss over the truth so that it seems prettier than it actually is, or the messages an organization is sending are vague and can be perceived in many different ways (Juutinen & Steiner 2010, 174.)

A green statement must be based on truth, accurate and easily verified. It also must be clear for everyone to understand and precisely present what the statement is about. For example, a company could say that their products are made of 80% recycled paper (Juutinen & Steiner 2010, 174.)

Statements that claim that a product is "green" or "responsible" are vague and do not provide any specific information. Exaggerating the eco-friendliness would also be considered as greenwashing (Juutinen & Steiner 2010, 175.) For example, if a company stated that they are decreasing their Co2 emissions twice as much as previous year, but

the amount was still very little, the statement wouldn't have any value and therefore would be greenwashing.

Communicating about CR can be difficult, and it should preferably be not too aggressive. Aggressive CR communication or messages that highlight CR activities can be perceived in a negative way or even greenwashing (Cornelissen 2017, 259.) However, some organizations don't communicate about their activities at all, which can be seen as not having any responsibility activities. For example, in April 2019, Eetti Ry evaluated Finnish clothing companies' corporate responsibility based on the information provided on their websites. One company, R-Collection, was categorized to the second lowest category based on the provided information, which made the company look much worse than it was in reality. R-Collection replied, that for them the problem is not in being irresponsible, but in their ability to communicate about their activities to the publics. (Yle 2019)

The level of responsibility is not only measured by the actions of the organization itself, but also the actions of its supply chain does have an impact on how the organization is perceived by other stakeholders. The next subchapter will discuss the factors of a responsible supply chain, and how an organization can influence its suppliers' CR activities.

### **3.10 A responsible supply chain**

Suppliers are an important stakeholder group influencing an organization. An organization can't say it's doing responsible business, if the supply chain is not verified responsible as well. Preferably, each part of the supply chain supports the strategy an organization has chosen to implement. For example, logistics, can have a huge negative impact on the environment but making sustainable choices on operational and strategic level, it is possible to decrease the impacts. Doing business with a supplier that works socially or environmentally unsustainable way is a potential risk for an organization's reputation (Harmaala & Jallinoja 2012, 179-180.)

Organizations can require their suppliers and clients to commit to the national legislations and principles of social and environmental sustainability, to respect the human rights and do ethical business. Risk evaluation of suppliers is typically done by global organizations using suppliers from countries that work for lower costs. These suppliers can be categorized by their level of responsibility or ethical principles, and often organizations help them to reach an acceptable level. Ethical instructions for suppliers are considered one way to increase the responsibility of supply chains. Helping suppliers to develop their performance is another approach of being responsible. If organizations would ignore all

unethical suppliers and only choose the responsible ones, there wouldn't be any development and unethical companies would continue operating (Harmaala & Jallinoja 2012, 180-181.)

Verifying whether a supplier is responsible or not can be challenging, as there might be many links in the supply chain. Agreements on responsible performance and violating the agreement at the threat of a fine can be one way, but it doesn't fully eliminate the potential risk of a supplier violating the agreement anyway. Requiring specific documentation, such as certificates, and information about different processes, or a third-party auditing are more efficient ways to evaluate and verify the suppliers' performance, but it requires time and resources (Harmaala & Jallinoja 2012, 184.)

So, what kind of performance can organizations expect from their responsible suppliers, distributors and subcontractors? A responsible supplier considers social and environmental aspects in its operations. Decent and safe working conditions with reasonable working hours and salary, reduction of energy consumption, usage of renewable materials when possible, decrease of waste and pollution and efficient logistics and other processes are issues that need to be considered. (Fisk 2010, 132)

Koipijärvi & Kuvaja (2017, 176) argue that knowing the suppliers personally and trusting them based on conversations is good, but not enough convincing other stakeholders. In global business, where the supply chains can be long, certificates issued by a third party are often required to verify the responsibility of suppliers. Koipijärvi & Kuvaja also remind, that a company can't certify itself.

### **3.11 Environmental standards and certificates**

Certificates are a way to communicate, that a company is taking sustainability issues seriously. There are many types of certificates and standards available for verifying sustainable business operations. The most well-known global environmental series of standards is ISO 14000, of which ISO 14001 is the most common one. ISO 14001 includes guidelines for sustainable usage of energy, managing greenhouse emissions, life-cycle analysis, communication, identifying risks and opportunities and how environmental issues can be integrated to the business strategy. The aim of the standard is to contribute to the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 sustainable development goals (SDG's). ISO (International Organization for Standardization) does not issue certificates, but only provide the standards and guidelines. To become ISO certified, an organization should apply for a verification from a third party, from a specific company specialized in issuing certificates. (ISO 2019)

EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) by the European Commission is another standard for environmentally responsible business. As well as the ISO 14001 standard, also EMAS provides guidelines for improving the business to be more sustainable. Unlike ISO 14001, EMAS also requires organizations to publicly report about their actions. (Ketola 2005, 155; European Commission 2019)

FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) are certifications for forestry and forest industry. Sustainable forestry values the biodiversity while doing socially and economically profitable business. Certifying forests is a way for forest owners to communicate about their responsibility and sustainable business. (Koipijärvi & Kuvaja 2017, 172)

Green Office certificate is an environmental certificate for workplaces and offices. The main objective is to support organizations to set goals, measure results and improve the environmentally friendly performance. Certified offices are expected to report yearly to WWF.

Green Office has seven themes including the commitment of management, communication and engaging employees, energy and water consumption, acquisitions, recycling, transportation and food. It provides tools for improving the environmental impacts, such as calculating the carbon footprint of the particular office (WWF 2019.)

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a process developed to provide globally admitted and consistent guidelines for organizations to report about sustainability. Reporting might help organizations to set goals, measure performance and manage change to become more sustainable. GRI concerns economic, environmental and social aspects. According to GRI, environmental sustainability concerns organization's impact on living and non-living natural systems; land, air, water and ecosystems. The impacts are related to inputs (water and energy) and outputs (emissions, effluents and waste). As the scale of reported issues is very wide, small companies might find it difficult to follow the guidelines due to lack of resources. Yet still, the GRI guidelines are available for everyone, so it is possible to follow them at least partially (Global Reporting Initiative 2015.)

Certificates and standards have been criticized for not requiring concrete evidence of improvement in environmental practices. They provide guidelines, instructions and models, and encourage organizations to improve their performance. Although certified organizations are audited by a third party, they show no judgement in case of failing to improve. The criticism here is, that organizations holding an ISO 14001 certificate, for

example, do not necessarily indicate to more environmental responsible activities than competitors without a certificate (Simpson & Sroufe 2014, 835.)

In their research, Simpson & Sroufe (2014) suggest that certified and non-certified organizations have different stakeholder emphasis. Organizations who consider their most important stakeholders as regulative, such as governments, customers and employees, provide more specific information and reports. Non-certified organizations, on the other hand, consider normative stakeholders – community, media or NGOs – more important and preferably provide information in a more simple way (Simpson & Sroufe 2014, 846-847.)

### **3.12 Conclusions**

In this chapter, the theoretical framework of sustainability and corporate responsibility have been discussed from various aspects. The topics that are covered in this chapter are considered important to understand the concept of corporate responsibility, and what other issues are linked with CR. The theoretical framework will help explaining the empirical part and key concepts that emerge from the interviews, but also to conclude why corporate responsibility is important.

As the aim of this thesis is to investigate the environmental issues of the member organizations of Outdoor Finland, the dimension of environmental responsibility has more focus in this chapter than the other two dimensions of corporate responsibility.

Corporate responsibility goes beyond obeying the laws and regulations. To prove its legitimacy in the eyes of its key stakeholders, an organization must understand what the stakeholders are expecting from it, and to meet or even exceed those expectations. Stakeholders are affected by the operations of an organization, but on the other hand they are also able to influence the organization. Therefore, it would be important to identify what is expected from Outdoor Finland, and what Outdoor Finland is expecting from its stakeholders, in the context of environmental responsibility. Recognizing the expectations might help to understand the reactions of stakeholders in different situations.

Stakeholders' expectations and how the organization is responding to those expectations and demands can affect the organization's reputation. In the subchapter 3.3 it is discussed, how difficult it might be to manage an organizations reputation, as the reputation consists of perceptions, image and knowledge stakeholders have of the organization. Transparency and communication are considered important to foster a good reputation. It has been researched, that CR activities have a positive influence on the reputation of an organization. However, it has also been discovered that the way and on

which channels CR is reported has effect on how stakeholders perceive the information. Too much overwhelming and irrelevant information targeted for wrong stakeholders is a mistake to be avoided.

Communication in general is extremely important. Communication practices are needed when considering reputation management, stakeholders, engaging with stakeholders, relationships with suppliers, holding certificates and communicate about them, trying to achieve competitive advantage and an association communicating to its members and the publics. The most important thing in CR communication is, that the messages must be based on facts, truthful and easily verified. Getting caught by greenwashing or untruthful messages can result in trouble.

Considering the subchapter 3.5, Outdoor Finland has a big decision to make. Their members are of different sizes and unequal with resources. Does the association want competitive advantage for the most successful organizations, or foster the sustainability of the whole industry? In the light of the research and the fact that the industry is growing year after year, it might be a beneficial decision to aim for the common good within the industry – which would also bring more value to the member organizations of being an associate.



## **4 Research approach and methods**

This chapter will introduce the chosen research approach and discuss the data collection methods. Furthermore, the research process will be described as well as how the data for this research was gathered and analyzed. The aim of this research was to get an understanding of the current state of environmental responsibility and actions in the member organizations of Outdoor Finland, and to clarify the role and motivation of the association in helping its members to raise the level of sustainability.

