CSR & Sustainability Survey Results Report

July 1, 2014

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Executive Summary

The survey included questions about job titles and the kind of work being undertaken, as well as the respondents' knowledge and skills and how these had been gained; i.e. through academic courses, specialized trainings, or on the job experience. The survey also asked respondents to provide summary of their experience. A total of 222 people responded to the survey, of which 166 (75%) indicated they are employed in a CSR or sustainability role. The latter group were invited to continue to complete the balance of the survey and 145 did continue. The survey concluded by inviting respondents to request a copy of this report and to also receive an invitation to attend a follow-up discussion. A total of 118 survey respondents indicated affirmatively.

Analysis of the survey results has shown:

➢ A multitude of titles describe the roles of people working in Sustainability/CSR; most titles include 'Sustainability', 'CSR', 'Communications', 'Community Investment', and/or 'Environment'.

➢ 70% of respondents' titles indicate they are at the management/executive level.

➢ Respondents identified courses they know and/or have used themselves and indicated if the course earns/leads to a certification. The list is divided into categories: NGOs (that support members and/or offer professional development at workshops or conferences), professional certifications, educational programs, and academic courses.

➢ Practitioners gain their specialized knowledge through a blend of on-the-job experiences and specialized Sustainability/CSR trainings.

➢ Respondents believe academic courses are the best source for gaining Sustainability/CSR knowledge and skills. St. Michael's College, Boston College, and the universities of Alberta, Waterloo, and Royal Roads were cited.

➢ When asked if their Sustainability/CSR specialized competencies should be recognized by employers and others, their response was 86% in the affirmative. However, 87% of these respondents have not been asked for evidence of their competencies by employers or prospective employers.

➢ When asked whether a professional certification process in Canada should be managed at the national, North American, or international level, the majority recommended the international level.

The next step is proposed to be a local dialogue session that will be facilitated by volunteers in Vancouver, Calgary, and Toronto, plus one online session. This will be followed by a national dialogue session that will be conducted virtually and made as accessible as possible. The goal of these sessions will be to discuss the survey results and invite the participants' opinions, perspectives, and recommendations on whether there is sufficient interest in proceeding with the development of Sustainability/CSR professional standards and a body of knowledge.

Introduction

In April 2014, CSR professionals in Canada were invited to participate in a survey to explore whether there is an interest the development of a Body of Knowledge and professional standards covering Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability practices in Canada.

This document provides an overview of the survey's process, responses, analysis, and recommendations of what can be done as a result of the knowledge gained by this research.

Methodology

The survey was developed with input from a team of CSR and Sustainability professionals[1] who have seen tremendous growth in the number of CSR and sustainability positions in organizations over the last decade. With this growth, the team has each experienced first-hand an increased demand for CSR and Sustainability education and training that is to some extent being addressed by a plethora of articles, books, courses, workshops, and conferences.

A preliminary draft of the survey was shared among the team, who tested the questions and made suggestions for edits. Then a link to the survey was shared with contacts team members knew to be CSR and Sustainability professionals in Canada, through personal Emails. These targeted people were asked to pass the survey link to their own contacts. The survey link was also posted on the Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (CBSR) and the Sustainability Learning Centre websites and in newsletters. After the survey closing date passed, the responses were imported into Microsoft® Excel and analyzed.

The survey comprised questions that first clarified the respondents were indeed CSR and/or sustainability professionals, then explored their work and training experience, and concluded by inviting respondents to offer their comments as to whether there is an interest and need for a Body of Knowledge of Sustainability/CSR and/or establishing professional standards for work in CSR and sustainability in Canada.

The intended result was to ascertain whether there is an interest in developing a Body of Knowledge and/or establishing professional standards for work in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability in Canada.

Please note: The results reported can only be considered the opinions of the survey participants. The survey data gathering used the snowball sample methodology of non-probability sampling. They cannot be generalized to represent the entire population of CSR and Sustainability professionals in Canada and elsewhere.

Demographics

The survey was intended for Canadians working in the fields of CSR and/or Sustainability. We were pleasantly surprised to find it was also completed by people in some other countries. Of the respondents who shared their contact information to continue to be engaged post-survey there were Canada (86), United States (12), UK (4), two each in Brazil, India, and Netherlands, then one each from Australia, Bolivia, China, France, Greece, Hong Kong, South Africa, Sweden, UAE, and Venezuela.

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[1] Survey Team: Steven Fish, Executive Director, CBSR; Mimi Marrocco, Past Director of Continuing Education, University of St. Michael's College; Kathryn Cooper, President & Chief Learning Officer, Sustainability Learning Centre, Sheila Carruthers, CSR Management Consultant; and Kaitlin Almack, Intern.

Survey Results

We started by determining current employment status and involvement in Sustainability/CSR. This was achieved by asking survey participants for their job titles and an open-ended question that asked for the kind of work they undertake. It continued by asking about the respondents' Sustainability/CSR knowledge and skills and how these had been gained; i.e. through academic courses, specialized trainings, or on the job experience. The survey also asked respondents to explain their experience. A total of 222 people responded to the survey, of which 166 (75%) indicated they are employed in a role that could be described as being specialized in CSR and/or sustainability. The latter group was invited to continue to complete the balance of the survey and 145 did continue. The survey concluded by inviting respondents to request a copy of this report and to also indicate their interest in receiving an invitation to attend a follow-up discussion. A total of 118 survey respondents indicated affirmatively.

Work Specialization and Seniority

To indicate Sustainability/CSR related responsibilities that are currently part of the respondents' professional roles they were asked to identify both their role and title. The role part of their titles varied to the point that few had the same title, indicating a broad variety of specializations and interpretations of people's work responsibilities, which included Aboriginal Affairs, Communications, Community Investment, Community Involvement, Community Relations, CSR, Environmental, Food Security, GIS, Health and Safety, Human Resources, Hydro, International Development, Leadership Development, Marketing, Municipal Relations, Non-Profit, Quality Assurance, Stakeholder Relations, Supply Chain, Sustainability, and Waste and Recycling. The majority of the respondents' roles are relevant to CSR and sustainability. The following table indicates the number in each category of primary job functions from the survey respondents (using actual numbers).

