INTRODUCTION

David Grayson - Director: Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility, Cranfield

BITC (www.bitc.org.uk) is one of the very oldest and is the largest of the business-led coalitions around the world which promote Responsible Business. It was established in 1982. This paper explores what Business in the Community has learnt in twenty-five years about engaging business; and speculates on the next phase of BITC’s work. A fuller version incorporating a short history of the organisation is published by the CSR Initiative at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard.

A revised version of this paper will be published by BITC in December 2007, incorporating feedback from member companies, alumni of BITC (ex-staff, ex-board, ex-leadership team members etc) and external partners in government and in the Voluntary and Community Sectors. Additionally, and also under the auspices of the CSR Initiative at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard and BITC, there will be a second paper on a broader “lessons learnt” from business-led CSR intermediaries around the world, about engaging business.

The starting point has been to establish the key elements in BITC history, identifying what key players see as the seminal events (the “aha moments”) and exemplar “stories.” What one key participant has described as the “equivalent of the regimental history to be passed on to new recruits” at induction. The summary of these can be found in the timeline; and in the longer, Kennedy School version of this paper.

The paper then draws on feedback from current and former staff and board members; member companies, partners in the public and voluntary/community sectors; experts in Responsible Business and opinion-formers in business and politics, to define some of the key lessons that BITC has learnt about engaging business for Corporate Responsibility. These lessons are based both on the undoubted successes of BITC over 25 years, but also on some of the failures and areas where the organisation could have done better / could still do better. In turn, this leads to a brief description of some of the challenges and the potential future directions for BITC. The latter in particular, are the subject of the Jubilee Dialogue for which this paper is a starting-point.

THE BRITISH CONTEXT

In retrospect, BITC has benefited from a British business culture somewhere between the continental European Social Model and US free-market capitalism. Arguably, globalisation is now producing more of a convergence in these very different models of capitalism - but the early adoption of Responsible Business ideas in the UK does owe much to this prevailing UK business culture. It was, of course, the first country to privatise significantly. Many of the most prominent and influential business leaders of the time, such as Allen Sheppard (Chairman of BITC 1994-6), were clear that there was a quid pro quo for a smaller state - and that was a more activist business community. Many of these leaders simultaneously felt both a moral duty and a business imperative to act. In the words of one early BITC board member - David Sieff: “you cannot have prosperous High Streets without prosperous back streets.”

Geography has also been important for BITC: corporate UK remains heavily concentrated in London: even CEOs of companies head-quarted in northern parts of the UK will typically often spend 1-2 days each week in London. Creating a “Mexican Wave” amongst business leaders based in close proximity is easier than (say) in the USA or Australia where corporate HQs are far more dispersed across the country.

THREE PHASES OF BITC

There have been three phases of BITC so far:

Phase (I) during the 1980s, it predominantly championed business support for local enterprise agencies as a way of business helping to regenerate local economies depressed by corporate closures, through encouraging small business development and re-skilling. The predominant driver for business in this phase, was social cohesion and a recognition of the social costs of just walking away from the human consequences of massive corporate restructuring.

Phase (II) during the 1990s involved BITC promoting a wider agenda of corporate community involvement, including
how businesses should better organise their involvement. The business driver in this phase shifted more to the need to address the UK’s decline in the international competitiveness league tables, to improve basic skills in literacy and numeracy; and the war for talent which drove more companies to embrace diversity in their workforce.

Phase (III) has seen BITC embrace Corporate Responsibility – or as the organisation now prefers to call it: “Responsible Business.” The business driver has shifted more to competitive advantage for individual companies and the pressures of sustainability as a business challenge. Throughout, BITC has been concerned both with encouraging more companies to get involved individually; and also to encourage collective business action.

CONTRIBUTE TO A BITC-WIKIPEDIA AND TIMELINE

The “action” has reached the boardrooms of most leading businesses; but also to some of the most deprived communities around the UK. To read the lists of BITC board, leadership teams, conference speakers, “Prince of Wales Seeing is Believing” programme participants, is to study a “Corporate Who’s Who” of the past quarter century. Most leading politicians of the era, from all the major parties have been involved – alongside thousands of voluntary and community organisations. It is impossible to capture the richness of that history in just a few thousand words. Hence, the wish over the BITC Jubilee Year to encourage a collective, on-line, Wikipedia-style account which can provide more detail of the various campaigns and initiatives referred to in the Timeline here or in the brief history in the Kennedy School version of the paper.

HEALTH-WARNING! WRITING AS A PLAYER NOT A SPECTATOR!

As someone who has been involved with BITC since the very early days – variously over the years as a volunteer, staffer, member of the senior management team, and – most recently – as an associate – it is hard to be dispassionate about an organisation that I love and a cause in which I passionately believe. This is not, therefore, a wholly objective outsider’s account. I hope, however, that the process of input and debate on early drafts of this paper with present and former colleagues in BITC; and with faculty in the Kennedy School of Government; and through interviews with a number of leading figures from business, politics and media / think-tanks from the last quarter-century, has produced a rounded summary of BITC 1982-2007 and key lessons. I am grateful to everyone who has contributed already to the production of this paper – and especially to BITC and the CSR Initiative at the Kennedy School, for the opportunity to capture this account. The usual disclaimers apply. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of either organisation. Ultimately, sins of omission and commission are the author’s!

David Grayson June 2007
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II. BITC 1982-2007

WHAT’S IN A NAME?  

The “canvas” for BITC has thus evolved and expanded over the years: from encouraging businesses to contribute to economic regeneration in specific localities in England, Wales and in Northern Ireland (and in Scotland through the sister organisation: Scottish Business in the Community) through promoting corporate community involvement, to corporate social responsibility, to Responsible Business.

This has been reflected in the evolving mission of BITC:

“BiC is an association of major UK businesses committed to working in partnership with each other, with local and central Government, voluntary organisations and trades unions to promote corporate social responsibility and revitalise economic life in local communities.” (1988)

“the mission of BITC is to raise the quality and extent of business involvement in the community and to make such involvement a natural part of successful business practice.” (adopted before 1993-4)

“to inspire business to increase the quality and extent of their contribution to social and economic regeneration by making corporate social responsibility an essential part of business excellence.” (Adopted before 1998)

“Our purpose is to inspire, challenge, engage and support business in continually improving its positive impact on society”.

The current mission statement reads:

“Business in the Community is a unique movement in the UK of over 750 member companies. Our purpose is to inspire, challenge, engage and support business in continually improving its positive impact on society.

Membership of Business in the Community is a commitment to action and to the continual improvement of the company’s impact on society. Our members commit to:

• Integrate responsible business practice throughout their business
• Impact through collaborative action to tackle disadvantage
• Inspire, innovate and lead by sharing learning and experience.