### **4.1 A case study**

The research was conducted as a case study. In a case study approach the case, the subject of the research, can be an organization or one department of an organization, a product, service or a process. The aim of a case study is to provide detailed and comprehensive information of a recent phenomenon in its own environment or field, and to understand how the organization, for example, functions. A case study often aims to answer questions like “how?” or “why?”, and to provide new information that is a base to development. A case study is a suitable approach, when the objective is to fully understand an organization’s functions or a certain type of behavior among the employees, or to improve something (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 52-53).

This approach was chosen, because the aim of the project was to understand what the current level of environmental responsibility is in the member organizations of Outdoor Finland, how the phenomenon is perceived in both Outdoor Finland and the member organizations, and how it can be improved. In a case study approach, a phenomenon can be investigated in several organizations, for example, but it is essential that the subject of the research is understood as one case (Ojasalo et al. 2014, 53). In this context it means, that although there are many organizations that have been interviewed for this research, they all present the same industry and phenomenon that the industry is experiencing.

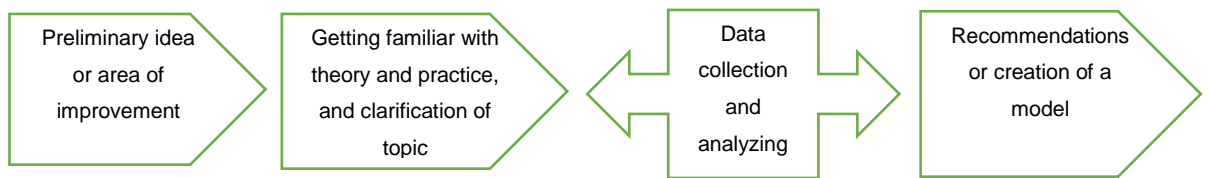


Figure 3. Stages of a case study. Source: Ojasalo et al. 2014, 54.

Case study is typically considered as a qualitative research method, but it is not unusual to have elements from quantitative data collection methods, such as surveys, in a case study either. Mixing quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, like interviews, surveys, focus group interviews, observation or benchmarking, can provide a more comprehensive result and understanding of the case (Ojasalo et al. 2014, 55). In this research, it was a conscious decision to only use qualitative research methods, because it was clear that the information was needed from a limited sample.

Typically, the researcher has some previous knowledge or understanding about the case or phenomenon, before starting the project and defining the research problem. It also requires some orientation to the subject before being able to understand what to research and what kind of questions can be asked (Ojasalo et al. 2014, 54).

#### 4.2 Previous knowledge of the industry and phenomenon

During the past years CR has become more and more important, and especially after the latest IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reports were released in October 2018 and August 2019, conversations of environmental responsibility and the responsibility of both individuals and companies towards the environment started to flow.

This social debate made me wonder how the industry I was working in, had considered these environmental issues and if there were some areas that the industry could develop. Strong interest towards corporate responsibility worked as a great motivator to investigate the current state in my own industry more.

Having worked in the OOH industry for a few years as a media planner, the industry was already quite familiar. The industry is rather small in Finland, and it consists of both large global organizations and small local companies. To get a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the industry, instead of choosing one organization to focus on, I chose to focus on an association, Outdoor Finland, that represents the industry in Finland.

Outdoor Finland has currently 10 member organizations, and it was clear from the beginning that it would be necessary and useful to interview representatives of each member organization. Additionally, it was considered interesting to investigate if Outdoor Finland as an association could influence or help its members to lead the industry towards more sustainable performance. Interviewing the board members of the association would provide a deeper understanding of the industry and where it could be going in the future.

### **4.3 The research process**

The chairman of the board of Outdoor Finland was contacted in February 2019, and introduced with the idea of conducting a Master's thesis to Outdoor Finland. The board was interested, and it was agreed that the first meeting with the chairman of the board would take place in March 2019.

At the meeting, it was discussed why environmental responsibility is important for OOH industry and what would be Outdoor Finland's ambitions about the research. The association considered the topic important but had no facts nor information about the state of responsibility in their member organizations. It was agreed that the research would include interviews with the member organizations to gain understanding about the current state, but also interviews with the board members to understand what Outdoor Finland considers important and what could be the areas that in terms of environmental responsibility would need more focus in the future. The conclusion of the meeting was that the case study would investigate how member organizations currently pay attention to environmental issues and policies, and provide recommendations for Outdoor Finland to support its members in developing their environmental responsibility. It was acknowledged, that more information and education about environmental issues would be needed in member organizations.

After the meeting, the research questions and questions for interviews were formed. As a guideline for finding the right interview questions that would contribute to answering the research questions, the GRI reporting guidelines were used. GRI provides guidelines of a wide range for all dimensions of CR, but only questions regarding environmental responsibility were chosen. Also, the environmental guidelines were carefully thought through and only issues that were considered the most important and valid for the member organizations, were chosen. Logistics, transportation, supplier evaluation, recycling and energy consumption, for example, were considered important topics as it was expected that these areas would have a huge impact on the environment. These topics were also considered valid for each member organization, and it was expected that the members would have processes regarding them and therefore could provide answers

to these questions. As the member organizations are of different sizes and have different resources, it was taken into account that some of the topics in the GRI might be too difficult to answer, and therefore left outside of the research.

There were two types of interviews with different themes and questions, aiming to gain information that would help answering the research questions. The first series of questions was for the member organizations and the other series was for the board of Outdoor Finland.

#### **4.4 Interviews**

The aim in qualitative research is to gain comprehensive and deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Ojasalo et al. 2014, 105). An interview is a good choice for a data collection method, when the topic of the research is relatively new or has not yet been thoroughly researched. An interview provides the opportunity to repeat or clarify the question if needed, and to have a conversation about the topic with the interviewee (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73). In this research, an interview was chosen for a data collection method, as there were only 10 organizations to collect data from. An interview was also considered more effective method than a survey, for example, because it was important that the topics could be discussed and explained in person in case of misunderstandings.

The chosen method was half-structured interview, which means that the interview proceeds according to specified themes and theme-related questions. The upside of a half-structured interview is, that the interviewer may change the order of questions, remove or even add questions if that is what the interview situation requires (Ojasalo et al. 2014, 108). The interview questions are introduced in appendices 1 and 2.

The themes of the interviews were given to the interviewees beforehand to guarantee that the interview situation would proceed smoothly, and that the interviews would provide as much valuable information as possible.

Nine organizations out of ten were interviewed, and one of the interviewees represented two different companies as they belong to the same organization. Therefore, it can be said, that all member organizations were interviewed and heard. One of the interviews was conducted as a group interview of three people. Three of the interviews had two interviewees, and five interviews were conducted individually. In all interviews, the titles of interviewees varied from CEO to marketing executive, sales manager and operations manager. The organizations had the opportunity to decide who would represent them in the interviews.

The second series of interviews was with the board members of Outdoor Finland. Out of four board members, three were interviewed.

The number of agreed interviews and responses can be considered excellent, as three board members out of four, and nine out of ten member organizations were interviewed. Receiving such a high response rate, it can be concluded that the topic was considered interesting and important among both the member organizations and the board of Outdoor Finland. It was delightful to see, that all members were committed to the project.

All interviews were conducted in May-June 2019, via Skype, telephone or face to face. Interviews were conducted anonymously, and the names of interviewees or represented organizations were not mentioned during the interview, nor will they be mentioned in this research paper. In all interviews, a recorder was used, and interviews saved in a digital form on a USB-stick. The recorder was very useful, as it gave the opportunity to transcribe the interviews, which made the analyzing of written documents easier.

#### **4.5 Analyzing qualitative data**

The objective in analyzing qualitative data is to create valuable new information about a phenomenon or subject. In qualitative research, the amount of data collected via interviews and other data collection methods can be massive, and by analyzing the data the information can be demonstrated in a clear and consistent way. Qualitative data is analyzed by breaking down the content and construct the information in a new entity that is an interpretation of the researcher. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108)

The content analysis of qualitative data can be either inductive or deductive. Inductive content analysis is content oriented, aiming to explain the phenomenon by creating new theory based on the collected data. Deductive content analysis, on the other hand, is an approach that aims to explain the data with theory. A deductive approach is good for testing hypothesis, theory or models that already exist. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108-113)

#### **4.6 Description of content analysis**

Inductive content analysis approach was used in this research, as the aim of the research was to understand what the stage of environmental responsibility in member organizations was, and to create recommendations based on that information. The collected data was first transcribed from audio to written form so that it would be easy to re-organize for analyzing. All interviews were saved as individual documents, respecting the anonymity of interviewees and companies they were representing.

The written documents were read many times to fully understand the meanings behind words and to find new insights, ideas or concepts. The data was first reduced, question by question and answer by answer, and only data that was relevant for the research was written on a separate document sheet for later analysis.

The interviews for member organizations included both questions based on the GRI guidelines concerning the environment and operations that have a direct impact on the environment, and questions that concerned the decision making and values in the organizations. The questions themselves formed clear themes, but to make the analysis phase smoother, the number of themes was reduced to six. The themes were a) materials (including recycling and waste) b) certificates and policies c) environment (including energy, water, biodiversity and carbon dioxide emission) d) transportation and logistics e) suppliers f) importance (including decision making and plans of growth).

The reduced data was then collected under each theme.

Qualitative content analysis can include quantitative analysis methods as well, which may provide new insights of the data and decrease the possibility of false interpretations (Ojasalo et al. 2014, 143). After the data being divided under different themes, Excel was used as a tool to list and count how many of the organizations had certifications, used green energy or had policies regarding company cars, for example. That kind of quantified data was useful in the analysis and helped in defining the final recommendations.