Primary Job Function
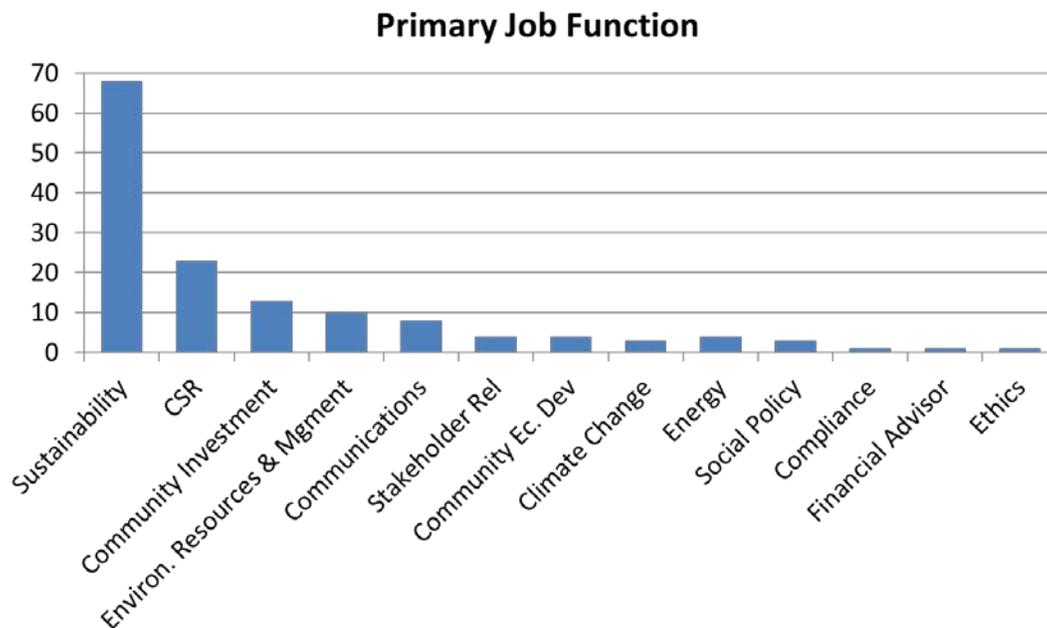
A New Language

Most interesting were the job descriptions added in the Comments Section that are using language and titles not broadly used a decade ago; these were (in alphabetical order):

➢ Aboriginal Affairs & Sustainability
➢ Chief Architect, Sustainability Business Architect
➢ Community Leader, Community Relations, Corporate Sustainability & Community Relations
➢ Enterprise Waste & Recycling Manager, Research on energy labelling, Insulation Contractor,

- ➢ Environmental Specialist, Engineering and Environmental Manager,
- ➢ ESG Analyst
- ➢ Food security and sustainable agriculture
- ➢ Lecturer CSR, Sustainability Author,
- ➢ Risk manager
- ➢ Social Responsibility
- ➢ Sustainability and Citizenship, Corporate Citizenship, Education & Adventure
- ➢ Training Manager

Comments made about the question of job functions:
- ➢ Position list is quite fractured;
- ➢ I deal with multiple integrated issues of social, environmental and supply chain sustainability (or lack thereof)
- ➢ What would you call this? - Improving outcomes of non-profit sector through collaboration, leadership & skill development and data (performance measurement - are we achieving the outcomes we wish to achieve).
- ➢ I don't see water professions in your list.
- ➢ Where is Certification in waste reduction and diversion?

Looking more closely at the titles and roles, the most frequently mentioned are charted in the following graph (please note, respondents could indicate as many roles as they held.
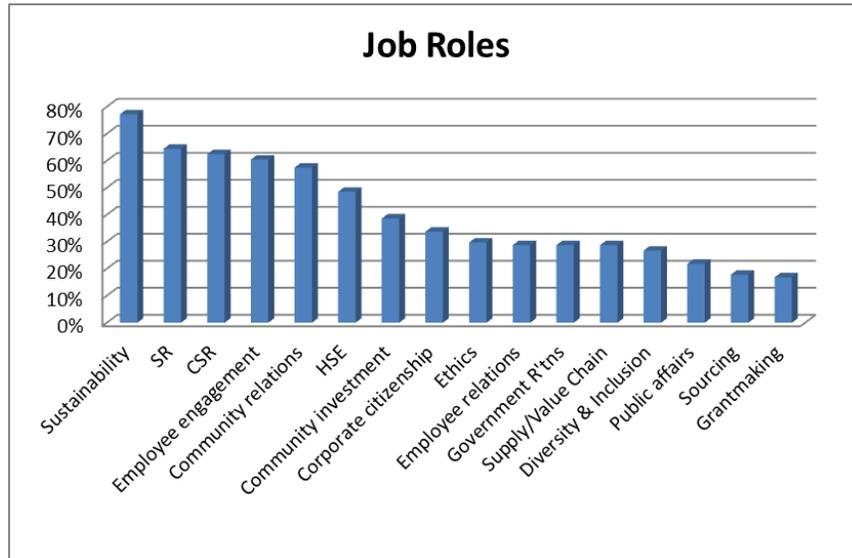
Seniority

The respondents' titles indicate they hold positions ranging from junior to senior executive/decision-maker, i.e. Academic, Community Leader, Contractor, Coordinator, Consultant, Director, Entrepreneur, Executive, Intern, Management Consultant (clustered with 'Consultant' in the graph), Manager, Project Manager, Researcher, Risk Manager, Technical Specialist, Thought Leader, Vice President.
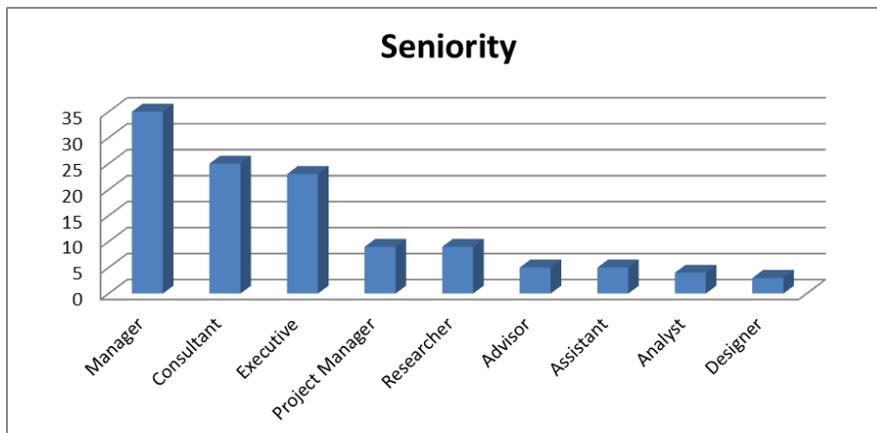
Perhaps most notable is that 70% of respondents' titles indicate they work at the management and executive level. We can assume this indicates experienced professionals provided a significant portion of the survey results. (n: 118)

Industry Sector

The majority of respondents when asked to identify their industry sectors and listed the following:

1. Construction
2. Consulting Agency
3. Education
4. Energy - alternative
5. Energy - conventional
6. Financial Services
7. Government - public service
8. Hospitality
9. Information Technology
10. Legal Services
11. Manufacturing
12. Natural Resources
13. Non-profit
14. Retail
15. Telecommunications
16. Transportation
17. Utilities