Further information about Business in the Community can be found at the website www.bitc.org.uk”. 

Perhaps, it is best summed up me in two interviewees’ comments - one from a senior adviser to the Blair / Brown Government; and one from a senior adviser to David Cameron - both these people have known BITC for a decade or more. One said of BITC:

“it has made it socially acceptable for business leaders to admit Corporate Responsibility is important..allowing private belief to become public..without BITC it is unlikely that the agenda would have been taken up so broadly by so many companies”

The other said of BITC that it is:

“the largest and most influential and visible of all the Corporate Responsibility groups... strengths are the relentlessness of the agenda-setting..BITC has helped to institutionalise and mainstream the practice of Corporate Responsibility and created a consensus / expectation for it.”

1 BITC itself had to add the “t” when lawyers for BIC biro threatened legal action for infringement of their name as Business in the Community’s profile grew in the 1980s and its original diminutive form “BiC” was used by member companies.
Many share the view that BITC’s great success has been in making Responsible Business mainstream; getting influential business leaders personally involved - and keeping them involved.

In doing so, it has created a range of campaigning techniques for engaging business and a practical menu of things for businesses (and for individual business-people) to do - whether they are experienced or just starting out.

BITC has been the catalyst to create or take broadscale, a whole range of organisations and Corporate Responsibility activities such as the International Business Leaders’ Forum; employee volunteering; the idea of businesses voluntarily benchmarking their performance through the Corporate Responsibility Index; and encouraging companies regularly to measure and report on their environmental and social impacts: In the UK, for example, 90% of the top companies now regularly report.
IMPACT ON:

- **Individual business leaders**

  Example: More than 5000 have participated in HRH The Prince of Wales Seeing is Believing programme visits and report-backs; 7000 business leaders have been twinned for two-way mentoring with school head teachers (principals); at any one time, more than 500 top business leaders are providing strategic direction through membership of BITC boards, leadership teams; and as speakers at BITC events.

- **Individual businesses**

  Example: Several hundred companies new have the BITC Big Tick Award for excellence in Responsible Business.

- **Business world in UK / internationally**

  Example: Institutionalised concept of Corporate Responsibility; promoted Corporate Responsibility reporting by companies.

- **NQOS / voluntary and community sector**

  Example: Helped create In-Kind Direct, Employers’ Forum on Disability; Teach First; established concept of “community and social entrepreneurs” and helped build all-party support for them.

- **Government / government policy / delivery of public services**

  Example: Created the consensus for / expectation of cross-sectoral partnerships as integral to delivery of social policy.

- **Specific social and environmental issues**

  Example: Supported the creation of and continues to provide the secretariat for, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Corporate Responsibility.

- **Management education (thinking about role of business in society and how it operates vis-à-vis other aspects of society)**

  Example: Report for BP 1995 on how to introduce Corporate Responsibility into Business Schools which led to BP-supported Centre for Corporate Citizenship at Warwick Business School and early work which led to the creation of the European Academy for Business in Society (EABIS) which brings together leading European business schools and multinational businesses interested in improving research and teaching of Corporate Responsibility.

- **Particular localities**

  Example: Halifax One Town-Partnership for the regeneration of a former mill-town - a model subsequently replicated in more than a dozen other locations and encouraging the British government to engage business leaders in local regeneration; Bridge-building cross-communities Northern Ireland - vehicle for younger generation of business-people to participate in civic life 1990s in non-political way.

- **CR coalitions elsewhere**

  Example: Inspiration for FES Spain, BITC Ireland; support for employee volunteering around the world through ENGAGE; created IBLF (International Business Leaders Forum).

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1Submissions for BITC’s Silver Jubilee “Big Tick” Awards for longevity of company-community partnerships repeatedly refer to the trigger from a Seeing is Believing visit or BITC campaign. BITC now has an extensive video library of film clips showing regional and national Awards for Excellence winners. These provide powerful testimonies of the impacts on individuals, businesses and on communities, causes and the environment.
BITC Timeline

1981
- BITC set up
- Companies such as IBM, BP, Shell, British Steel (Industry), Marks and Spencer, Barclays Bank, W.H. Smith, ICI and Midland Bank become early supporters of BITC
- 100th Local Enterprise Agency established

1982
- BITC set up
- Companies such as IBM, BP, Shell, British Steel (Industry), Marks and Spencer, Barclays Bank, W.H. Smith, ICI and Midland Bank become early supporters of BITC
- Falklands War
- Brixton, Toxteth and Notting Hill riots
- 30,000 women protest at Greenham Common air base

1983
- Government launches the Youth Training Scheme
- Thatcher Government re-elected
- 100th Local Enterprise Agency established
- Amalgamation of CBI Special Programmes Unit with BITC
- HRH The Prince of Wales accepts the Presidency of BITC

1984
- Miners Strike starts
- Band-Aid
- FTSE launched
- Live Aid Concert
- Gorbachev becomes leader of USSR
- Launch of PerCent Club by HRH the Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
- Employers’ Forum on Disability launched
- BITC co-hosts Anglo-American Youth Employment conference in Boston
- Study visit to Boston Compact

1985
- Chernobyl disaster
- Industry Year
- HRH The Prince of Wales accepts the Presidency of BITC
- Launch of PerCent Club by HRH the Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
- Employers’ Forum on Disability launched
- BITC co-hosts Anglo-American Youth Employment conference in Boston
- Study visit to Boston Compact

1986
- Stock market crash (Black Monday)
- Conservative government re-elected: “And now for those Inner Cities”
- Industry Matters
- BT Child Line partnership starts
- Institute of Business Ethics launched
- Guiness Scandal
- Ivan Boesky “insider share trading” scandal
- Grand Metropolitan (now Tomorrow’s People)Trust

1987
- Brundtland Commission report on sustainable development: “our common future”
- Corporate Responsibility Group starts
- Montreal Protocol
- Movie: “Wall Street” – “Greed is good”
- First One Town Partnership in Halifax
- Launch of first Education Compact in East London by HRH The Prince of Wales modelled on Boston Compact
- BITC starts to administer Lord Mayor of London’s Dragon Awards
- Live Aid Concert
- Gorbachev becomes leader of USSR
- Launch of PerCent Club by HRH the Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
- Employers’ Forum on Disability launched
- BITC co-hosts Anglo-American Youth Employment conference in Boston
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1988

BITC
• BITC leadership teams start work
• Anglo-American Conference London
• Training programme for community entrepreneurs

Political/Economic
• BSE scare starts
• Pan Am 747 Lockerbie
• Margaret Thatcher environmental speech: “no generation has a freehold on this earth. All we have is a life tenancy – with full repairing lease”