Similar content analysis was made with the interviews of board members. The audio files were first transcribed into written form and read many times to find the key points and insights. The data was then reduced and collected under three themes: a) importance b) the role of Outdoor Finland (including support and resources) c) common best practices and goals.

Quantitative methods were not used in analyzing the interviews of board members, as there were only three interviews and it was considered, that quantifying answers would not provide any new insights.

## 5 Findings

### 5.1 Interviews with member organizations

**Policies and certificates.** The interviews began with a rather wide question regarding the policies an organization has that might have a positive or negative impact on the environment. The aim of the question was to map the general awareness of the topic in the organization. The most common spontaneous answer was that the lightning in advertising devices had been changed to LED-lights. The heaviest reason for having LED-lights was to reduce the cost of electricity, but intentions of saving energy for environmental issues were mentioned as well. Other environmentally friendly policies that were spontaneously mentioned, were energy saving policies such as shutting the lights, keeping the office paperless, recycling at the office and supporting the staff to use public transportation when possible.

Most of the policies mentioned concerned the staff and operations at the office. It was clear, that the actions on personal level are conscious, and the organizations know what kind of positive things they can individually do for the environment. It can be concluded that personal values are slowly deploying to the business environment in the organizations. Five organizations mentioned organizational level policies as well, which concerned the life cycle of devices, processes regarding efficient washing of the devices or strict policies regarding suppliers. Only one of the organizations said to have Green Office certificate, and two organizations have ISO 14001 certificates.

**Materials, recycling and waste.** The OOH industry is constantly going through digitalization, and most OOH companies have digital advertising devices in their portfolio. Despite the big trend of digitalization, however, analogical devices such as posters, banners, advertisements on buses and other public transportation, billboards and road signs are still competitive among all possibilities. Most of these devices and materials are made of non-renewable sources. Non-renewable materials include metal, concrete, glass and plastics that are made of oil. Of course, electronics are included as well. All organizations emphasized the importance of recycling, especially recycling the digital devices. Currently, it is not possible to re-use the old devices, but maybe in the future the technology would enable using some of the components again. One organization mentioned that they only use paper that has been certified with an FSC or PEFC certificate. Other companies did not have a policy regarding the quality of paper, but they all emphasized that paper products are recycled as they should.

An interesting point was found when going through the data, regarding panels that are typically made of plastic and used in traditional OOH advertising. One organization said they had been looking for a material that could be re-used several times in its life cycle and found the type of material that lasts and can be used for multiple campaigns. Other organizations using similar material for similar use, mentioned that re-using the panels is not cost-efficient, or the possibility of re-using hasn't been investigated yet. However, it was said that those panels can be re-used in different context, for example for industrial use. Recycling of advertising materials and devices is always on the responsibility of the company itself, or the supplier.

Plastic can indeed be controversial as material. On one hand, it's tough as a material and can last in difficult weather conditions, but on the other hand it's not good for the environment as it's made of non-renewable materials. One organization had come up with an innovative solution to create shared value by partnering with another company creating new products, for business gifts, for example, out of the plastics used in advertising campaigns.

Many organizations could not identify if their devices produced dangerous waste, such as solvent, chemicals or batteries.

**Environment (energy, water, carbon dioxide emissions, biodiversity).** When asked about energy consumption and the source of energy organizations are using, it was considered one of the most important things impacting the environment, and none of the organizations said they wouldn't choose green energy. However, only three organizations said they are using energy from green sources in their advertising devices currently. Those who didn't use green energy, said they had not thought of that possibility at all but might change it in the future. The possibility of using solar panels and solar energy have been discussed in some organizations as well, but still considered too expensive.

As many interviewees mentioned in the beginning of the interview, LED-lights have been changed to most of the devices using lightning. The most important reason was the cost and reduction of electricity bills, but many interviewees also mentioned the environmental aspect having an influence on that as well. During the conversations, it became clear that the organizations were aware of the importance of all aspects of corporate responsibility (social, economic, and environmental), and how the different aspects affect one another.

One organization had a great practical example of reducing the energy consumption of their devices. As they did not have the possibility of affecting the source of energy they were using, they monitored the electricity consumption and found out that some colors



use more energy than others. Now the organization gives instructions to the creative agencies about which colors preferably to use in the adverts, in order to save energy and reduce costs.

Having the possibility of affecting the source of energy used in offices was considered challenging, as many smaller companies are renting office space from bigger properties, and therefore have no access to choosing the source of energy themselves. Energy saving policies at office were mostly considered starting from the personal level and from learned habits and have not been discussed on company level. Same considerations were found regarding water consumption. Three organizations said they monitor the water consumption at the office, and two organizations are monitoring the water consumption on business operations level. Water was not considered an issue in most organizations.

None of the organizations were aware of their direct carbon footprint or how much they are causing carbon dioxide emissions. The problem seemed to be the lack of knowledge and understanding of how to calculate and what aspects to consider in those calculations. One organization said to have calculations on global level, that could be used to estimate the carbon footprints locally as well. Most interviewees estimated that most of the emissions the organizations are causing would be because of logistics. Also, it was considered that suppliers producing advertising materials would be a huge cause of emissions. Concerns about the production of digital devices were brought up, but because it hasn't been compared which is better or worse – producing digital devices that have a longer life cycle than analogical devices or using more traditional devices - we can only ponder and guess.

Two of the organizations told that they had paid attention to the biodiversity and their business having an impact on it. It was mostly considered, that since the locations of devices were in or near cities or close to roadsides, the environment or biodiversity would not be affected by advertisements or devices directly. One organization had to consider the locations of devices more carefully, as their products are located in a specific environment. In this case, the considerations of choosing locations come from both the organization itself but also from responsibly operating business partners. Another point, that came up in one interview, regarding biodiversity and how OOH industry directly affects the environment, is pollution caused by light. The majority of the member organizations of Outdoor Finland have digital devices in their portfolio, which means digital screens in the city centers, shopping malls, roadsides and other public spaces. These screens produce bright lights that might affect, for example, birds and other animals by distracting them with unnatural light. It might be good to consider, if these screens could

be fixed in a way that they use brighter light in the daytime, and dimmer light when the natural light is darker.

**Transportation and logistics.** Transportation and logistics were mentioned to be one of the most impactful areas when considering the environment. However, at the time of the interviews only one organization had policies regarding cars and they only purchased low-consumption vehicles as company cars. In many organizations, it was mentioned that some kind of policies will be considered in the future, and the next company cars will be either hybrid or electric cars. One organization mentioned the possibility of using biodiesel. Two organizations mentioned that public transportation is supported, for example by providing travel cards or discounts for staff. However, although the opportunity is provided, it is not monitored how many actually are using the public transportation over choosing to travel with a car.

Three organizations said travelling by train has been increasing, and in longer journeys it is highly recommended. Cost-efficiency: saving time and money and being able to use the travel time for working, were the most important reasons for choosing train when travelling for work. Environment was mentioned as well, and it was considered as a bonus alongside with cost-efficiency.

Considering logistics, it plays a big role in the OOH industry. Especially for organizations whose business includes analogical advertising. All organizations needing transportation for weekly or monthly logistics said to have processes planned for efficient routes and change of materials. The logistics is done mainly with big companies such as Kaukokiito, Matkahuolto or Schenker.

**Suppliers.** Trust is the word that was emphasized in almost all interviews when talking about suppliers and how to choose them. Trustworthiness and experience within the industry were considered the most important things in suppliers, but trust is mainly based on references and conversations between the supplier and organization. One of the interviewees said they have a process regarding new suppliers and verifying their responsibility in operations. Specific questions regarding the supplier candidate's processes and environment are asked already in the beginning, when choosing a supplier. Not answering the questions automatically leads to not choosing that supplier.

Suppliers and business partners are chosen based on costs and business first. Organizations believe that having conversations with the suppliers and having two-way communication can benefit the industry and foster sustainability. One organization was happy to receive information and news about their suppliers' operations and development

of equipment. They believe transparency strengthens the co-operation and trust between them.

Many interviewed organizations felt they don't have any power on how their suppliers produce the products they need, or they can't influence the carbon footprint, for example, that their suppliers are causing. In bigger cities there are usually more options and suppliers to choose from, but in smaller towns there might not be competition over, for example, contractors or mechanics.

**Importance (decision making and growth plans).** As a conclusion from the interviews, it can be said that the industry is indeed growing, and many organizations have plans on focusing especially on digitalizing their portfolios. Some interviewees said that digitalization itself might be better for the environment than analogical adverts, but the impacts on the environment are impossible to compare without thorough calculations. One organization said to believe in product development and that new sustainable products will be produced in the future.

Environmental issues have been considered on some level, as it was mentioned that high quality and longer life cycles of devices with the newest technology will be invested in already now and more in the future, energy-saving devices and solar panels have been discussed in some organizations as well. However, it was also admitted that environment is not the first thing in mind when considering these decisions and options. Organizations want to provide high quality for the clients, to keep the business competitive. Because the society, clients and consumers are becoming more aware of the environment, the interviewed organizations felt they need to start investing on sustainability to maintain the business – which is an economic motivator. It was considered positive, that economic and ecologic dimensions of responsibility boost one another.

Few organizations mentioned business gifts and focusing on the quality and amount of giveaways. One organization said they had made a conscious decision on giving up on unnecessary plastic gifts and focusing on a well-thought product for a specific target group. One organization had decided of changing meetings into virtual meeting within the organization, to reduce the time and driven kilometers. One organization claimed they can't do anything or make decisions based on the environmental impacts, as they are such a small organization.