The balance of responses under 'Other Sectors' provided the following:

1. Certification and verification body
2. Agriculture (Farming), Food
3. Lottery/Gaming/Gambling
4. Recycling
5. Training

Working in CSR/Sustainability

Of the 225 survey respondents, 169 indicated they are currently working in the field of CSR and 56 are not. When asked if they believe they know everything they need to know about the topic, 79 of the people currently working in the field agreed that they do while 90 indicated they do not yet know everything. Correspondingly, 56 indicated they are not working in CSR and of them, just 10 indicated they know what they need to know and 18 indicated they do not know. Using percentages, the graph below indicates that 75% of respondents are working in CSR. While 53% of them admit to not knowing everything they need to know to work effectively, 47% do not. Notably, 50% of the 'not working in CSR' group did not indicate whether they believe themselves to know everything they need to know or not.
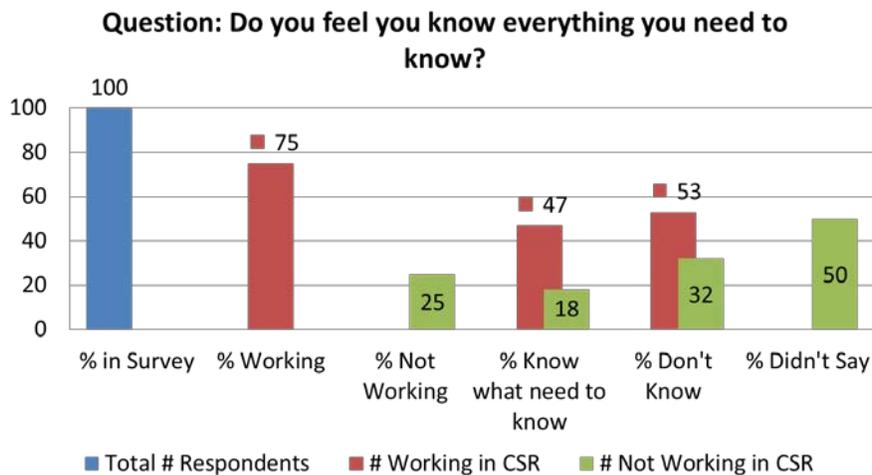
On the next page, you will see a graph that compares respondents' industry with their response. The graph indicates all respondents (in blue) and then divides their responses between indicating that they know everything they believe they need to know about this topic and indicating that they do not yet know everything they need to know about this topic. From the results, we can deduce that the more experienced CSR professionals indicate themselves to know all they need to know. They are often consultants and/or working in industries such as manufacturing and retail - where there has been an emphasis on the inclusion of CSR and Sustainability practices and reporting.

Know what you need to know?

Legend: ■ All   ■ Know What I Need   ■ Don't Know What I Need
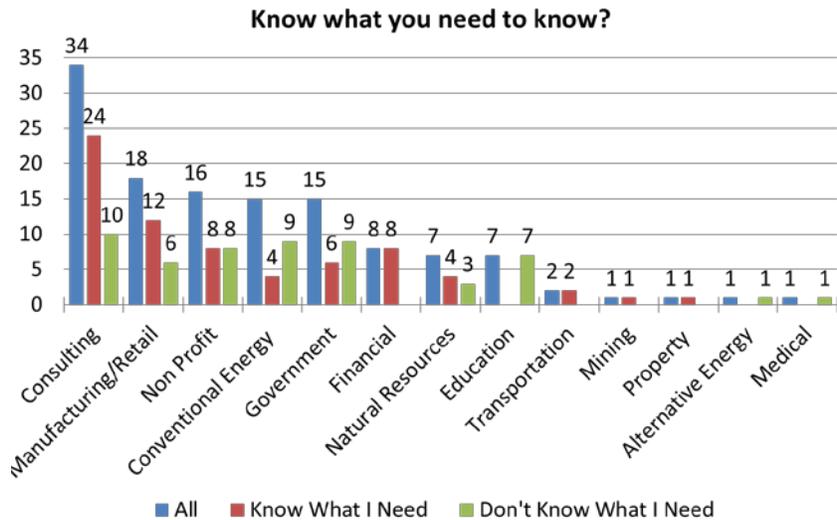
Drilling deeper into the survey response data, by comparing the respondents' titles, the following graph builds from the one above to indicate who believes they know all they need to know about CSR/Sustainability to accomplish their work:

Do you know all that you need to know?
sorted by title

Legend: ■ Know   ■ Don't Know
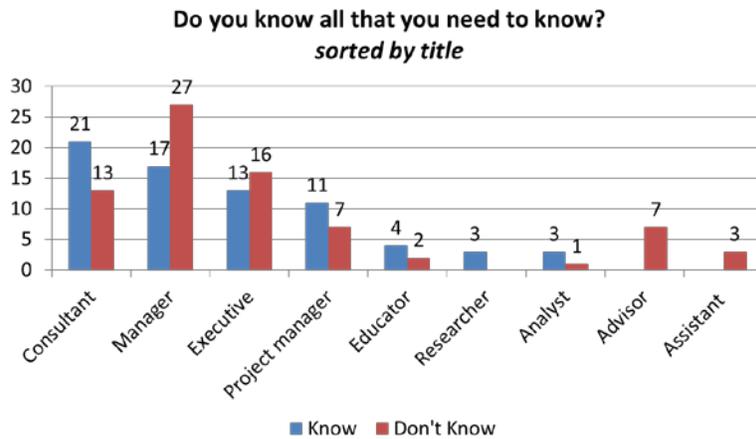
When compared using percentages, the following graph clarifies industries frequented by people with CSR knowledge. This graph is sorted by the industry respondents indicated where they are currently working.

Know what you need to know (by %)

Legend: ■ Know What I Need   ■ Don't Know What I Need
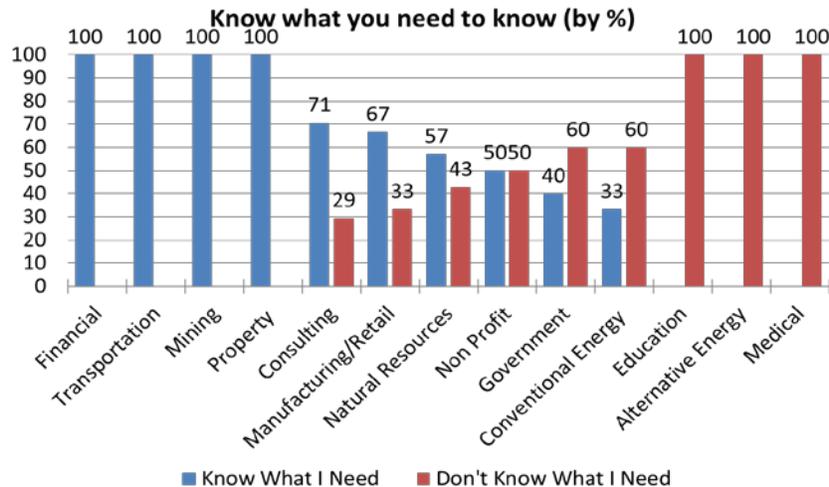
Observations