Responsible Business
• “The Green Consumer” Guide

1989

BITC
• BITC takes over Community Enterprise Awards, Inner City Awards, and Prince of Wales Innovation Awards.
• Business in the Environment set up at the request of HRH The Prince of Wales.
• Enterprise Works – 10 years of LEAs
• Launch of BITC Northern Ireland

Political/Economic
• Berlin Wall falls after 28 years
• Tiananmen Square
• Employment White Paper proposing Training and Enterprise Councils
• Greens get 2.3m votes in UK in European Parliament poll

Responsible Business
• The Natural Step think tank for the promotion of sustainability in core business strategy
• Exxon Valdez tanker ruptures off Alaskan coast and spills 11m gallons of crude oil
• Lloyds of London Community Programme launched

1990

BITC
• HRH the Prince of Wales Seeing is Believing Programme begins.
• John Cleese and Prince star in “Grime goes Green”
• First Employee Community Involvement Award (sponsored by Whitbread) 5 – 153 entries in three years
• First BITC Account Management Handbook

Political/Economic
• Poll tax riots.
• Margaret Thatcher resigns
• Nelson Mandela freed in South Africa
• Estimated 8million living with HIV/AIDS worldwide
• East and West Germany united
• World Wide Web

Responsible Business
• International Business Leaders Forum created after Charleston Conference;
• Charles Handy’s RSA Lecture: “What is a Company for?”

1991

BITC
• Launch of Opportunity 2000 (Opportunity Now) with over 60 founder members
• Directions for the Nineties launched with Prime Minister John Major, Charles Kennedy, Tony Blair
• Sunningdale Conference with British Chambers of Commerce, TEC National Council & DTI proposes “one stop shops” to help small business (Business Link)
• Mike Heron from Unilever chairs new Leadership Team on Education

Political/Economic
• Business decide to participate in the UN Conference on Environment and Development for the first time with NGO’s and Governments on a new global platform to help guide world affairs
• First Gulf War
• End of USSR

Responsible Business
• Coffee farmers suffer as prices fall to a 30 year low. In response Cafedirect is founded by Oxfam, Traidcraft, Equal Exchange and Twin Trading.
• Formation of Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) in the USA, including early members such as Ben and Jerry’s and Tom’s of Maine
• “Companies & Communities” by Fogarty & Christie: PSI
1992
- First National Volunteering National Challenge (now Cares) with 30 corporates, 500 community challenges and the participation of more than 8000 people
- UBS CEO’s Seeing is Believing visit to Deptford Green School leads to “Roots and Wings” student mentoring

1993
- Aim High campaign launched
- First Managing Corporate Community Investment training programme at Ashridge
- Work in Society presentation on competitiveness and social cohesion launched

1994
- Launch of Local Investment Fund
- First BITC Responsible Business supplement with Financial Times
- 7 “Ps” of Corporate Community Involvement identified

1995
- Launch of Roots and Wings Mentoring programme
- Merger of BITC and Action Resource Centre to form Action: Employees in the Community
- Launch of Race for Opportunity with 21 member companies
- Launch of Cause-Related Marketing Campaign

Political/Economic
- Britain phases out manufacture of CFCs through concerns over the ozone layer
- Conservative government re-elected
- Los Angeles riots
- George Soros speculates against sterling: “Black Wednesday”

Responsible Business
- Start of Tesco’s Computers for Schools; and of Avon Breast Cancer Crusade
- Launch of London First
- Earth Summit in Rio
- Corporate Citizenship Briefing starts

The BITC Jubilee Dialogue Paper
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BITC</th>
<th>Political/Economic</th>
<th>Responsible Business</th>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>• BiE Index of Corporate Environmental Engagement launched - 73 FTSE 100 companies benchmark their environmental management • Partners in Leadership launched • Tony Blair addresses Per cent Club at Tate Gallery</td>
<td>• President Mandela visits Brixton with BITC • “Mad cow” disease • 60 million users of Internet worldwide</td>
<td>• Launch of Gifts in Kind • Nike “sweatshops” controversy • BP faces allegations over connections to security forces in Colombia</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>• Global Network Launched • Launch of 40 Regeneration Action Areas • Head Teacher mentoring launched • Launch of pilot Principles of Corporate Community Investment</td>
<td>• Blair Government elected • national network of Business Links established • Hong Kong handed back to China • Dolly the Sheep</td>
<td>• European Business Network for Social Cohesion set up (now CSR Europe); • Copenhagen Centre; • Global Reporting Initiative created • Marine Stewardship Council set up • John Elkington’s “Cannibals with Forks” published</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>• Business Action on Homelessness launched • Taskforce 2002: BITC-NCVO reports: Two-Way Street • Launch of Awards for Excellence in Corporate Community Investment • Launch of Right to Read education initiative</td>
<td>• Government sets tough new literacy targets, 80% of all primary school leavers to reach standard level • New Deal Launched • Stephen Lawrence murder • Good Friday agreement, Northern Ireland • Clinton scandal • English Regional Development Agencies established</td>
<td>• Launch of first European Online Resource Centre on CSR • GMO food controversy in Europe • Instituto Ethos launched in Brazil to promote responsible business</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>• New Principles of Corporate Community Investment launched • First PerCent Club Index launched • Launch of Cares incorporated • Company of the Year: BT • “Cause-related marketing – who cares wins” by Sue Adkins</td>
<td>• UK writes off £1bn of debt owing by some of the worlds poorest countries • Mass protests at the WTO meetings in Seattle • World population reaches 6 billion</td>
<td>• Committee of Inquiry into New Vision for Business reports</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>BITC</td>
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| 2004 | - Launch of CSR Academy  
     - Launch of Prison Partners  
     - First Conversation at the British Museum  
     - First Starbucks Dialogue  
     - "Corporate Social Opportunity" | - Kyoto Protocol comes into effect  
     - Google floatation  
     - Indian ocean Tsunami  
     - EU Enlargement | - Super Size Me, documentary directed by and  
     - "Good Migrations" - study looking at impact of off-shoring of jobs - BT case-study  
     - 'The Corporation' movie |
| 2005 | - Launch of Business Action on Health  
     - Launch of Marketplace taskforce  
     - 15th anniversary Seeing is Believing | - Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma  
     - 40 million living with HIV/AIDS  
     - 7-7 attacks, London  
     - One billion Internet users worldwide | - Ian Davis - The Economist: “By special invitation” |
| 2006 | - Marketplace principles launched  
     - RED Summit  
     - Marks and Spencer Company of the Year | - Companies Act 2006  
     - Stern Report for UK Government on Economic Impact of Climate Change | - Al Gore’s ‘An Inconvenient Truth’;  
     - Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G3 guidelines released;  
     - Google in China controversy |
| 2007 | - “Universities that Count”  
     - Shopping malls’ consumer exhibition on Climate Change  
     - May-Day Summit with Regional Development Agencies  
     - Awards for Excellence with Al Gore  
     - First CR Yearbook  
     - Silver Jubilee Big Ticks  
     - Jubilee Dialogues | - Tony Blair steps down as Prime Minister and Gordon Brown becomes PM  
     - Climate Change Bill  
     - Inter-governmental panel on Climate Change reports | - “One planet Business” published by WWF;  
     - report of Tomorrow’s Global Company Inquiry led by BP and Infosys;  
     - Baker Report into health and safety failings in BP North America |
Arguably, BITC has been most successful when it has applied Five Critical Success Factors - think of them as five ships: Leadership, Apprenticeship, Showmanship, Entrepreneurship and Partnership. By far the most significant of these has been Leadership. The organisation has been less successful when one or more of these Critical Success Factors was missing.

III. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. BITC has always enjoyed the active engagement of top, current business leaders. It has been “the club to belong to.” Each area of BITC work: each BITC region and each campaign has a business leadership team in charge. Membership of the BITC board and of Leadership teams has been at the level of company Chairmen, CEOs, main board members of FTSE 100. Strategic direction has come from the top of companies rather than been confined to the CSR function. The continuing ability to attract and retain the most senior levels of business leadership has been crucial. One top marketing guru argues that BITC has made it “socially acceptable for business leaders to admit it (Corporate Responsibility) is important: allowing private belief to become public.”

2. One aspect of continuing to engage top, current business leaders has been leadership to set the agenda and move the debate about business and society forward. This has included a series of ground-breaking initiatives such as BITC’s Race for Opportunity (RFO) campaign; the Business Impact Reporting Group which encouraged more companies to measure and report on their environmental and social impacts; and the subsequent work to launch the Corporate Responsibility Index (CRI). This has also included periodic “thought-leadership” exercises to consult on and then suggest a forward agenda such as Directions for the Nineties (1991); Work in Society (1994); Perfect Storm (2002); and the Lambert Commentary for BITC’s 20th Anniversary in 2002. Most recently, thought-leadership has been exercised in the development of the Responsible Business Marketplace Principles; and now in a new Responsible Business in the Workplace Leadership Team.

3. The engagement of top, current business leaders has also enabled BITC to take a leadership role as an authoritative, independent third-party endorser of good practice in Responsible Business for example through the annual Awards for Excellence which are independently judged and verified; and through the increasing role in benchmarking, particularly the Corporate Responsibility Index as well as the earlier Business In the Environment (BiE) Index, and benchmarking by BITC’s Race and Gender equality campaigns.
4. BITC has also benefited from strong executive leadership with just two CEOs in 25 years. The charisma and convening power of these two long-serving CEOs: Stephen O’Brien (1982-1992) and Julia Cleverdon, previously at the Industrial Society (since 1992) - and specifically their phenomenal “people-tracking” and networking skills - have complimented the eight chairmen who have led the organisation: Alastair Pilkington, Robert Carr, Hector Laing, Allen Sheppard, Peter Davis, David Varney, Mike Rake. Stephen and Julia have also been able to work very closely with BITC’s only president: HRH The Prince of Wales (1985 onwards).

5. BITC – and the Action Resource Centre before it, which BITC subsumed in 1995 – has operated as credible, “honest brokers” between business and society. Effective brokerage has been at the heart of delivery. It is easier to be this broker if the organisation and its staff are able to relate to & empathise with business. Hence the stated purpose of the organisation “to inspire, engage, and support and challenge companies, to continually improve the impact they have on society.” The BITC philosophy has been to inspire rather than to bludgeon: to “name and fame” – for example, through the annual Awards for Excellence now in their tenth year. A further aspect of brokerage is being able to talk at FTSE 100 board level and simultaneously to community activists / grassroots - and where necessary, translate between.

6. Another element of apprenticeship has been having a range of concrete things for companies to get involved with - a menu for people at different levels in a business (CEOs to front-line staff); for different business functions (marketing, purchasing, HR etc); for different community issues; and for particular segments eg Comm.unity (to engage the IT sector) and “Pro-Help” to broker pro-bono help into the community from professional firms. A crucial aspect of BITC has been the simultaneous emphasis on individual business activity and collective business action. Providing a safe place for businesses (often fierce commercial competitors) to meet and discuss collective business responses, has also been important.

7. Intense, inveterate networking – putting people in touch with useful contacts – is part of the BITC corporate culture - and this fits well with prevailing British business culture. Significantly, when the then BITC Chairman David Varney persuaded a top American strategy consultant to advise BITC, the guru gave the BITC management team a business school case-study about Tupperware - whose enduring global success has been based on selling through personal contact and networks! Even some of BITC’s critics acknowledge its intense, eclectic networking which seems in BITC’s DNA and something which staff seem hard-wired to deliver.

THE LEADERSHIP OF HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES

Prince Charles became President of BITC in 1985 and over the 22 years since, he has undertaken more than 350 engagements for BITC. These have included taking more than 30 “report-backs” from Seeing is Believing visits, and leading visits to community projects across the UK. His memos to BITC chairmen and to BITC CEOs Stephen O’Brien and Julia Cleverdon identifying new issues, spotting potential synergies and opportunities to advance “Responsible Business” have become a regular part of BITC life. He personally promoted the rural regeneration leadership team at the time of Britain’s foot and mouth disease crisis in farming. His early and persistent identification of Climate Change has been globally recognised. In the early years before the concept of Responsible Business was widely known, he was particularly crucial in opening doors. Today, his own widespread networks and experience ensure new issues and potential synergies are constantly being explored.
III. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

SHOWMANSHIP

8. BITC has had a number of successful media partnerships over the years. These have included the (London) Evening Standard who published a series of full-page articles by corporate CEOs on different aspects of corporate responsibility, brokered by BITC, over an 18 month period in 1992-3; annual BITC supplements in The Financial Times; Granada TV’s Community Challenge to five major companies in the North-West of England each to adopt a local community and together fulfill a community development goal. BITC’s annual Awards for Excellence are run in partnership with the Financial Times.

“Companies that Count” is an annual supplement on the Corporate Responsibility Index which is published in The Sunday Times. The Giving List with data from BITC’s Per Cent Club is published annually in The Guardian.