One interviewee said, that especially small companies must think and act business first, but they can't afford operating irresponsibly as bigger organizations have the resources and abilities on operating in a responsible way. Hence, they need to find the balance

somehow. It had been noticed that the younger generation is even more aware and educated about the environment and our impacts on the environment and have even more greener values than before. Organizations need to update their values, develop processes and act responsibly to meet with the values of future employees – which is vital for the continuum of the business.

It was mentioned, that from the personal aspect environmental issues are in a more advanced level than from the organizational aspect. Interviewees felt that they have the values and will, but no tools, knowledge or resources. It was also mentioned many times, that they should talk about the topic internally more often – to get insights and be more aware of what kind of actions have actually already been taken. Because of this research, one organization had already formed a team that would focus on considering environmental aspects and think how they could be more sustainable.

To conclude the interviews, environmental responsibility was considered important for the industry – and for any industry. Many things are already been considered and things been done, but this round of interviews had opened their eyes, and many had started see things differently or from a different view.

## **5.2 Analysis of the interviews with the board**

**Importance.** The common opinion about the importance of environmental responsibility in OOH industry was that it really is important already now, and even more in the future. Outdoor Finland has not yet reacted to the rising pressure of investing and focusing resources on environmental issues, but industry is slowly going towards actions. The board believed, that in the future environmental responsibility might bring competitive advantage and be a positive factor affecting the employer image. At least, not being able to prove that operations that have a positive impact on the environment are done, might cause trouble.

Outdoor Finland does not currently put any environment-related requirements to its member organizations but in the future, it might be one aspect when considering new memberships. Now, an important criterion is economically sustainable business, but the criteria might as well include other dimensions of corporate responsibility, like ecological responsibility.

However, it was emphasized that the first and most important step for Outdoor Finland in leading the industry towards more sustainable performance and environmentally responsible business, is to educate the member organizations and focus on communication about the topic.

**The role of Outdoor Finland (including support and resources).** When interviewing the board members, it came out clear that there are currently not enough resources to focus on and develop environmental issues. It would require a third-party consultant or equivalent, which would mean bigger investments from Outdoor Finland, and commitment and desire from the members to invest in it.

To be willing to invest more, the member organizations need to know more and be educated more. What do they get out of it? What are the benefits? It was mentioned in the member organizations interviews as well, that small companies do not have as much resources or knowledge as the bigger global organizations might have – and they wished to get shared information for common use. Also, the board members noted that as a strength of Outdoor Finland and one of the benefits and values they could offer for the small member organizations – and provide a reason to stay as a member.

Communication has an important role in creating awareness both internally and externally. Internally, Outdoor Finland could educate member organizations and share best practices and other information. On the other hand, Outdoor Finland could communicate to external stakeholders about concrete actions or commitments the member organizations have made regarding the environment.

**Common best practices and goals.** Interviewing the member organizations revealed that motivation and values exists, but tools are lacking. The board considered the situation as an opportunity to find the tools and develop the industry together.

Forming a work group or team that would include representatives of each member organization, was considered a good idea to involve all members and to think of common goals that each organization could commit to. One board member was concerned about the members being under pressure to reveal their business secrets or advantages but thought everyone should consider responsibility issues as the advantage of the industry.

The board considered important to find a common way to calculate the carbon footprint of each organization, invest resources in finding the responsible suppliers and to reduce energy consumption and the light pollution caused by digital screens. Policies for transportation and recycling or usage of more sustainable materials were also considered important shared best practices. Applying for environmental certificates, for example Green Office certificate, was mentioned to be a good start.

Outdoor Finland can't designate what member organizations must do, but it can provide instructions and recommendations on how to do certain things. For Outdoor Finland to monitor its members' operations, and therefore have more power on them, the member

organizations would have to commit to the process by investing more money, report to Outdoor Finland, and a third-party would monitor the development process. However, it is not seen possible or even necessary at this stage.

For the board, the most important goal and first thing to do was to focus on communication and to gain more understanding about the issue, what can be done and what kind of contribution is expected from the member organizations.

## 6 Recommendations

The process has now taken the first step, as all members of Outdoor Finland have been interviewed and the issue has been brought up. During the interviews it was mentioned many times, that already being interviewed about the topic and pondering about the questions they were asked, made the interviewees think about the environment from the point of view of their business. The next step would be to sit down together, learn more about the topic and gain more understanding of how the members together could develop the industry.

The recommendations presented here are drawn from the theoretical framework and interpretations made from the interviews.

**Certificates.** Getting certified by Green Office would be a good starting point for each member organization, regardless of the size. Green Office provides tailored environment programmes considering the needs and operations of the organization, starting from the daily practices at the office. As the interviews revealed, daily activities with a positive impact on the environment are already implemented at the office by individual employees. The certificate could potentially generate to more ambitious activities, as the employees already have environmentally focused values. Green Office also provides standards and tools for calculating the carbon footprint caused by the activities at the office, which is only one part of the total footprint, but could be the starting point of consistent reporting.

**Materials, recycling and waste.** All organizations are recycling the advertising materials according to the regulations either by themselves or by a third party, for example, a subcontractor. In case of a subcontractor taking care of the recycling, organizations could instruct them specifically on how to recycle each material correctly.

Within the member organizations, there are several who have panels made of polypropylene, which is plastic, in their portfolio. As one of the organizations said, they had investigated the issue and found that it was cost-efficient – and better for the environment – to use the panels 3-4 times. It might be beneficial for all organizations using similar panels, to investigate and calculate the issue more. Offering the panels for construction industry, for example, is also a good way to continue the lifecycle of the panels. Some organizations already are doing this.

In several organizations, plastic is used in other forms and formats as well. Instead of directly throwing the plastic waste away after a campaign has ended, there might be other companies looking for plastic waste for further use. One of the member organizations had

partnered with another company using plastic to create new products. That kind of partnership benefits both and brings both economic and ecological value.

A few organizations are using large amounts of paper for posters. One of the organizations said they only use PEFC or FSC certified paper from sustainably grown forests, and it is recommended for other organizations as well to focus on finding a supplier for certified paper.

**Giveaways.** Considering giveaways, well thought and useful gifts are delightful for clients and other stakeholders. Carefully considered giveaway is also a powerful statement and a concrete message of the values of the organization. Giving thorough consideration on the type of giveaways can potentially decrease the amount of waste. One organization already had decided to change disposable giveaways to more meaningful business gifts to a specifically targeted group of stakeholders, which probably increased the positive perceptions of the organization.

**Environment (water, energy, carbon dioxide, biodiversity).** Reducing energy consumption is considered important in all organizations, but the sources of green energy are not yet widely used. Some organizations do not have the opportunity to choose the source of used energy as their offices are part of bigger properties. However, it is highly recommended, that energy used in advertising devices and at the office will be changed to energy from sustainable sources, when possible.

The consumption of energy in advertising devices can be monitored and controlled by how the content is produced. By monitoring their digital screens, one organization already found out that different colors consume different amount of energy. Another thing concerning the digital screens, is the brightness of the light they produce – light pollution. For the biodiversity and environment, maybe from the economic aspect as well, it would be better if the screens adjusted to the environment by being brighter or dimmer according to the natural light.

Calculating the carbon footprint is an issue that could start with the help of Green Office certificate, but in the long run only knowing the footprint of each office is not enough. Finding a consistent and mutual way for each organization to announce their total carbon footprint, would make the OOH industry more comparable to other industries within marketing communications.

**Logistics and transportation** were assumed to be one of the biggest issues concerning the environmental impact. Logistics and transportation cause a lot of emissions, which is also an important aspect that the GRI encourages to follow and report. The member



organizations also considered that the biggest impacts they have on the environment, would be caused by transportation and logistics, but currently there were not many policies regarding those aspects. There could be targets for reducing emissions by driving less with an own car, company cars could be updated to fuel-efficient or gas-, electric- or hybrid cars. More support for public transportation or cycling, especially in the cities where the public transport is efficient and works well.

Regarding logistics, many member organizations considered not having much influence on how the suppliers or subcontractors take care of logistics or what kind of vehicles they are using. However, suppliers are part of the supply chain and organizations can encourage them using vehicles or fuel with less emissions. Big logistic companies might also be certified with an environmental certificate. Investigating the possibility of a certified logistic partner would be recommended.

**Suppliers.** Responsible supply chain makes an organization itself more responsible. All member organizations are using multiple suppliers, and most of them emphasized the importance of trust between suppliers and the organization. However, some interviewees mentioned that regardless of trust, you can never be sure if you don't have the facts. The GRI guidelines encourage organizations to report about the recognized negative impacts suppliers have on the environment and about the actions or improvements that are agreed on as a result of the supplier assessment. Since many member organizations might be using same suppliers and similar materials, it would be recommended to share experiences about the different suppliers. Together with the member organizations, Outdoor Finland could compile a code for suppliers to follow. In addition to following the laws and regulations of each country the company is operating in, the code could require suppliers to, for example, hold specific certificates, commitment to reducing emissions and energy consumption, efficient recycling and usage of renewable materials when possible. Evaluating suppliers and encouraging them operating in a certain way to become more sustainable, gives organizations the opportunity to influence their own performance and level of sustainability. Open dialogue between a supplier and an organization is important to maintain the trust and develop the cooperation further.

**Communication.** The interviews reveal that the personal values and motivation to act in an environmentally friendly manner are very strong, and employees are doing small things every day, perhaps unconsciously. However, the small individual acts remain at personal level because in many cases the issue has not been brought up to concern the whole company. Each company could set up conversations, ponder and brainstorm around the

topic together internally, to see what they consider important and what they are capable of with their resources.

The strength of Outdoor Finland as an association is the power of a community, the skills and tacit knowledge about the industry that can be shared for peers. Therefore, it would be important to gather together as well. As it can be concluded based on the interviews, all organizations already have policies and ideas regarding how to operate within the industry, and some have already created well working new best practices. Sharing ideas or solutions on how to make things in a more cost-efficient way is not necessarily giving away the competitive advantage, as they might result in bigger ideas that benefit all.