From these results, we can conclude that whether you are working in the area or not, the majority of people do not yet know what they need to know. Key points noted were:

- The largest % of respondents came from Consulting and Manufacturing/Retail (e.g. consumer products), but generally the responses were widely distributed across industries.
- One might expect consultants would have a high level of knowledge as experts in the field, still nearly one-third (29%), did not feel they knew everything they ought to know.
- One might also expect the skills and knowledge for the manufacturing/retail group might be quite diverse. With manufacturing focusing on eco-efficiencies. Retailers focusing on eco-efficiencies at the store level and CSR along the supply chain. Still, 33% did not feel they knew everything they ought to know.
- Education, Energy (conventional and alternative) and Medical seemed the most uncertain about what they needed to know. 100% in each case saying they did not know what they needed to know. (Note, only small sample sizes in these sectors.)
- Respondents who work in Mining, Property and Transportation seem satisfied with their level of knowledge . Only a small sample sizes came from these categories.

Certifications and Certified Training

Certification – is it needed?

A hundred and one of the respondents indicate they work in a specialized CSR/Sustainability relevant field. Of this cluster, 58 of respondents to the question on whether they believe they know everything they need to know to function effectively when working in CSR/Sustainability indicated they know what they need to know, while just 7 indicated they do not and another 36 did not say. In the group of respondents who indicated they need to know more, 40 indicated certification is needed while 23 think not. However, 37of the respondents did not say either way – perhaps they need to know more before making a decision.

Who would benefit the most to hold Certification?
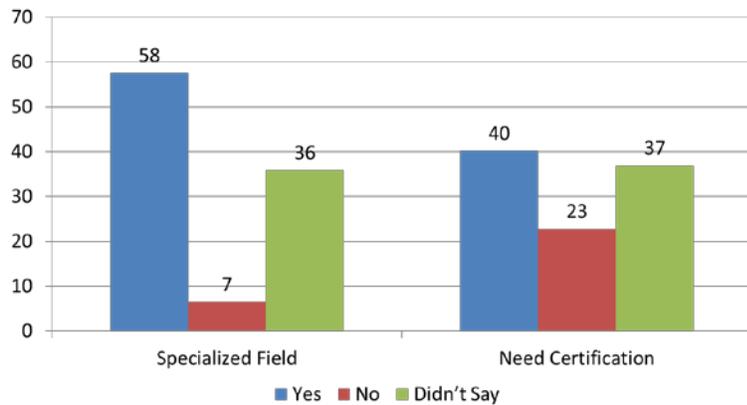
(n: 201)
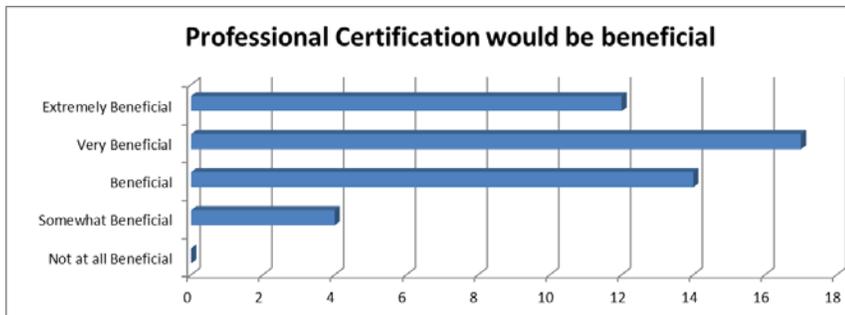
(n: 47)

Comments to this question fell into several categories, namely:

1. Gain and upgrade/update knowledge & skills
2. Credibility: *recognition of the specialization's uniqueness and professionalism*
3. Professional Discipline
4. Geographic Reach
5. Process
6. Not Yet

The majority of comments fell into the Credibility category. See Appendix 2 for a table of these comments.

Standards

Current national and/or international certification standards identified through this process were the International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP), the International Standards Organization (ISO), the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), and the American Society for Quality (ASQ).

Certified/Formal Training

To identify the current awareness level of Sustainability/CSR programs and certification options, and to determine which are being utilized, we asked the respondents to identify organizations they know and/or used themselves and to indicate if the course earns/leads to a certification. As well as providing names of organizations, institutions, and programs. The following chart indicates named institutions where respondents gained their Sustainability/CSR specialized education.

CSR/Sustainability Education sources
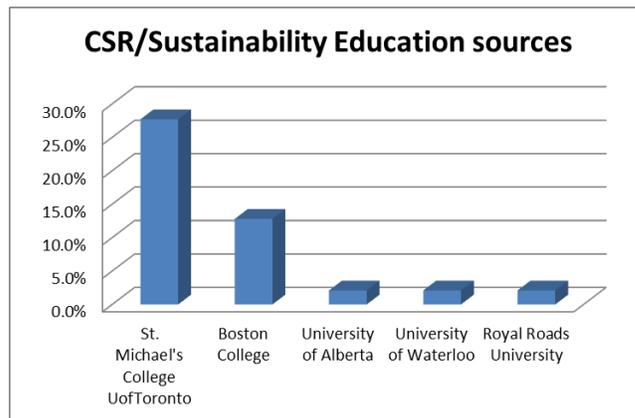
(n: 86)

When asked where the survey participants gained their formal knowledge, skills, and/or attributes related to Sustainability/CSR, 86 responded but 30 of these indicated they have none. The balance of respondents listed the following to be where they have completed formal Sustainability/CSR education.

CSR/Sustainability Education source
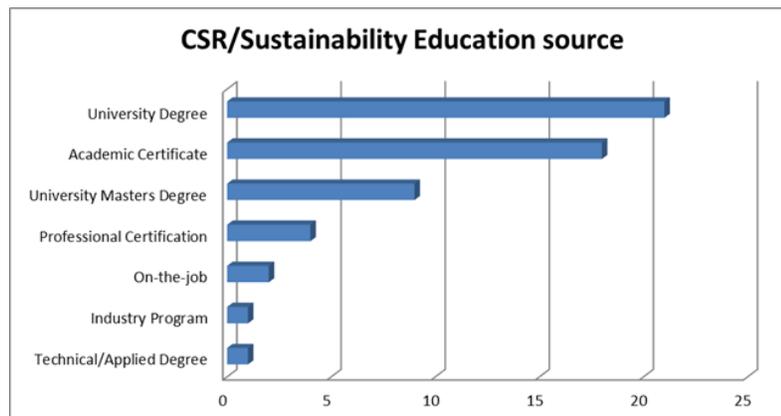
(n: 56)

Professional Organizations

Thirty-eight of the respondents indicated they are members of at least one professional organization, while 48 indicated they are not members of any professional organizations. The following chart indicates who are members and who are certified members of various organizations.