9. Showmanship is also about the creativity of events to keep BITC fresh for long-serving members / individuals. PR guru Tim Bell in 1990 told BITC it had to create the Oscars of Responsible Business. Arguably this happened when BITC started holding the Awards for Excellence in the Royal Albert Hall. Creativity is both in the venues used: such as holding events in an old Nineteenth Century Music Hall – Wiltons – which is now being restored by enthusiasts; and in the format of events: for example “Conversations” with top business leaders in the British Museum.

CONVERSATIONS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Have involved several different business leaders including Niall Fitzgerald (Chairman of Reuters and previously CEO of Unilever), Sir Martin Sorrell (WPP) and Lord Browne (BP). Each session involved a CEO choosing examples from the British Museum collection to illustrate his chosen themes of business responsibility. Niall Fitzgerald chose African artefacts to make the business case for business engagement in Africa. John Browne used the story of Venice – memorably asking why Venetian power waned and concluding that it was when the merchant class grew complacent and stopped asking “what is the news on the Rialto.” Each Conversation was moderated by Richard Lambert.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

10. Like a good entrepreneur, BITC has spotted and exploited opportunities. One of its greatest skills has been picking up issues early on, putting them on the boardroom table, and helping to make them mainstream. BITC’s most successful initiatives did not start out as national programmes – but began as very specific practical examples and projects. Subsequently, some of these were taken broadscale – for example, the St Helens Community Trust which became a national network of 400 local enterprise agencies.

The East London Education-Business Partnership became a national network of (in their heyday, some 300) such partnerships.

The Halifax One Town Partnership (modelled on the example of Lowell, Massachusetts) led to some 12 other public-private-community city partnerships. BITC learnt from New York City Cares and developed more than 30 local Cares projects around the UK to encourage employee volunteering – and have now exported this again to Australia, with Melbourne CARES.

11. A further manifestation of this entrepreneurship is the ability to spot, to tap and to harness individual business leaders’ passions – eg international banker John Studinski’s commitment to homelessness which led to him chairing BITC’s Business Action on Homelessness. In order to do this, BITC has used the “Tupperware” Principle: using the networks and persuasive powers of current supporters to draw in the next generation of business leaders, like Tupperware sells its products through sale-agents’ personal networks. This has involved an appeal to hearts and minds – as in the Prince of Wales “Seeing is Believing” programme (SIB) – which takes small groups of business leaders to look at community issues and the role that might play to tackle these. SIB started with Headhunters sharing their “little black books” of contacts – talent they had identified – with BITC.
III. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

12. Entrepreneurship has also been about assembling a range of resources to develop practical solutions for identified social problems. In the early 1990s, for example, BITC’s work with community entrepreneurs revealed a funding gap which led to BITC creating the Local Investment Fund: LIF to offer an early alternative to grant-funding for community organisations. This concept was subsequently taken up and replicated by Government with a series of new funds to support the expansion of social enterprises, and the voluntary and community sector more broadly.

13. BITC has also played to the competitive instincts of entrepreneurial businesses with the Awards for Excellence and the various benchmarking Indexes. Companies strive to improve their rankings. When Marks & Spencer was chosen by independent judges as BITC’s Company of the Year, for the second time in three years, the company took out full-page adverts to celebrate the recognition – and use it to evidence the centrality of its commitment to Corporate Responsibility as part of its corporate brand values.

PARTNERSHIP

14. BITC has not been about business replacing the public or voluntary sectors – the emphasis has more been on cross-sectoral partnerships.

15. Corporate Responsibility is not associated with any one political party or tradition. It is for all seasons. BITC has worked to achieve all-party engagement and active involvement with successive governments. This has included helping:
(i) to shape government ideas (Business Link, Compact, Training and Enterprise Councils);
(ii) to help implement government policies and
(iii) to take BITC programmes broadscale through public funding and support eg “Right to Read” to Literacy Hour Partners in Leadership (to provide mentors between business leaders and high school principals (head teachers).

Thus BITC worked with the Thatcher Government whilst simultaneously, helping miners’ wives’ support groups during the miners’ strike (1984-5); worked with local government of all colours (a number of the 1980s/ early 1990s local authority contacts of BITC became Blair government ministers).
BITC has assisted successive governments: former Managing-Director Peter Davies undertook a Review of EBPs for the Government. A previous BITC Chairman: Sir Peter Davis chaired the Government’s New Deal Taskforce; and several members from BITC assisted the Prime Minister’s Social Exclusion Unit. BITC board members have led a number of government reviews: eg the Russell Commission on volunteering amongst young people; the (Sandy) Leitch Skills Review; and the (Derek) Wanless Reviews of Health. This continues with the announcement by the new British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, that BITC’s Julia Cleverdon will lead a government inquiry into how to engage more businesses with schools.
All five Critical Success Factors can be seen at work in the implementation of successful BITC campaigns: see box below. Some of these campaigns have focussed on increasing the quality and extent of business involvement in the community such as Business Action on Education and campaigns on various aspects of regeneration (including earlier leadership teams on economic development and engaging more small and medium size businesses in the community).

Other BITC campaigns have focussed on core business operations such as environmental impacts or most recently, campaigns to persuade businesses to adopt Responsible Marketing Principles.

Business in the Community campaigns have been central to the success of the organisation over the last 25 years. This summarises some of the key learning points.

**Principles - Campaigns must be**

- Business led - campaigns must be business led - not staff led or Government led
- Business funded - campaigns must attract the core business funding that can leverage Government funds. The McKinsey report on BITC (1995) identified the willingness of business to invest as the critical acid test of business need
- Based on a business case - the clear case for business action based on business benefits
- Time limited with exit strategies - even if this is to establish a long term campaign brand

The substance of this box is a summary of campaigning lessons prepared by Peter Davies - former Managing Director of BITC 1996-2005.

**EXPERIENCE IN PRACTICE**

A number of BITC staff suggest that the organisation has often been more effective on the early steps - and has been weaker on refining the agenda for broadscale adaptation; and on renewing campaigns: on identifying the point on the Sigmoid Curve: X rather than Y when renewing campaigns.
5. Promoting the agenda for action – involving both actions for individual businesses to adopt and the agenda for collective business action - Use Seeing is Believing – the most powerful engagement tool - at all points in the development of the campaign. It can also be used at Step 4 to build the leadership team, to engage business on the issue, and later to communicate impact to a wider business audience.

Create a web resource – it will act as a focal point and reference point for companies you want to engage - make sure it is full of leadership companies’ endorsements and case studies.

Case studies are the life blood – the stories that can be used in the media, in speeches etc. Use the companies to host “open door” sessions.