Carefully planned and led communication is recommended for engaging the members, to provide everyone a chance to attend the dialogue and contribute to the common good. It could be a workshop facilitated by a third party consultant, or someone from the member organizations who has a good understanding about environmental responsibility. It could also be a brainstorming event, with an ecological agenda. Aiming to find the mutual understanding and desire to develop together requires open dialogue and two-way communication between the members and the board – a feeling that no one is dominating the conversation, and everyone is being heard and appreciated.

Listening to different stakeholders, such as clients, advertising- and media agencies or cities and municipalities might also help identifying the key issues that would need more environmental focus. Listening and involving stakeholders creates dialogue, which ultimately can also help organizations and stakeholders to understand each other's expectations better and engage them more. It is about the license to operate, about meeting and exceeding stakeholders' expectations, proving the legitimacy and justifying the existence and growth of OOH industry.

The desired outcome of the brainstorm, or workshop, and listening and involving stakeholders would be that mutual goals and next steps could be agreed on.

After all member organizations have agreed on the next steps, the starting point needs to be clarified. For example, if all member organizations agree on reducing their carbon footprint during the next two years, the current levels need to be calculated first. Aiming to change all digital screens to adjust to the natural light would need an agreed time frame to the change and concrete facts on how it affects the environment and biodiversity.

Focusing more on the responsibility of the supply chain would require facts: how will we do it?

External communication happens only after something concrete has been done. Once the starting points of each area of improvement are clear, the goals can be communicated externally. However, it is also very important to transparently communicate about the results – did we reach our goals? Why? Why not?

Yearly reporting might be too long a time span, as stakeholders need fresh and valid updates. Messages can be directed to those stakeholder groups who might find them interesting and essential.

As the aim of this thesis is for Outdoor Finland to support the member organizations and promote the sustainable development of the industry, the main channel for communicating about environmental actions could be the website of Outdoor Finland. Each member organization could also publish messages regarding their own performance on their own website and other channels they might be using.

## **6.1 Summary of recommendations**

The theory of sustainability and environmental responsibility was studied by looking into it from different aspects. The theory was then reflected with the analyzed interviews with the board of Outdoor Finland and its member organizations. As a result, recommendations on which issues should be developed for the OOH industry to continue its growth with a more responsible focus, will be provided as followed:

- Certifications
  - Green Office to start off with
- Materials and recycling
  - Get acquainted with recycling the specific materials your organization is using. In case a supplier or subcontractor is taking care of recycling for you, be sure to instruct them accordingly
  - Consider using PEFC or FSC certified paper
- Re-use
  - Investigate the possibility of re-using materials, such as panels
  - Search for partners or industries who could re-use your materials
- Giveaways or business gifts
  - Give up on unnecessary business gifts and consider more sustainable options
- Energy
  - Change to green energy when possible

- Monitor your digital screens and their energy consumption → are some colors using more energy than others? Is it possible to shut down the screens for a few hours during the night?
- Light pollution
  - Investigate if your digital screens can be adjusted to the natural light
- Carbon footprint
  - Find a mutual way of calculating your carbon footprint. Green Office certificate provides tools for calculating the footprint of your office
- Policies for transportation
  - Goals for reducing emissions
  - Update company cars for low consumption vehicles or gas-, hybrid or electric cars
  - Support public transportation
- Logistics
  - Look for environmentally certified logistic companies
- Suppliers
  - Focus on finding responsible suppliers
  - Create a code for suppliers
  - Focus on transparent communication with suppliers
- Communication
  - First focus on internal communication, orientating and education of all member organizations
  - Brainstorm or have a workshop with a third party facilitator, find mutual goals that are achievable for all member organizations considering their resources
  - Listen and involve stakeholders
  - Find out the starting point and clarify goals → communicate externally only after something concrete has been done
  - Provide stakeholders fresh and valid updates
  - Direct messages to those stakeholders who might find that information interesting and accurate
  - Outdoor Finland's website as a main communication channel for the common updates. Additionally, each organization can communicate about their own performance on their own channels

Member organizations being of different sizes and having different amount of resources must be taken into consideration when deciding the first issues Outdoor Finland wants to

start developing. Not everything can be changed at once, but it is assumed that the most essential issues will be discovered during the discussions Outdoor Finland has with its members and stakeholders.

Since the OOH industry has not yet taken a stand on environmental issues or communicated about any activities in public, the stakeholders don't know how these issues are taken into account. As Hasan & Yun (2017, 83-85) and Axjonow et al. (2018, 432) claim, CR activities have a positive impact on the reputation of an organization. Therefore, listening to stakeholders' expectations and hopes, and reacting to them, can potentially affect the reputation of the industry.

It is assumed that in the future, more industries will come out with their announcements of taking more responsibility of their own actions and on the environment. Many organizations in different industries, in the food industry, for example, have already publicly challenged their competitors to publish their carbon footprint. The more information consumers have about different options, the more they can compare. Speculatively, having factful information about an OOH campaign's carbon footprint could affect a client choosing that campaign over something else. Organizations operating within marketing communications industries are also suppliers for marketers and other operators, who might have the pressure on choosing a supplier with a small carbon footprint.

Most recommendations provided in this chapter, such as policies for transportation and logistics, efficient recycling of materials or reducing energy consumption and using energy from sustainable sources don't directly affect stakeholders, but they do have an impact on the total footprint of the organization.

Regardless of digitalization of OOH advertising, analogical advertising materials made of paper and plastic are still used a lot. This might affect the perceptions stakeholders have of the industry and how sustainable the industry is compared to others. Hence, all CR activities might affect the reputation in a positive way.

## **6.2 Feedback received from the board**

The findings and recommendations were introduced to the board of Outdoor Finland in September 2019.

The feedback received was positive, and recommendations were considered a good starting point for developing the industry. It was discussed, whether the association will start guiding the industry forward towards more sustainable growth, or will sustainability remain as a competitive factor within the industry. Lack of resources in smaller

organizations was brought up again, and therefore Outdoor Finland taking a role in the development was considered a good idea.

However, an important point that came up, was that if Outdoor Finland will start guiding and developing the industry, all member organizations must agree, follow and commit to it. For everyone to be able to follow requires that mutual areas of development and next steps are found.

The board now needs to decide the next steps and how they will continue the process. It can be concluded that the study was considered helpful and useful, and all members were happy to have been part of the project.

## 7 Conclusions

The objective of the study was to research the level of environmental responsibility in the member organizations of Outdoor Finland, an association representing the OOH industry in Finland. The study was conducted by using qualitative research methods, and all member organizations were interviewed using a half-structured interview method. Additionally, the members of the board of Outdoor Finland were interviewed to gain understanding on how the board perceives the environmental issues and how does it influence the industry. The aim was to investigate, if Outdoor Finland as an association could help the industry develop towards sustainable growth.

Three research questions were formed, and the aim was to find answers to the research questions by interviewing both member organizations and members of the board of Outdoor Finland. The research questions were:

1. What issues must OOH industry take into consideration in order to grow sustainably?
2. What factors affect the choices member organizations make concerning sustainability of its operations?
3. What kind of role can Outdoor Finland take in fostering the sustainable growth of its member organizations?

To ask the right questions from the member organizations, and to provide an answer to the first research question, the GRI reporting guidelines were used to define what areas are important for sustainable business. The GRI guidelines are provided for organizations, who report about their responsibility activities. Not all topics from the GRI were chosen, but the ones that were considered important and relevant in terms of the OOH industry affecting the environment, and what could potentially be reasonable to ask from organizations that are of different sizes.

The interviews with the member organizations revealed, that in all organizations the environment and issues affecting the environment are considered important. It was clear, that values exist on a personal level, but are not yet fully deployed to the business level. Many issues have already been taken into account, like recycling, but a lot of things are still lacking – due to resources or lack of knowledge and understanding.

It can be concluded that **the answer to research question 1. is the areas that need more focus in most organizations.** Energy consumption and **the source of used energy** is one of the biggest things that needs improvement. All organizations agreed that green energy is good and for most organizations it would be possible, but only a few said they used energy from sustainable sources. **Responsibility of suppliers** and supply chain is another big issue to be improved. Organizations need to invest time and resources in finding the responsible suppliers – an organization can state to be responsible only if its suppliers are as well. Most organizations assumed **transportation and logistics** play a big role in their carbon footprint, and more goals on emission reduction and policies in that area are required. **Calculating the carbon footprint** is difficult, and even the big organizations have not yet figured out how to logically calculate it. It was recommended, that member organizations should apply for the Green Office certificate, as it provides tools for calculating the carbon footprint at the office. It must be emphasized, that Green Office only takes the actions at the office into account, but it would be a good starting point to create some comparable figures.

The main factor affecting all decision making in all organizations, is business. All decisions are made business first, but many organizations considered sustainability issues having a small influence in the background as well. Many have understood that the dimensions of corporate responsibility often walk hand in hand, and environmentally friendly decisions often have an economic impact as well. For example, all organizations have changed the lightning on their advertising devices to LED-lights, to reduce the energy consumption and save in costs. LED-lights being environmentally more friendly than halogens, for example, is only considered as bonus. Therefore, **the answer to research question 2. is business and economic factors.** However, it can also be concluded that environmental issues can't be neglected, and organizations can't afford radically unsustainable decisions. Many organizations considered stakeholders' expectations, and the condition of our planet, very valuable, and therefore thought they need to make sustainable choices as well. Concerns about the future and continuum of the business were also brought up, as it was considered that future employees want to work for businesses that share the same values with them. It is also a question of reputation and comparability to other industries, for example.