(n: 38)

NGOs/Professional Development opportunities

Next, is a list of these organizations and training offerings. This list is sorted by the types of organizations as not all provide specific trainings or courses. For example, the first category covers Non-government organizations that support members and/or focus on offering professional development activities such as workshops and conferences. This is followed by a list of professional certifications such as for engineers, project managers, and ISSP's professional certification in sustainability. The next cluster lists certified education programs provided either by non-profit organizations or for-profit businesses. The final cluster is a list of academic certification courses.

Approximately 50% of the respondents responded to this question, indicating 50% have not connected with any of the organizations listed and/or could not immediately recall any certification programs.

Organization's Name	Organization's Acronym	Certification *(if relevant/known)*
Calgary Community Investment Council	CCIC	
Canadian Business for Social Responsibility	CBSR	
Canadian Council for International Cooperation	CCIC	
Ceres		
Climate Change Volunteer Conference	CCVC	
Conference Board of Canada		
Corporate Responsibility Officer Association	CROA	
Environmental Leadership Program	ELP	
Ethical Corporation		
FSG	FSG	
GEOSS	GEO	
Globe Foundation		
GreenBiz		
Local Governments for Sustainability	ICLEI	
London Benchmarking Group	LBG	
LBG Canada	LBG Canada	

Net Impact		
SEDEX Global	SEDEX	
Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform	SAI	
UL	UL	
United Nations	UN	
United Nations - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	UNIPCC	
WRAP	WRAP	
Professional Certifications		
Association of Energy Engineers		
Balanced Scorecard Professional/Master Professional (*Balanced Scorecard Institute*)		
Canadian Environmental Certification Approvals Board Sustainability Prog.	CECAB CP	
Centre for Sustainability and Excellence - CSR-P		CSR-P
ECO Canada Environmental Professional Certification		
Everblue Certified Sustainability Manager		
Greenhouse Gas Management Institute		YES
ISSP Professional Certificate in Sustainability		
LEED Green Associate, GPRO		
Partnership Brokers Association http://www.partnershipbrokers.org/		
Responsible investment Academy	RI Academy	
Sustainability Resources Ltd.		
Organization Training/Certification		
American Apparel and Footwear Association (Sustainable Apparel Coalition SAC)	AAFA	
American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment	ACUPCC	
B-Lab		YES
Business Social Compliance Initiative	BSCI	
California Air Resources Board	California ARB	
Connecticut Green Building Council	CTGBC	
Global Reporting Initiative	GRI	YES
GRI Certified Training Program		YES
International Labour Organization	ILO	
ISO		YES
LEED AP		YES
North American Association for Environmental Education		
Philanthropic Foundations of Canada		
REEP Green solutions	REEP	
Second Nature		
Social Innovation Generation	SIG	
SPUR (San Francisco)	SPUR	
US Green Building Council	USGBC	

Academic Certification		
Anaheim University Green MBA		
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education	AASHE	
Boston College	BCCCC	Certificate in Corporate Citizenship Leadership
Cambridge University Sustainability Course		
Duke University		Sustainable Community Development Certificate
Harvard Sustainability & Environmental Management program		
Lipscomb University		
Queen's University		Corporate Social Responsibility Certificate
Queensland University in Australia's Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining		
Royal Roads		Master of Environment & Management
Royal Roads University		Sustainable Community Development Certificate
Simon Fraser University SFU Resource and Environmental Management		
St. Michael's College		Corporate Social Responsibility Certificate
University of British Columbia UBC		Sustainability Certificate
University of Alberta/Alberta School of Business, Corporate Social Responsibility Program		
University of Calgary, Corporate Social Responsibility-Sustainable Development Program		
University of Waterloo		Masters of Environment and Business
University of Waterloo		Masters of Environmental Studies in Sustainability Management
University of Waterloo		Social Innovation Graduate Diploma
University of Western Ontario, Ivey School of Business, Network for Business Sustainability	NBS	
University of Western Ontario, Ivey School of Business		Sustainability Certificate

Skills, Knowledge, Competency

Exploring whether the respondents are satisfied they have all the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively do their job, both now and into the future, it was interesting to see their response with 56% indicating their satisfaction and 46% disagreeing. We can assume from this result that senior practitioners (of which, many are the respondents of this survey) are satisfied they have the knowledge and skills needed to do their work. Equally, we can assume more junior practitioners are still looking for learning opportunities. When asked a follow-up question as to where the respondents gained their knowledge and skills, they offered a variety of sources that were synthesized into the categories included in the following chart.

Source of Knowledge & Skills

On-the-job experience + CSR/Sust. training

Self-Taught

Self-Taught + CSR/Sust. training

CSR/Sust. training

Academic & CSR/Sust. training

Academic

On-the-job experience

Academic courses in CSR/Sust.

0   5   10   15   20   25
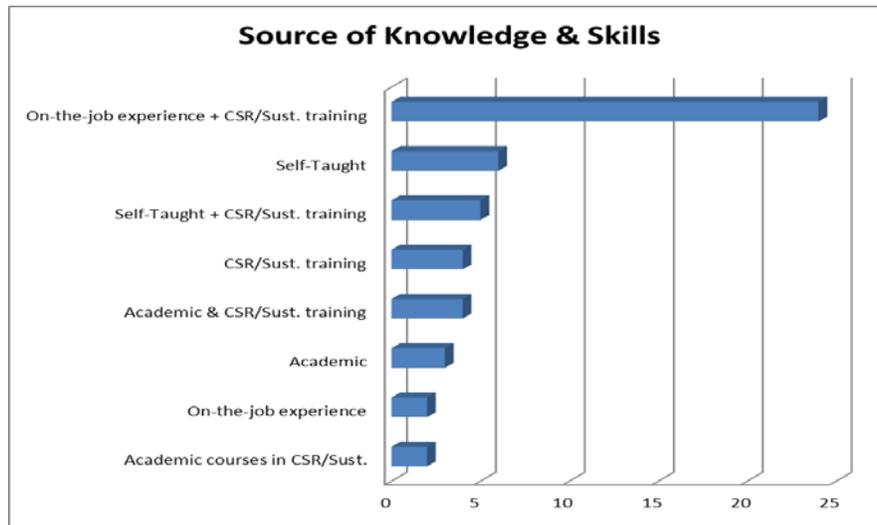
As we can see above, of the 51 respondents who indicated the source of their Sustainability/CSR knowledge and skills, the majority (24) indicated it was through a blend of on-the-job experience and specialized Sustainability/CSR trainings. One mentioned professional networking was another way they learned and several indicated they maintain/update their knowledge by reading. However, 94 respondents skipped this question; indicating the great majority cannot clarify the source of their knowledge and skills and perhaps indicating the need for more education opportunities.

