

Corporate Affairs

The Corporate Affairs department may vary from business to business, but is generally responsible for managing the organisation's reputation as a 'responsible' or 'ethical' business. This often includes showcasing how the organisation gives back to their local community, is committed to the environment, supports their employees, upholds human rights and may lobby for new Government legislation.

This department may also be called Corporate Philanthropy (i.e. giving back to the community, volunteering), Corporate Citizenship, Community or Corporate Relations or Public Affairs. It is often linked with the Marketing department within a company as its activity relates to how the wider public view the organisation as a whole.

The types of roles you may find in this department include:

- Corporate Responsibility Manager
- Public Affairs and Policy Officer



A **Corporate Responsibility Manager** may also be called Sustainability Manager. Their role would include things such as creating and managing community partnerships (for instance with local charities), corporate philanthropy (charity giving) and external stakeholder (partners) engagement programmes. It may also include developing internal employee engagement programmes such as employee volunteering.

Corporate Responsibility Managers are responsible for looking at ways of reducing the environmental impact of the business – this may be through the products or services it provides its customers, or through the way the business is run.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR or CR) is a growing profession, as more and more businesses see the need to showcase what a responsible business they are. This is why in some organisations there may be a full Corporate Affairs department, while in others the Corporate Responsibility Manager may be the only person working in this area, and they may sit within Marketing, Human Resources, Legal or Operations/Services.

Whilst there are no formal qualifications needed for this role, a degree in Marketing, Communications or Management would be beneficial. Also needed is experience in building relationships with internal (e.g. employees) and external (e.g. other organisations, charities, partners) stakeholders. Strong presentation and communication skills are also important in helping to communicate messages about the ethical and responsible business a company is doing to as wide an audience as possible.

Average salaries for managers can start at around £50,000 and go up to £100,000 or more with experience and depending on the size of the company.

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A **Public Affairs and Policy Officer** (also called Government, Parliamentary Affairs or Political Advisor) would be responsible for managing relationships with local Members of Parliament (MPs), civil servants or other Government policy makers, in order to influence Government legislation (this is called lobbying). Their role would be to serve as the organisation's 'voice' amongst these groups, ensuring issues of importance to the business are heard by the Government.

The day to day work of a Public Affairs and Policy Officer would also include monitoring political news and information, and sending this out to other areas of the business, in order to keep on top of key business trends relevant to the organisation. There may be a number of officers within larger departments each normally reporting in to the same manager.

A degree in politics or international relations would be beneficial for this role, as well as an interest in Government relations. Excellent written and verbal communication skills are needed, as is the ability to negotiate and influence other people. An understanding of the political system in the UK, and experience working with an MP (for instance volunteering for a political party during an election campaign), would also be advantageous.

Salaries for an Officer position can start at around £25,000, rising to over £40,000 for the Manager level.

Employability SKILLS

There are a number of skills needed to work in the Corporate Affairs department, including:

- An enthusiastic and positive attitude
- Excellent communication skills, both written (i.e. briefing documents, reports, etc) and verbal (i.e. presentation skills), including confidence in doing this well
- Strong negotiation skills and the ability to influence others
- Analytical thinking skills
- Ability to understand and simplify complex information
- An interest in Corporate Responsibility, Sustainability and ethical business
- Understanding and awareness of current trends in government and business.

One of the key employability skills for Corporate Affairs is positive enthusiasm and commitment. As this department acts as the face of a responsible business, enthusiasm to work for 'the greater good' is key here, as is a strong commitment to the cause being worked towards.