The board of Outdoor Finland highlighted that they are not in a position to designate what the member organizations must do. However, the association can **recommend and advise what to do, which is the answer to research question 3**. Outdoor Finland can educate the member organizations, provide help and shared resources in finding mutual areas of development and how to solve them, and to communicate externally that the industry is taking steps forward.

Being unequal with resources is a challenging factor, when trying to find the areas of development that all organizations are capable of implementing. A big question and challenge for the association is, will they start guiding the whole industry towards sustainable growth or will sustainability issues remain a competitive factor within the industry? As Galan et al. (2012) conclude in their paper, being a member of an association might be beneficial for smaller member organizations as they can imitate the activities and solutions that were explored with shared resources. On the other hand, bigger organizations that might have the resources, can potentially benefit from the whole industry being considered sustainable in cases were they are evaluated in the industry context.

### **7.1 Reliability and validity in qualitative research**

Qualitative research is aiming to create illumination, understanding and extrapolation to different subjects. It uses naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in different contexts. Research methods used in qualitative research include interviews and observation: methods that require a person, a researcher, to conduct the research and data collection. (Golafshnani 2003, 600)

The concept of objectivity is based on the idea that a truth exists outside the observation or investigation. It is strongly criticized, that can the results of a research ever be not affected by the researcher: by her age, gender, political or religious views or occupation. In qualitative research that is inevitable, since the analysis is made of the interpretive of the researcher (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 136).

The concepts of reliability and validity are broadly criticized in qualitative research context, as they are mainly used in testing and evaluation in quantitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 138). However, both quantitative and qualitative research need something to demonstrate that the research is valid and of good quality. In qualitative research the concept of reliability can be considered to define as credibility, neutrality, confirmability, consistency, dependability and transferability. The most crucial aspect, however, is trustworthiness (Golafshnani 2003, 600).

In the context of qualitative research, the concept of validity has often been re-defined as quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Golafshani 2003, 602).

## **7.2 Reliability**

The data for this research was collected by interviewing representatives of the member organizations of Outdoor Finland. In the beginning, the CEO's of each organization were contacted via e-mail, and asked for a contact person that would be a suitable interviewee. In some cases, an organization had a person responsible for sustainability issues, but the sample also included interviewees that were not specifically involved with those issues. Therefore, in this research, it must be acknowledged that although the interviewees answered the questions with their best knowledge, some issues may have been undiscovered due to uncertainty.

However, uncertainty implies to not being aware or not having enough understanding or knowledge, which on the other hand justifies the aim of this research: to raise awareness of the topic.

During the interviews, it was admitted many times that the organization had not thought of a specific operation from the environmental aspect, and already attending the interview had given them much to think about. Admitting that, it can be considered that the answers were honest and therefore reliable.

## **7.3 Validity**

The interviews revealed that many of the organizations were not fully aware of the impacts their operations have on the environment. Therefore, it can be considered that there was a serious need for development. In all cases, there were questions that could not be answered because the interviewees did not have adequate knowledge, information or understanding of the issue that the question concerned.

Not receiving answers to all questions does not mean that the research was a failure or questions too difficult. Unanswered questions are interpreted as not being certain and not having enough understanding or knowledge, which provides valid and valuable information for the case study and can be considered as topics that need improvement.

## **7.4 Evaluation of own learning**

This project has been very interesting for me personally. I have been interested in the topic of corporate responsibility, and especially environmental responsibility for a long time. Any business performing irresponsibly has been incomprehensible for me.

Therefore, it was interesting to investigate the industry I have been working within for a few years. I assumed that the industry would be following some principles of sustainability, and especially that the social and economic dimensions of corporate responsibility would be well managed. About the environmental dimension I wasn't sure, because that dimension is so specific and requires many resources to be handled comprehensively.

One of the most important things that I learned when starting this project, was the importance of preparing, planning and making strict decisions. In the beginning, it was a challenge for me to find the right focus. And although after the focus was found, it was still difficult for me to evaluate which issues would be important to include and which ones could be left out. The thesis was made in parts and the structure found its form, including the different topics that should be covered in the theoretical part, while both analyzing the interviews and reading the literature.

During the process, I have learned a lot about corporate responsibility and the different aspects of that framework. What I find more important than getting familiar with the topic, is that I have learnt to be more analytical and critical towards the information I receive. In the beginning, it was difficult to critically investigate different sources and evaluate which information would be valid for my research. As I read the books, it became more clear which topics and issues would be relevant, as those topics were repeated in most books.

I was very happy with the interviews and how they were received in the member organizations, as well as the members of the board. The spontaneous feedback that I got from some of the interviewees, was very positive. I got the feeling that this research was useful and eye-opening – especially for the smaller local companies. As I consider this topic important, it was inspiring to hear that my efforts were well received and that the research might be useful. I hope this research will result in further development.

## References

- Arendt, S. & Brettel, M. 2010. Understanding the influence of corporate social responsibility on corporate identity, image and firm performance. *Management Decision*, 48, 10, pp. 1469-1492.
- Argenti, P. 2016. *Corporate Responsibility*. Sage Publications, Inc. United States of America.
- Axjonow, A., Ernstberger, J. & Pott, C. 2018. The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Disclosure on Corporate Reputation: A Non-Professional Stakeholder Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 151, 2, August 2018, pp. 429-450.
- Belz, F-M., Peattie, K. 2012. *Sustainability Marketing – A Global perspective*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. John Wiley & Sons Ltd. United Kingdom.
- Blowfield, M. & Murray, A. 2014. *Corporate Responsibility*. 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press. New York, United States of America.
- Chandler, D. 2017. *Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Sage Publications. United States of America.
- Cornelissen, J. 2017. *Corporate Communications: A Guide to Theory & Practice*. 5th Edition. Sage. United Kingdom.
- Elkington, J. 2018. 25 Years Ago I Coined the Phrase “Triple Bottom Line”. Here’s Why It’s Time to Rethink It. *Harvard Business Review*. URL: <https://hbr.org/2018/06/25-years-ago-i-coined-the-phrase-triple-bottom-line-heres-why-im-giving-up-on-it> Quoted 20.9.2019
- European Commission 2019. *Eco-Management and Audit Scheme*. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/#> Quoted 27.8.2019
- Fisk, P. 2010. *People, Planet, Profit*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Kogan Page Limited. United Kingdom.
- Fombrun, C. J. & Low, J. The Real Value of Reputation. *Communication World*, November-December 2011, pp. 18-22.
- Friend, G. 2009. *The Truth About Green Business*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Natural Logic, Inc. New Jersey, United States of America.

Galan, J.I., Moura-Leite, R.C. & Padgett, R.C. 2012. Is social responsibility driven by industry or firm-specific factors? *Management Decision*, 50, 7, pp. 1200-1221.

Global Reporting Initiative 2015. G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines. URL: <https://www.globalreporting.org/resource/library/GRIG4-Part1-Reporting-Principles-and-Standard-Disclosures.pdf>

Quoted 23.4.2019

Golafshnani, N. 2003. Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8, 4, pp. 597-606. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss4/6/> Quoted 21.7.2019

Haapala, J. & Aavameri, L. 2008. *Omatuntotalous*. Talentum Media Oy. Helsinki.

Harmaala, M. & Jallinoja, N. 2012. *Yritysvastuu ja menestyvä liiketoiminta*. 1st Edition. Sanoma Pro Oy. Helsinki.

Hasan, R. & Yun, T.M. 2017. Theoretical linkage between corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation. *Indonesian Journal of Sustainability Accounting and Management*, 1, 2, pp. 80-89.

Hillgrén, A. 2014. *Kilpailuetua Yritysvastuusta*. Turun yliopisto. URL: [http://www.utu.fi/fi/yksikot/fff/palvelut/kehitysprojektit/vastuullisuusviestinta/Documents/Kilpailuetua%20yhteiskuntavastuusta\\_Final.pdf](http://www.utu.fi/fi/yksikot/fff/palvelut/kehitysprojektit/vastuullisuusviestinta/Documents/Kilpailuetua%20yhteiskuntavastuusta_Final.pdf)

Quoted 19.8.2019

International Chamber of Commerce. ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code. URL: <https://iccwbo.org/publication/icc-advertising-and-marketing-communications-code/> Quoted 4.9.2019

IPPC 2019. URL: <https://www.ipcc.ch/2019/> Quoted 14.8.2019

ISO 2019. URL: <https://www.iso.org/home.html> Quoted 26.8.2019

Juholin, E. 2017. *Communicare! Viestinnän tekijän käsikirja*. Infor. Management Institute of Finland MIF Oy. Turenki.

Juutinen, S. & Steiner, M-L. 2010. *Strateginen yritys vastuu*. WSOYpro Oy. Helsinki.

Kauppakamari. Markkinointiin sovellettavat säännöt. URL:

<https://kauppakamari.fi/lautakunnat/men/sovellettavat-saannot/> Quoted 4.9.2019

Kerrigan, F. & Schaefer, A. 2008. Trade associations and corporate social responsibility: evidence from the UK water and film industries. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 17, 2, pp. 171-195.

Ketola, T. 2005. Vastuullinen liiketoiminta – sanoista teoksi. Edita Prima Oy. Helsinki.

Koipijärvi, T. & Kuvaja, S. 2017. Yritysvastuu – Johtamisen uusi normaali. 1st Edition. Helsingin seudun kauppakamari. Printon, Estonia.

Kujala, J. & Kuvaja, S. 2002. Sidosryhmät eettisen liiketoiminnan kirittäjinä. Talentum Media Oy. Jyväskylä.