6. Learning from early adopters, refining the agenda in the light of their experience and promoting the refined agenda to a more broadscale audience - Work with BITC Account managers responsible for regular engagement with member companies - they know the members best, but make life easy for them – provide brief, regular updates, join with them in meetings with key targets, keep them involved when you have engaged their companies. Products and services - campaigns go through a cycle of development moving from awareness-raising through to service provision in providing the business solutions developed by the campaign. Be clear about how these are to be delivered in the long term.

7. Showcasing and reporting results and using these to renew the campaign. Awards - case studies are often best generated through BITC’s Awards for Excellence which are externally assessed and judged. Award winners may be the initial step prompting a campaign. They may help to scope what is possible and contribute to the business case as well as the agenda for action. Awards also provide critical profile. Media partners - campaigns need profile to succeed. This is one of the values for the Leadership companies, make them the spokespersons. A media partnership can make an impact although can limit wider coverage by other media. Make sure all the relevant trade/specialist/CSR press are briefed and know the campaign team personally.

Slimming clubs – some campaigns work best on the slimming club model, companies join as a commitment to improve, regularly measure progress against each other and share what has worked with each other – the BITC version of weightwatchers!

In implementing these Seven Steps, BITC has applied all its Five Critical Success Factors. It can now also use a “toolkit” of different techniques and devices which help to shape the campaign.
1. Identifying issue for business - showing how something is important for future business success - this may be triggered by a suggestion from HRH Prince of Wales or board discussion or a challenge from government or Third Sector, or it may start as a result of discussion on (say) a Seeing is Believing Visit

2. Scoping: what the issue means for business, potential solutions and possible business contributions, research partners, public and private partners, businesses and business people already interested - Build your key partnerships with public /NGO sectors - involve them in leadership team where appropriate, but build your partnerships, which will be often critical to providing the inspiration, the basis for funding bids and long term exit strategies

3. Making the business case - building the hard evidence from practical examples - Identify a research partner - build the business case based on evidence, establish benchmarks to measure progress, plan in regular research to measure progress. Many consultancies will be keen to offer pro bono to build relations with the business leader

4. Building leadership - finding and recruiting business leaders - as with any organisation, the leadership style effective in the early stages of a campaign may not be best suited to a mature campaign or one being refreshed - The critical role of the campaign leader - the business leaders who are passionate - based on personal commitment and/or business interests. Campaigns must directly engage these leaders and while it may be necessary to go through intermediaries in the business, direct engagement is critical to success. Get to know the PA - plan into their diary, link to speaking engagements or business visits, use the address book etc. The relationship between Campaign chair and Campaign director should be a “Torvil and Dean” Fun - campaigns should be fun for business leaders - create inspirational opportunities. Avoid Leadership team meetings becoming involved in the routine - they must be enjoyable, inspirational, networking opportunities with Government ministers and other opinion-formers - so run great parties and use the BITC tupperware model to engage the next generation of leaders
IV. AREAS WHERE BITC COULD HAVE DONE BETTER / COULD DO BETTER

Inevitably, in 25 years, BITC has not always got it right: sometimes it was the right idea but the wrong time; sometimes the right idea but insufficiently resourced - and sometimes it just did not grab the opportunity. Some things that BITC is now criticised for not having done are clearly comments with the benefit of hindsight.

Some are items which campaigners wish some organisation might have picked up - and in this case, the criticism is directed at the Responsible Business movement generally rather than BITC in particular.

Nevertheless, one of BITC’s former chairmen used to say: “study your failures, you can often learn more from them than from your successes.”

SLOW TO SPOT THE NEW ISSUES

The weakness most consistently mentioned is that in recent years, as the organisation has grown in size; as campaigns have become more established; and as BITC has become more of a delivery organisation, the “fleetness of foot” has declined. It has been less able to spot the next topical waves. BITC, for example, has come relatively late to the Climate Change Agenda – even though the BITC President HRH The Prince of Wales has been flagging the issue for some time. On Climate Change specifically, it is now working closely with organisations like the Carbon Trust and the Regional Development Agencies to help spread awareness and good practice.

Similarly, the organisation lagged leading members in moving from “Corporate Community Involvement” to “Corporate Social Responsibility.” Some communications specialists argue that the continuing existence of programmes like the Per Cent Club and association with newspaper supplements such as “The Giving Age,” perpetuates the mixed messages about whether the focus is on the community activities of business, or on the broader issue of how business conducts its overall activities in an ethical and responsible way. Indeed, one leading change-maker interviewed for this Paper, argued that BITC needs a brand make-over – “look at everything: name, look, feel, ways of working, programmes!”

FIG-LEAF FOR BUSINESS

This leads to a linked criticism that sometimes, membership of BITC can be seen as a fig-leaf for some companies, who are really doing very little to minimise their negative environmental and social impacts, and to maximise their positive impacts. For some companies, participation in a BITC campaign may have been a relatively easy “bolt-on” to operations - rather than being “built-in” to their purpose and strategy. In part, this is the price to be paid for being a “broad church” and having “everyone who is anyone” in membership.

The most recent membership surveys suggest that amongst the leading companies, the complaint is that BITC does not challenge them enough. One objective, therefore, of the Jubilee Dialogue is to help refresh the forward agenda in the way that in previous times, the Lambert Commentary, David Varney’s “The Perfect Storm,” the “Winning with Integrity” Report or - earlier still, “Work in Society” and “Directions for the Nineties” - did.

NOT FOLLOWING THROUGH

Paradoxically, if it has not always been fast enough to identify new issues, another criticism over the years has been that it was often too quick to start new initiatives at the expense of not not sticking with existing programmes and taking them to scale.

POOR INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

BITC has had a patchy record at tracking and codifying its learning - at least until now. Some argue that some of the other business-led Responsible Business coalitions like BSR and IBLF and WBCSD (World Business Council for Sustainable Development) have done better at thought-leadership and codifying good practice. One aspect would be that BITC has not fully exploited the richness of the raw data it has, eg from the Prince of Wales Seeing is Believing Visit Reports, the annual returns for the Corporate Responsibility Index and submissions for the annual Awards for Excellence.

Additionally, as one senior government policy adviser observed, whilst BITC has contributed to the development and implementation of a range of government policies in both the Thatcher-Major and the Blair-Brown eras, it has not helped to translate this social innovation into lessons for broadscale public policy reforms. In fairness, this same interviewee conceded that this has also been a failing
of successive governments themselves as well. There has been little, consistent attempt within government to implement I.D.E.A: Identify good practice; Disseminate; Experiment in different circumstances; Apply refined learning broadscale.