Next, the 41 respondents who indicated they were <u>not</u> satisfied to have all the skills and knowledge they need in Sustainability/CSR were asked what resources or organizations might help. Their responses are captured in the following chart.

Where to gain Knowledge & Skills

Specialized Education: Academic

Not sure

Industry Associations

Certification/Member Orgs (CBSR/ISSP/Ethical corp

Certification

Body of Knowledge

Networking w/peers

Strategic Partnerships

Specialized Education: NGOs

Reporting standards

Case Studies, best practice examples

Webinars, conferences

Research

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
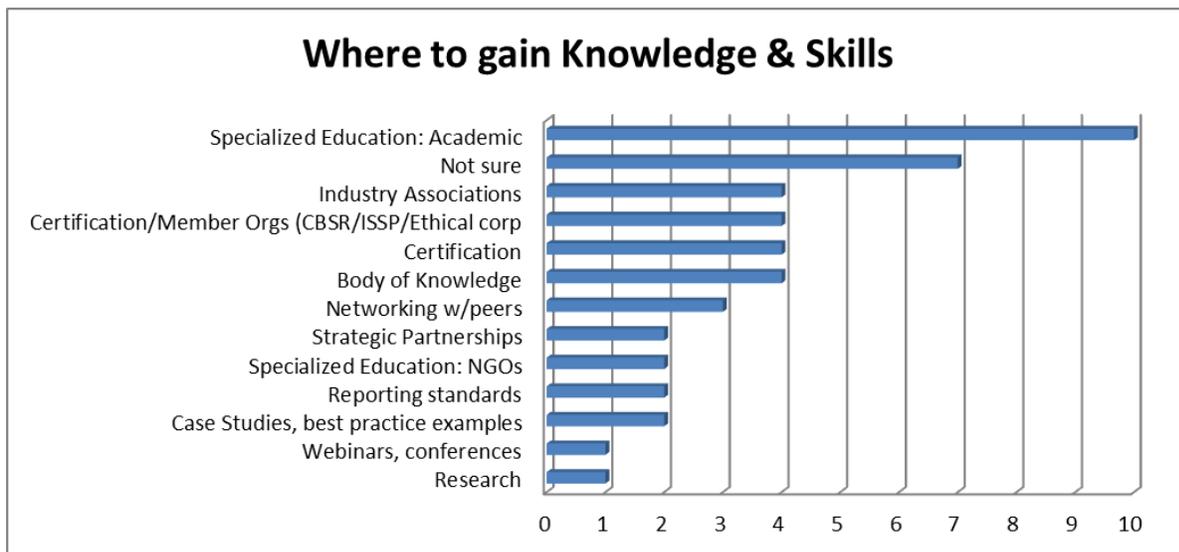
(n: 41)

The above indicates an appetite for a certification that would travel well. More research is clearly needed to understand how international such certification should be, and if that is even possible.

Specialized Competencies

When asked if the respondents believe Sustainability/CSR practitioners have specialized competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills, attributes) that should be recognized by employers and others, their response was 86% in the affirmative (with 81 responses out of a possible 145). Comments made in this question were all positive (see Appendix 3)

The follow-up question asked whether the respondents had been asked for evidence of their competencies by employers and/or prospective employers. The majority (87%) had not been asked.

Geographic Reach

When asked whether a professional certification process in Canada should be managed at the national, North American, or international level, the majority recommended the international level.

Certification reach

(n: 47)
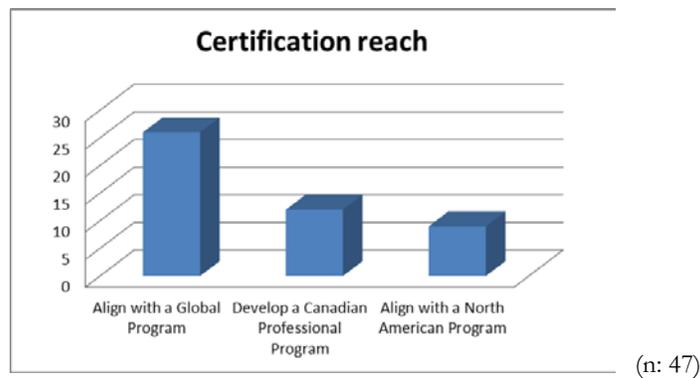
It is clear from the graphed responses and accompanying comments (e.g. *"it should be Canadian as well as Global."*) that any work done towards establishing a Canadian professional standards need to be aligned with global standards.

Continuing the Dialogue

The final question asked respondents to indicate their interest in being involved with any follow-up discussions on the topics covered in the survey. Sixty-five people provided their names and contact information. They were also asked what may inhibit them the most to participating in any follow-up discussions that are in person. Travel, cost, and time are all inhibitors; particularly time.

Participation Influencers

(n: 54)
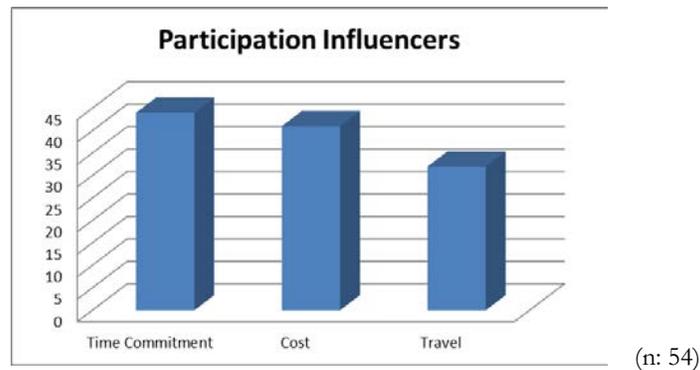
The accompanying comments varied from "*Don't do it*" to "*As in many consulting fields, there are many people practicing in areas where they don't have expertise. I believe this is a concern for the client who is getting sub-par advice and for CSR in Canada which may be*

held back by this lack of expertise. I think this issue would be greatly helped by certification which would demonstrate someone's knowledge (or lack of it) in particular areas."

Conclusion

The survey generated 225 responses. The information provided has proven to be enlightening and complex in that some assumptions had to be overcome such as a wide variety of job titles and an expanded geographic reach. The survey developers had assumed there may be interest from people working in CSR and/or Sustainability in Canada. However, we have discovered academics, people looking to start working in the field, and experts from countries beyond Canada also took the time to provide their insights and views.