Luoma-aho, V. & Olkkonen, L. 2014. Public relations as expectation management? *Journal of Communication Management*. Vol 18, 3, pp. 222-239.

Martin, D. & Schouten, J. 2012. *Sustainable Marketing*. Pearson Education Inc. New Jersey, United States of America.

MTL. MTL:n eettiset säännöt. URL: <https://mtl.fi/mtl/organisaatio/mtln-eettiset-saannot/> Quoted 4.9.2019

OAAA – Out of Home Advertising Association of America. Code of Industry Principles. URL: <https://oaaa.org/AboutOAAA/WhoWeAre/OAAACodeofIndustryPrinciples.aspx> Quoted 4.9.2019

Ojasalo, K., Moilanen, T. & Ritalahti, J. 2014. Kehittämistyön menetelmät; Uudenlaista osaamista liiketoimintaan. 3rd Edition. Sanoma Pro Oy. Helsinki.

OMA – Outdoor Media Association 2013a. About us. URL: <http://www.oma.org.au/about-us>

Quoted 4.9.2019

OMA – Outdoor Media Association 2019b. Code of Ethics. URL:

[http://www.oma.org.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/20552/OMA-Code-Of-Ethics.pdf](http://www.oma.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/20552/OMA-Code-Of-Ethics.pdf)

Quoted 4.9.2019

OMA – Outdoor Media Association 2019c. Environment and Sustainability Policy. URL: [http://www.oma.org.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/20556/OMA-Environment-and-Sustainability-Policy.pdf](http://www.oma.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/20556/OMA-Environment-and-Sustainability-Policy.pdf)

Quoted 4.9.2019

Outdoor Finland – Suomen Ulkomainosliitto 2019a. Uutiset. URL: <http://www.outdoorfinland.fi/uutiset/ulkomainonta-oli-suurin-kasvaja-vuonna-2018/6-14>

Quoted 4.9.2019

Outdoor Finland – Suomen Ulkomainosliitto 2019b. Yhdistys. URL: <http://www.outdoorfinland.fi/yhdistys/2>

Quoted 4.9.2019

Rawlins, B. L. 2006. Prioritizing Stakeholders for Better Public Relations. Institute for Public Relations, March 2006, pp. 1-14.

Rohweder, L. 2004. Yritysvastuu – kestävä kehitys organisaatiossa. WS Bookwell Oy. 1st Edition. Porvoo.

Simpson, D. & Sroufe, R. 2014. Stakeholders, reward expectations and firm's use of the ISO 14001 management standard. International Journal of Operations & Production Management, 34, 7, pp. 830-852.

Staib, R. 2005. Environmental Management and Decision Making for Business. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Palgrave Macmillan. London, United Kingdom.

Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. 2009. Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi. 5th Edition. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi. Helsinki.

United Nations 2019. URL: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

Quoted 13.8.2019

WWF 2019. Green Office. URL: <https://wwf.fi/vaikuta-kanssamme/greenoffice/mika-green-office/>

Quoted 27.8.2019

Yle 2019. Suomalaiset vaateyritykset kertovat niukasti tuotantojensa vastuullisuudesta – kajaanilainen R-Collection arvioitiin lähes pohjamutiin. URL: <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10744873>

Quoted 20.8.2019



## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview questions for the member organizations:

1. Minkälaisia käytäntöjä teillä on liittyen yrityksenne negatiivisten ympäristövaikutusten vähentämiseen tai positiivisten vaikutusten lisäämiseen? Onko yrityksellänne ympäristösertifikaatteja? Jos, niin mitä?
2. Materiaalit. Mistä materiaaleista tuotteenne (julisteet, mainostaulut ja muut mainosvälineet) on tehty? Ovatko ne uusiutuvia vai uusiutumattomia materiaaleja? Osaatko arvioida, mikä on kierrätettyjen materiaalien osuus tuotteissanne?
3. Energian kulutus. Minkälaista energiaa käytätte digitaalisissa- ja muissa mainosvälineissänne? Entä minkälaista energiaa käytätte toimistollanne? Onko yrityksellänne energiaa säästäviä käytäntöjä?
4. Vesi. Minkä verran yrityksenne käyttää vettä? Onko käyttämänne vesi kierrätettyä?
5. Luonnon monimuotoisuus. Mieti alueita, jotka ovat yrityksenne omistuksessa, vuokralla, tai joilla yrityksellänne on jonkinlaisia toimia. Missä nämä alueet maantieteellisesti sijaitsevat? Ovatko nämä alueet suojeltuja, tai onko niillä havaittu lajeja, jotka olisivat uhanalaisia tai joihin toimintanne voisi vaikuttaa?
6. Päästöt. Minkä verran yrityksenne aiheuttaa hiilidioksidipäästöjä? Ovatko päästöt suoraan oman yrityksenne aiheuttamia, vai välillisesti jonkin alihankkijan aiheuttamia?
7. Jätteet. Tuottaako yrityksenne ympäristölle vaarallista vai vaaratonta jätettä? Minkälaisia keinoja teillä on hävittää jätteet: uudelleenkäyttö, kierrätys, kompostointi, poltto, hautaaminen, kaatopaikalle vienti vai jokin muu?
8. Liikkuminen ja logistiikka. Millä kulkuvälineillä henkilöstönne liikkuu työajalla? Miten tuotteiden ja materiaalien kuljetusten logistiikka on yrityksessänne hoidettu? Tiedätkö, minkälaista polttoainetta liikkumiseen ja logistiikkaan tarvitsemiinne kulkuneuvoihin käytetään?
9. Alihankkijoiden arviointi. Mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat alihankkijan valitsemiseen, ja onko ympäristötekijöillä mitään vaikutusta valintaan? Oletteko varmentaneet hankintaketjunne vastuullisuutta? Miten? Oletko huolissasi alihankkijoidenne toimista?
10. Miten yrityksenne kasvusuunnitelmassa on otettu huomioon ympäristötekijöiden vaikutus?

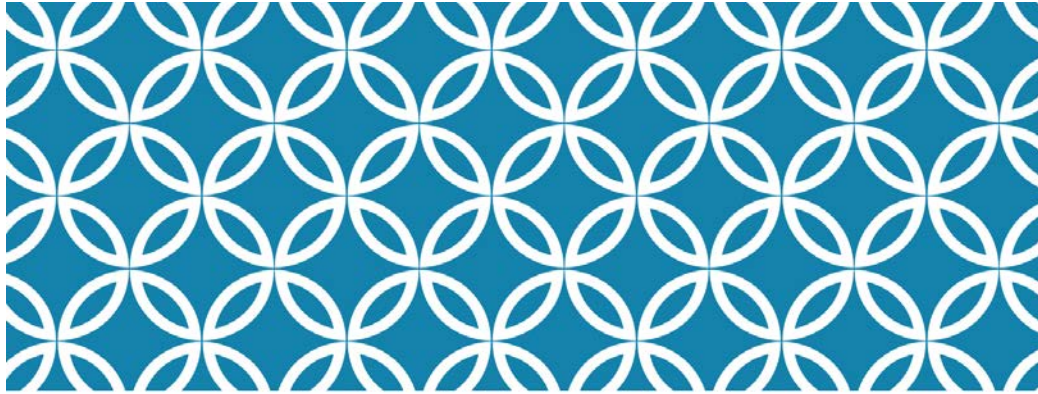
11. Miten ympäristövaikutukset nousevat esille yrityksenne päätöksenteossa (uudet mainosvälineet ja niiden sijainti, hankinnat)? Kuinka paljon niillä on merkitystä?

12. Kuinka tärkeää ympäristövastuu on yrityksellenne? Miksi? Miten se näkyy?

## **Appendix 2. Interview questions for the members of the board:**

1. Kokeeko Outdoor Finland ympäristövastuun tärkeäksi asiaksi ulkomainosalalle? Miksi? Miksi ei?
2. Mitä vaatimuksia ulkomainosyrityksen täytyy täyttää, päästäkseen Outdoor Finlandin jäseneksi? Onko kestävä liiketoiminta edellytys? Jos ei, voisiko se olla sitä tulevaisuudessa?
3. Onko Outdoor Finlandilla käytäntöjä tai vastuita liittyen jäsenyritysten liiketoimintaan? Jos ei, niin voisiko sillä olla tulevaisuudessa?
4. Voisiko Outdoor Finlandilla olla rooli sen jäsenyritysten ympäristövastuutekojen valvomisessa? Miksi? Miksi ei?
5. Pitäisikö Outdoor Finlandin asettaa jäsenyrityksille tavoitteet saavuttaa tietty taso ympäristövastuussa? Miksi? Miksi ei?
6. Onko Outdoor Finlandilla resursseja tukea jäsenyrityksiään kohti kestävämpää liiketoimintaa?

## Appendix 3. Presentation of findings and results. Presented to Outdoor Finland on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2019



### TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GROWTH - TULOKSET JA SUOSITUKSET

Nelli Rantamäki

Haaga-Helia UAS  
Communication Management

## JOHDANTO

- Haastattelukierros Outdoor Finlandin jäsenyritysten edustajien kanssa
  - Millä tasolla jäsenyrityksissä ollaan ympäristöasioissa? minkälaisia käytäntöjä yrityksillä on ympäristövaikutusten vähentämiseksi, miten ympäristö huomioitu valinnoissa ja päätöksissä?
- Hallituksen jäsenten haastattelut
  - Mikä hallituksen näkökulmasta on tärkeää? Miten liitto voisi tukea jäsenyrityksiään?

## TULOKSET

- Spontaanisti mainittuja ekotekoja:
  - ✓ LED-valot vaihdettu, kierrätys toimistolla, valojen ja tietokoneiden sammuttaminen, pyrkimys paperittomaan toimistoon, julkisten liikennevälineiden käyttö
- Jäsenyritysten edustajien ja työntekijöiden henkilökohtainen arvomaailma on ympäristönäkökulmasta hyvin positiivinen, ja ekotekoja tehdään tietoisesti päivittäin. Nämä arvot ovat hitaasti jalkautumassa myös liiketoimintaan
- Jäsenyritykset ovat huomanneet, että teoista huolimatta ympäristöasioista puhutaan yritysten sisällä ääneen todella vähän
- Haastattelukierros itsessään sai monet ajattelemaan omaa bisnestään uudesta näkökulmasta

## TULOKSET

### o Kierrätys, materiaalit ja jätteet:

- ✓ Materiaalien kierrättäminen koettiin hyvin tärkeäksi kaikissa organisaatioissa
- ✓ Alalla käytetään paljon materiaaleja, jotka ovat peräisin uusiutumattomista luonnonvaroista  
→ etenkin muovia ja elektroniikkaa on paljon
- ✓ Monet eivät tunnista neet, tuottavatko heidän käyttämänsä mainosvälineet vaarallista (kemikaaleja, paristoja tai liuottimia) vai vaaratonta jätettä
- ✓ Yksi yritys mainitsi käyttävänsä vain sertifioitua paperia
- ✓ Yksi yritys kertoi löytäneensä materiaalin, jota voi hyödyntää lähes sellaisenaan 3-4 kertaa. Muut yritykset, joilla on portfoliossaan vastaavanlainen tuote, kertoivat ettei uusiokäyttö ole kustannustehokasta, tai asiaa ei ole tutkittu vielä lainkaan
- ✓ Osa yrityksistä tarjoaa käytettyjä materiaaleja mm. rakennusteollisuuden käyttöön
- ✓ Yksi yritys on löytänyt kumppanin, joka hyödyntää muovijätettä luodakseen käyttötavaroita

## TULOKSET

### o Energia, hiilijalanjälki ja päästöt:

- ✓ Vihreää energiaa pidetään hyvänä, mutta vain muutama yritys kertoi käyttävänsä energian olevan kestävästä lähteestä
- ✓ Monet vuokralla olevat yritykset eivät voi vaikuttaa toimistollaan käytettävään energian lähteeseen
- ✓ Yksi yritys seuraa digilaitteidensa energiankulutusta sähkömittareiden avulla. He ovat huomanneet, että energiankulutukseen vaikuttaa mm. mainoksissa käytettävät värit, jota voi ohjata sisällöntuotannon kautta
- ✓ Yksikään haastateltavista ei tiennyt yrityksensä hiilijalanjälkeä
- ✓ Vaikka tarkkaa tietoa ei ole, monet yrityksistä olettavat suurimpien päästöjen tulevan logistiikasta, liikkumisesta ja alihankkijoiden tuottamista materiaaleista

## TULOKSET

### o Liikkinen ja logistiikka:

- ✓ Vaikka liikkinen pidettiin isona päästöjen aiheuttajana, ainoastaan yhdessä yrityksessä (haastattelujen aikaan) oli käytössä autoilua koskevia käytäntöjä. Useimmat yritykset aikovat ottaa aiheen käsittelyyn tulevaisuudessa
- ✓ Julkisten liikennevälineiden käyttöön kannustetaan joissain yrityksissä, mutta varsinaista tukemista tai käytäntöjä siihen ei juurikaan ole
- ✓ Logistiikkaan käytetään useimmiten isoja logistiikkayrityksiä, joiden vastuullisuutta ympäristönäkökulmasta ei ole tutkittu tai selvitetty

## TULOKSET

### ○ Alihankkijat:

- ✓ Monessa haastattelussa korostettiin luottamuksen ja alihankkijan kokemuksen olevan tärkeimpiä kriteerejä alihankkijan valitsemisessa
- ✓ Yhdellä yrityksellä on käytäntöjä alihankkijoiden valitsemisprosessiin liittyen → alihankkijoilta kysytään jo kilpailutusvaiheessa tiettyjä kysymyksiä, joihin tulee vastata päästäkseen kilpailutuksessa eteenpäin
- ✓ Moni yrityksistä kokee, ettei heillä ole mitään valtaa tai vaikutusta alihankkijoiden toimiin, eivätkä he voi vaikuttaa siihen minkälaisia toimia heidän alihankkijansa harjoittavat
- ✓ Isoimmista kaupungeista kilpailua on useimmiten enemmän, jolloin alihankkijan valintaa voidaan harkita. Pienissä kunnissa ei yleensä ole mahdollisuutta kilpailuttaa esim. huoltoja tai asentajia

## TULOKSET

### ○ Kasvusuunnitelmat ja aiheen tärkeys:

- ✓ Digitalisaatio koetaan ympäristöystävällisenä tekona
- ✓ Monet aikovat panostaa korkealaatuiseen ja uusimpaan teknologiaan, ja laitteiden pidempään käyttöikään
- ✓ Valinnat tehdään liiketoiminta edellä, mutta yritykset kokevat että ympäristöasioita ei voi enää jättää huomiotta
- ✓ Ympäristöasiat pitää huomioida, koska sidosryhmät (erityisesti tulevaisuuden työntekijät), ovat asioista entistä enemmän perillä. Yritykset kokevat, ettei heillä ole varaa olla tekemättä mitään.
- ✓ Ympäristön huomioiminen on edellytys liiketoiminnan säilymiselle

## TULOKSET

### ○ Haasteita:

- ✓ Vähäiset resurssit
- ✓ Koulutuksen ja viestinnän tarve

## SUOSITUKSET

- Sertifioiminen
  - ✓ Green Office –sertifikaatti olisi hyvä alku
  - ✓ Green Office tarjoaa räätälöidyn ilmasto-ohjelman huomioiden yrityksen koon ja liiketoiminnan, alkaen siitä mitä toimistossa tapahtuu päivittäin
  - ✓ Tarjoaa työkalun hiilijalanjäljen laskemiseen
- Materiaalit ja kierrätys
  - ✓ Perehtyminen yrityksen käyttämiin materiaaleihin, ja niiden kierrättämiseen
  - ✓ Mikäli alihankkija tai aliurakoitsija hoitaa kierrätyksen, heidän tarkka ohjeistaminen
  - ✓ PEFC tai FSC –sertifioidun paperin käyttö harkintaan
- Uusiokäyttö
  - ✓ Selvitys siitä, voiko mainosmateriaaleja (esim. jätti- ja pylvästaulut) käyttää uudestaan
  - ✓ Löytyykö kumppaneita tai muita tahoja, jotka voisivat hyödyntää käyttämänne materiaalit (esim. muovijätteet)?

## SUOSITUKSET

- Liikelahjat
  - ✓ Tarpeettomista liikelahjoista luopuminen ja mahdollisesti korvaaminen kestävämmillä vaihtoehdoilla
- Energia
  - ✓ Vihreää energiaa, kun se on mahdollista
  - ✓ Diginäyttöjen energiankulutuksen seuraaminen. Käyttääkö joku väri enemmän kuin joku toinen? Voisivatko laitteet olla toisinaan pois päältä (esim. muutama tunti öisin?)
- Valosaaste
  - ✓ Voisivatko diginäytöt mukautua luonnonvaloon siten, että näyttöjen valo on kirkkaampi valoisalla ja himmeämpi pimeällä?
- Hiilijalanjälki
  - ✓ Yhteinen tapa laskea hiilijalanjälki  
→ Green Office tarjoaa työkalun

## SUOSITUKSET

- Käytännöt liikkumiseen
  - ✓ Päästövähennystavoitteet
  - ✓ Firman autojen päivitys vähäkulutuksiin autoihin, tai kaasu-, hybridi- tai sähköautoihin
  - ✓ Julkisen liikenteen käyttöön kannustaminen ja tukeminen
- Logistiikka
  - ✓ Vastuullisten logistiikkayritysten etsiminen
- Alihankkijat
  - ✓ Panostaminen vastuullisten alihankkijoiden etsimiseen
  - ✓ Yhteinen koodisto tai vaatimukset sille, miten alihankkijan tulee toimia  
→ sertifikaatit ja /tai asianmukainen dokumentointi, sitoutuminen päästövähennyksiin ja energiankulutuksen vähentämiseen, tehokkaaseen kierrättämiseen ja uusiutuvien luonnonvarojen käyttämiseen aina kun mahdollista
  - ✓ Läpinäkyvää viestintää alihankkijoiden kanssa

# SUOSITUKSET

## ○ Viestintä

- ✓ Ensin on tärkeää panostaa sisäiseen viestintään ja jäsenten perehdyttämiseen ja kouluttamiseen
- ✓ Brainstorm tai workshop, jossa ulkopuolinen fasilitoija
  - yhteiset tavoitteet, jotka ovat kaikkien saavutettavissa jokaisen yrityksen omat resurssit huomioiden
- ✓ Sidosryhmien kuunteleminen ja sitouttaminen (media- ja mainostoimistot, kaupungit ja kunnat)
- ✓ Kun tavoitteet on määritelty, on selvitettävä lähtötaso ja tarkennettava se mihin konkreettisesti pyritään ja miten
  - ulkoinen viestintä vasta sitten, kun faktat on selvät ja jotain konkreettista on tehty
- ✓ Sidosryhmien informointi ajankohtaisilla asioilla
- ✓ Viestit osoitetaan niille, keitä mikäkin informaatio koskettaa tai kenelle se on olennaista tai kiinnostavaa
- ✓ Viestintäkanavana Outdoor Finlandin nettisivut, kun viestitään koko liiton jäsenten yhteisiä asioista tai päivityksistä. Jäsenyritykset voivat myös viestiä omilla kanavissaan omista toimistaan.