The wide variety in professional titles, sources of skill/knowledge acquisition and areas of practice that have been highlighted by respondents reveal that CSR and Sustainability are highly complex and continually evolving disciplines. These are also areas that are very wide in scope and application and span across diverse disciplines, including everything from economics, business, ethics, social justice, agriculture, investment, community development, and construction. This diversity requires more than the practical application of basic theory to reality, as a comprehensive understanding of these areas and how they impact/interact with one another is essential. This was articulated by one respondent as follows:

> *"If there aren't clearly defined skills, knowledge and behaviours, then anyone can call themselves a CSR professional. I think it's the combination of skills, experience, thinking style, behaviours and business acumen that is critical."*

The survey results and accompanying comments indicate support for continuance of this investigation on the potential of establishing a Body of Knowledge and certification to establish professional credibility. Many of the comments reflect this conclusion. One example is:

> *"CSR as a field of study has advanced tremendously over the last decade, it would benefit companies to recognize unique skills that people have gathered in this area."*

Of particular note, we found that 50% of respondents have not connected with any form of formal training or certification in CSR/Sustainability. Is this because they are junior practitioners and simply haven't had the opportunity, or are there other factors involved?

We also found that 46% of respondents do not feel they have the necessary skills to fulfill their roles, now and in the future. This tells us there is indeed a need.

Action Plan - Next Steps

The next step is proposed to be a local dialogue session that will be facilitated by volunteers across Canada in major cities. The 100 people who provided their contact information will be sent a copy of this report and invited to join a dialogue session being planned in Vancouver, Calgary, and Toronto; plus at least one on-line session. This will be followed by a national dialogue session that will be conducted virtually and made as accessible as possible.

The goal of these sessions will be to discuss the survey results and to invite participants' opinions, perspectives, and recommendations on whether there is sufficient interest in proceeding with the development of Sustainability/CSR professional standards, a body of knowledge, and explore the possibility of establishing a professional certification standard.

If you are reading this report and wish to participate in the above mentioned dialogue sessions or to contribute advice on this matter, you are encouraged to contact any member of the volunteer team listed in the report's Acknowledgements. Likewise, financial support will be needed if sufficient interest is maintained to cover the cost of establishing standards and researching the first body of knowledge; if you have any recommendations of tax deductible funding sources, please contact the team members.

Competencies - comments

When asked if the respondents believe Sustainability/CSR practitioners have specialized competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills, attributes) that should be recognized by employers and others, their response was 86% in the affirmative (with 81 responses out of a possible 145).

Below are the comments in response to the question as to whether CSR and Sustainability are specialized competencies: for the most part substantiate a need for certification:

- *There is a new skill set and area of technical expertise needed for CSR and Sustainability work that should be given a certain designation in order to distinguish various professionals, similar to other industries and professions.*

- *While there are many subgroups and competencies, general understanding of systems thinking, ethics, ecology and economics required*

- *Leadership Team Working Social Engagement*

- *It is different from other professions. Very specific skill sets that employers often think can be done by other practitioners. It is a specialized field.*

- *These enhance a corporate reputation and ability to manage and deliver programs. Partnership, communications, community development*

- *If "recognized" means certification, I'm not sure if this is always the best way to go. The certificate is only as good as the agency that gives it. Certification can be helpful in building networks, however, if the certificate and the person holding it have legitimacy.*

- *Most people in the field are reductionist thinkers, there needs to be concerted effort to move people beyond their past training*

- *Like any role, it is important that organizations are aware of the goal they are trying to achieve with a sustainability program and find the right person to fulfill the foal and achieve the goal. A person that excels in compliance and reporting does not have the same skill set as a person whos strengths lie in Employee Engagement. It is important that organizations recognize these unique skills and hire accordingly.*

- *Strong ability to develop corporate strategies and initiate new ideas as well as engaging subject matter experts from across an organization together .*

- *Align with other industry areas of specialty. This discipline requires leadership skills as many of the issues that are addressed are complex, systemic, and often not recognized as needing to be evaluated. This field requires understanding of government regulation, policy, human resources, in combination with communication skills, technical knowledge and often industry standards in various fields. It is field that covers wicked problems so the learning never stops.*

- *Appetite for learning Change management skills Leadership List is very long really*

- *CSR builds upon technical competencies including sustainability, community investment, and social purpose. Continuing education in the field is required to understand the changes in CSR and how companies are approaching it.*

- *Ability to to implement systems thinking to achieve change; stakeholder engagement (internal and external); Incorporating ESG factors into various components of a business. Ability to drive change on some level.*

- *Sustainability implies system thinking, critical thinking skills, effective communication, problem solving skills, environmental education knowledge - as well as specialized fields such as energy, water, social sustainability, or economic health.*

- *Because they are not well understood, recognized or communicated*

- *It is an important growing field and should be treated as such.*

- *Enhance image of CR professionals roles/responsibilities in large corporations. Create uniformity*

- *I think sustainability professionals have a deeper understanding of the issues. Being recognized for these skills is important to the employee and the organization.*

- *Mainly because it is annoying when applying for jobs where they want industry-specific experience... which is helpful but not the be all and end all. It would be nice if CSR skills were seen as more transferrable... like accounting skills for example.*

- *I believe sustainability professionals have a range of transferable skills that combined form an unique capability to ensure long term vision and cohesion in business strategies.*

- *There are key skills needed to do our jobs well.*

➢ *It is a highly skilled and professional career path. It takes much learning, skill, knowledge and networking to be not only competent, but able to lead an organization in its CSR journey. You need to be able to advocate internally and externally. You much challenge the status quo.*

➢ *Because it is a niche market.*

➢ *Most early stage sustainability initiatives are not understood by employers. Having a clear & defendable criteria would be helpful for them to know they are not alone.*

➢ *Because they are a unique set of inter-related skills.*

➢ *We have special skills that can contribute to the development and implementation of corporate strategies.*

➢ *There are common competencies with many professions, however there are unique requirements for the new and evolving field.*

➢ *Credibility to the work that will take on increasing importance in business and community*

➢ *Depending on area of sustainability there are specific competencies and knowledge base required, some are common to many areas e.g. ability to coordinate work across traditional discipline boundaries, stakeholder engagement etc.*

➢ *Employers often don't understand and/or respect the skills that make a strong sustainability professional.*

➢ *It can be a very complicated field to work in, particularly in developing world nations and as such needs recognition.*

➢ *Currently society is still evolving with how we tackle societal issues. Those with CSR experience are leading how we think about addressing these issues. Until business, government and not for profits have CSR thinking engrained in their core philosophy, this skill set is valuable and should be recognized.*

➢ *To lend credibility to the profession, and to the investment by corporations in CSR*

➢ *Competency, accountability*

➢ *My answer is a soft yes - this field is very broad, diverse and vaguely-defined, so whether a practitioner has/needs specialized competencies depends on the type of sustainability role they have. Some are basically doing engineering, others are communications professionals. Very diverse!*

➢ *Normally they have had a range of experiences outside the usual 9 - 5 office life which in turn has altered their perspectives of business and profit.*

➢ *Because it's an emerging profession, the subject areas aren't as clearly defined as for longer standing professions. There is also the risk that people are practicing in areas where they don't have expertise.*

➢ *It helps with credibility.*

➢ *Sustainability is a field, just like any other.*

➢ *Critical impact saving real dollars and resources*

➢ *Specific skills, knowledge and competencies are required for the job*

➢ *It is a field growing in relevance to organizations.*

➢ *Sustainability professional have grass root experience, which is of utmost importance for any development projects, Knowledge of relevant ministries, govt. offices and policies relevant for the progress of project, knowledge of project management tools, Relationship management skills specially with community, analyzing skills and goodwill in the community where they work. These is a just brief of qualities CSR professional have in them.*

➢ *Sustainability professionals occupy a specific niche in an organization. they require an analytic and creative mindset, and what can almost be described as entrepreneurial skills to drive change in an organization.*

➢ *Managing a sustainability program means understanding all aspects of sustainability and defining what this concept means when applied to different organizations. Once sustainability program is focused, it takes strategy skills to prioritize the projects and identify gaps, as well as project management skills to bring new ideas to life.*

➢ *Sustainability is a complex subject. The principles and practices require measuring and analyzing data to establish benchmarks and degrees of change. Each industry sector has guidelines and appropriate 3rd party certification programs*

Follow-up Question

The follow-up question asked whether the respondents had been asked for evidence of their competencies by employers and/or prospective employers. The great majority of 87% had not been asked.

Comments with this question comprised:

- ➢ We learn our trade by research and engaging with leading experts.
- ➢ They accepted it when I informed them of it. But I did show them anyway!
- ➢ But it would be valuable to have a common core of knowledge and expertise in our field to ensure transferability, consistent skills and competencies.
- ➢ Minimal requests for ISO-14065 certification of my company for specialized GHG audits. Otherwise, no.
- ➢ Being certified by a third party organisation doesn't make anyone a good practitioner
- ➢ This is two questions. I would answer "No" to the evidence of certification, but "Yes" to the recognition of knowledge.
- ➢ No, but it would help establish my credibility
- ➢ another level of certification is grossly unnecessary
- ➢ Disappointingly, sustainability and CSR are not given enough mainstream value.
- ➢ i have a masters degree in environmental science and management, so something specific to sustainability was not requested
- ➢ But I always offer it.
- ➢ certification is book learning not actual, working knowledge of the field

Why Certification?

Gain and upgrade/update knowledge & skills	Credibiility - *recognition of specialization's uniqueness & professionalism*	Professional Descipline
➢ should indicate that I have in-depth knowledge and skills in CSR	➢ My experience in CSR was gained on the job, so it is currently difficult to prove the depth and breadth of my experience.	➢ I think the whole exercise of developing this certification would bring more discipline to the profession.
➢ As CSR continues to grow it is important to stay on top of this discipline.	➢ Brings a level of formality and standardization that a CSR professional can articulate	➢ Lack of standardization of profession to date. Lack of credibility in the view of most business leaders.
	➢ It lends credibility beyond this fly-by night organizations who grant certification in 2 days. It should involve at least 2 years of university level education or equivalent , or it won't be credible.	➢ I believe we need to move toward establishing standards, like the accounting, legal and actuarial professions. Instead, it seems as though everyone comes at it with their own unique spin on what is important, millions of training opportunities and no natural path to professional credentials.
	➢ Because it reinforces my knowledge in the area of CSR and provides proof to others of that expertise.	
	➢ Would provide a place to start and add credibility.	
	➢ Increases professional credibility	
	➢ It shows you have a wide range of knowledge and concepts, plus it provides you with a network for best practise sharing and continuous improvement	

Geographic Reach	Process	Not Yet
➢ Canada is too small a market. A lot of companies operating here have their head office in U.S. or Europe. North America seems caught in the Stone Age in this field. Europe seems much further ahead. We live in a globalized world. We need a global program.	➢ I think we should have a laddered approach with a broad spectrum of specializations unique to each province, industry, and focus (corporate, community, resource-based,) that nests within the national and international program.	➢ It will become very beneficial when employers start asking for it. "sustainability" is such a varied field that it will be difficult to develop a certification, i think.
➢ Not sure -- global has more recognition but may not be as relevant to the Canadian perspective. CAnadian might be preferable.		➢ I would like to see more corporate "push" for certifications and understand their need for qualified CSR specialists.
➢ I am not entirely sure that Canada is a leader in CSR. Europe is. I believe the benchmark for success and knowledge is outside of Canada.		
➢ I think it should be Canadian as well as Global		
➢ Global may seem more wide reaching.		

Respondents not working in sustainability– *do CSR/Sustainability professionals have specialized knowledge?*

(Responses - No 2 Yes 20)

Comments:

➢ It's not rocket science, but with trained professionals focusing on JUST ONE PARADIGM (CSR/Sustainable Business Practices), much less gets missed, more opportunities arise and measurables can be much more effective. Many companies take the easy way out and claim that "all our employees are champions", so then no one does it...

➢ A structured CSR program would bring increased structure to this field, various professionals and businesses are saying they are practicing CSR without a common definition of these activities.

➢ A specialized field that is growing in both numbers and demand.

➢ very specific field and is changing

➢ Because as a very broad field sustainability/CSR also offers possibilities for specialization and a good professional would be one who tries to focus on and develop in a certain sub-field.

➢ Leadership, communication, strategic planning, project management, organizational change management, stakeholder engagement/community relations and public relations are some of the unique skills held by sustainability professionals. Roles are typically multi-faceted and strengths in these areas are necessary for success in any role.

➢ Some of the programs deliver a "Common Body of Knowledge" that can provide genuine value added to organizations if applied. Key challenge is far too many different programs and lack of alignment on a framework, body of knowledge and standards. Too much divergence in this field - could spend all day every day on the emails, training and volume of "information" being produced. Stretching limits of business attention, value and relevance. Lack of attachment to core business.

➢ As I perceive the world, this is easily one of the MOST important fields of human activity. Not to mention, a desperately necessary activity.

➢ The evolving nature of this subject matter has raised expectations in a multi-stakeholder environment, including such key stakeholders as regulatory bodies, engos, landowners, customers, investors and the media.

➢ CSR competencies need to be clearly defined. At the moment I am to the understanding they do not exist.ss in any role.