Amongst other failures and weaknesses quoted in interviews and discussions:

- Classic small business-type organisation: i.e. slow to establish processes to manage its own growth eg in its own Human Resources, financial controls; or impact measurement;
- Not tracked and involved the rising star civil servants (or voluntary and community sector rising stars either?) as well as it has done with the rising stars in business. It could be argued, however, that Common Purpose – started by Julia Middleton (like Julia Cleverdon, another Industrial Society alumni), has played this role – not just in tracking but also in capacity-building for working across the sector. Perhaps, therefore, the issue is more one of how to build better connections between Business in the Community and Common Purpose?
- not always engaged effectively with the Corporate Responsibility professionals in businesses. One of the downsides of focussing so strongly on CEOs and senior directors of member companies, has been that the managers responsible day-to-day in the same companies have often felt side-lined and / or bounced by BITC. One experienced CR professional who has worked in several BITC member companies, says – only half in jest – that BITC word-processors are programmed only to write to CEOs and Chairmen!
- Limited success on thought-leadership around Corporate Responsibility - and particularly at integrating the learning and thinking of other organisations on Responsible Business such as The Centre for Tomorrow’s Company. Consequently, in recent years, BITC has sometimes tended to punch below its weight in the opinion columns of the quality press and has not been high profile as a commentator in the media, on business and societal trends - for example - in business and current affairs programmes on radio and TV. Some would argue though, that as a “good (positive) news” membership organisation which seeks to inspire rather than to bludgeon, it is inevitably harder to get media than for organisations happy to “name and shame!”
- One solution to both the development of institutional memory and thought-leadership, would be to develop a close collaboration with some of the leading business schools. Although there have been periodic attempts to do this (including a conference at Highgrove in December 2002 with the heads of a number of leading UK schools; and BITC has become an associate member of the European Academy for Business in Society: EABIS, there has been a patchy engagement with Business schools. BITC has not persuaded member companies to include Responsible Business issues in specifying what they want from customised executive management programmes, provided by Business Schools. Nor has BITC yet managed to make its data available for MBA and executive management training or to link with the academic research agenda.
- There have been some “no-go” topics like the links between Corporate Responsibility and eg executive compensation / “rewards for failure; or eg how commitment to Responsible Business should change how corporate lobbying is conducted.
- BITC was slow to embrace the Internet or - more recently - the new Web 2.0 philosophy.
- It has been less attractive to the (new) entrepreneurial class; and efforts to engage smaller businesses regionally and through collaborations with small business organisations – such as the Small Business Consortium - have so far produced limited results.
- Although BITC has consistently emphasised that it is a business-led organisation, it has accepted substantial public funding in recent years. Some argue that, when it has taken government funds, it has, as a result, lost entrepreneurial focus. The former chairman of BITC member company Northern Foods: Christopher Haskins levelled this criticism in an article in the Financial Times in Aug 2006. – The danger is public funding reduces creativity in looking for ways of engaging business.

These are substantial criticisms. However, as some critics have themselves volunteered, a number of the perceived / actual weaknesses are identified with the benefit of hindsight. Expectations of how business will behave and the extent of corporate responsibility is far higher today than when BITC began - thanks in no small part to the work of BITC itself. Whilst it is now well-resourced by the standards of many community and voluntary organisations, its resources have always been very limited compared to the scale of its operations – and compared to the scale of resources available to the senior figures in business, politics and society that BITC is seeking to influence.
V. FUTURE CHALLENGES

BITC has to continue to improve and to innovate to remain relevant – particularly to remain relevant to what the McKinsey Report on BITC 13 years ago, described as the sophisticates - companies with high skill / high will to be a Responsible Business. That means BITC has to be nimble in anticipating the next topical waves - what the social philosopher Charles Handy has described as spotting the Sigmoid Curves.

When BITC started, there was still a President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Brezhnev). It was almost a decade before the Berlin Wall was to come down or before Nelson Mandela was released from prison. A visit to the on-line BITC Jubilee Timeline will quickly remind a visitor of the profound economic, social, political, technological – as well as business – changes that have occurred in the past quarter century. The one certainty of the next 25 years is that the pace and extent of change is likely to accelerate.

Before BITC celebrates its Golden Jubilee, China may have become the world’s largest economy. India may have become the most populous nation. As the Inter-Governmental Scientific Panel on Climate Change in its most recent report has warned, without urgent global action, by 2032, there may be mass, forced migrations caused by Climate Change produced flooding.

The latest UN Population Report (for 2006 - published March 2007) suggests that the world population will rise from 6.7 billion today to 9 billion by 2050: an increase of 2.3 billion - a growth equal to the entire world population in 1950. By 2020, over 90% of the world’s oil supplies may be in Muslim countries. “Raising our Game” – produced by the think-tank and consultancy: Sustainability, to mark their 20th anniversary, describes four potential scenarios for the next two decades - with different assumptions about whether the world can adopt the principles of sustainable development early enough or comprehensively enough.

We will all have our ideas of what the topical waves for Responsible Business – and therefore, for BITC, are likely to be, going forward. Some obvious ones include:

1. CLIMATE CHANGE: both helping businesses to work out their own agenda; but also through cross-fertilising all BITC work on Climate Change, for example, so that the education team is incorporating environmental education into its agenda with business; Partners in Leadership in the Community (PILCOM) and professional firms group Pro-Help are supporting environmental community entrepreneurs, more of CARES is encouraging environmental volunteering; more of the Seeing Is Believing visits are looking at environmental issues. Many of the specific elements to celebrate the Silver Jubilee are focussed on developing this greater degree of “join-up” between Climate Change and other aspects of BITC work such as the MayDay CEOs’ summit; special Awards for Excellence in 2007 on environmental impacts; and a shopping mall touring exhibition aimed at inspiring consumers of the role they can play in influencing corporate action on Climate Change. Further aspects could include identifying and disseminating good practice in companies on engaging their employees on the issue.

2. DEVELOPING A SINGLE AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS: In 2007 alone, for example, besides the BITC Silver Jubilee, it will be the 20th anniversary of the Brundtland Report on Sustainable Development; and reports on Tomorrow’s Global Company and from the Inter-Governmental Scientific Panel on Climate Change. Is this the opportunity to produce a single, common business agenda for Sustainability and Responsible Business?

3. DIVERSITY AND RECONCILIATION: Is one aspect of this, the role for business in contributing through its own need for workforce diversity, to encouraging better inter-faith / inter-cultural understanding, respect and tolerance. BITC’s new Burnley Initiative, in collaboration with other organisations in the Prince’s family of charities, is one manifestation.
4. SUSTAINABLE SOURCING, PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION; AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISUSE OF BUSINESS’S PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: How does BITC help its members to respond to heightened expectations of business globally including what responsibilities businesses have for possible misuse of products and services eg the food sector and childhood obesity and the new business action on health campaign. BITC has just developed a set of Responsible Business Marketplace Principles, emphasising also the business opportunities from being proactive as well as the risks to business of inaction. These will now be reflected in revisions to the market-place questions in the Corporate Responsibility Index.

5. THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE EQUITY: BITC has traditionally focussed mainly on large publicly quoted companies – but will it need to focus more in future on other forms of ownership. What, for example, will be the implications of de-equitisation of the UK market and the mounting power, influence and scale of private equity – and what critics perceive as its lack of accountability, transparency and responsibility. The BITC Managing Director Stephen Howard is leading a project on this topic. More broadly, will we see more engaged institutional investors as proposed in a recent book “The New Capitalists” and exemplified by the Carbon Disclosure Project?

6. HEALTH AND WELLBEING - will an increasing part of Responsible Business involve companies taking more of a holistic interest in their staff and staff wellbeing, health, work life balance, stress levels, and encouraging on-going learning and development?

7. APPLYING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS VALUES in emerging/developing economies. The report of the Tomorrow’s Global Company Inquiry – published June 2007 – suggests a forward agenda for global businesses operating in markets around the world. Sustainability’s “Raising the Bar” emphasised the importance of getting more authentic voices on Responsible Business from the global south.

8. EXECUTIVE PAY AND REWARD in the overall context of business integrity and increased shareholder pressure. Will there be more of a link between business ethics and the responsible business agenda?

9. PHILANTHROPY AND VOLUNTARISM - given the dramatic increase in individual wealth, will a new Golden Age of venture philanthropy and personal involvement in charities and social causes start to engage not just the super rich but a much wider cross section of society and can business be a facilitator for this? Academic research is already emphasising the concept of “Blended Value” – whereby responsible business, social enterprise, and civic entrepreneurship learn more from each other.

10. RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: really developing the language, the agenda and the routes to reach smaller firms – and especially the “gazelles” – small firms with the ambition and the potential to grow fast.

FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

More fundamentally, will BITC have to change how it operates in order to be relevant to those businesses which are increasingly looking for what Marks and Spencer, calls “competitive integration?”

The gap between the leading businesses who are committed to the sustainability / responsibility journey and the rest, is widening and the gap is likely to grow still larger. When the territory was just corporate community involvement (CCI), the business impact of a well-run (as opposed to a pedestrian or non-existent CCI) programme was marginal. This is not the case with Responsible Business practice. Will BITC continue to be relevant and able to add-value to the leading-edge member companies?

If so, what changes might be required not just in terms of the topics covered, but of how BITC organises itself? How far will the model be collaborative action through leadership teams and campaigns? How far will the leaders share with competitors as they used to do in CCI? How far will BITC need to upskill individual account managers (brokers) so that they are able to understand the key issues relevant to a particular business and be able to develop close relationships with a number of key players at different levels in the business? Will this require more sectoral expertise?

Two critical issues stand out:

• Going forward, will BITC principally be a campaigner or a deliverer?
• Is it going to be global or local?

1. CAMPAIGNER VERSUS DELIVERER

Perhaps the issue most frequently raised has been the scale and range of BITC’s delivery activity today; and whether this distracts from the ability to identify and pursue new agendas. This is seen to have added urgency as the range of issues which “Corporate Responsibility” covers increases; and it becomes ever harder to have in-house expertise in all of them or to keep in touch with innovation.

Does this imply some organisational change? If the enduring USP of BITC is the capacity to inspire and engage top business leaders, with the most relevant and important aspects of Responsible Business, should the focus be more on this campaigning role? Does this imply fewer “own labels” and a greater capacity to signpost to a range of strategic partners. Perhaps a mix of specialist NGOs/campaigns, boutique CR consultancies, business schools - different organisations expert in particular aspects of Responsible Business such as human rights, business ethics, sustainable production and consumption, responsible sourcing? This would represent a significant shift from today’s generally loose, ad hoc and sporadic relationships with other organisations. BITC would thus become an effective translator between member companies and these specialist, strategic allies. How far would such organisations be interested in a strategic alliance with BITC, as one of their key channels to connect to leading businesses?

In practice, the issue is not campaigning versus any delivery. Without some delivery experience, it would be hard for the organisation to understand the campaign issues or the practical obstacles to be overcome. The real question, therefore, is likely to be the scale of delivery - and how BITC finds partners to deliver broadscale.

2. RESPONDING TO GLOBALISATION: LOCAL OR GLOBAL

BITC is already confronting the challenge of speaking credibly to the growing number of non-UK head-quartered businesses in membership; and to long-standing members whose operations and areas of focus have become increasingly international. Already 20% of annual invoices are approved abroad.

One part of the response has been to start building links with like-minded organisations in other parts of the world through an emerging Global Partners Network (GPN). Like private clubs that offer reciprocal membership arrangements to members of affiliated clubs as they travel around the world, is there some referral service to be developed between GPN participants? The “Tomorrow’s Global Company Report (June 2007) involving a number of BITC member companies and BITC, makes the argument that global businesses need to “expand the space” through which they inter-act with society.

For organisations like BITC the question now is how they learn from experience and new approaches in different parts of the world - particularly the global south” - just as much as BITC shares its own learning.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF BITC MEMBERSHIP

Membership of BITC has historically been open to any business that wanted to join. Members are now encouraged to:

• Inspire – innovate and lead by sharing learning and experience
• Impact – on key social issues by engaging in collaborative action
• Integrate – manage and measure responsible business practice.

It is understood, however, that member companies are at different stages of understanding and of commitment to Responsible Business. Thirteen years ago, McKinsey & Co, described this as a skill / will matrix:

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<td>Low skill / low will</td>
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BITC tries to work with each member company to support their development - using where applicable tools such as the Corporate Responsibility Index. Repeated
studies – including BITC’s joint publication with Insight (2005): “Rewarding Virtue” have emphasised the critical importance of corporate leadership and board-level governance if Responsible Business is genuinely to be embedded. Is there an appetite now to expect that every member company of BITC might “comply or explain” with a commitment to have some form of board-level governance of Corporate Responsibility?

An allied issue is how directors of member companies and senior managers / rising stars are equipped to lead successfully on Sustainability and Responsible Business. Is a logical extension of long running BITC programmes like Seeing is Believing, to run board training – perhaps in collaboration with some of BITC’s consultancy members and / or partner business schools?

4. HARNESSING THE NEW MEDIA SUCH AS WEB 2.0

The rise of Web 2.0 (which is technological innovation encouraging - and simultaneously driven by - Internet users’ desire for a more participatory on-line environment) exemplified by Wikipedia and YouTube could make it much easier for BITC to keep in touch with, learn from, contribute to the development of a Global Partners Network of coalitions promoting responsible business.

More broadly, Web 2.0 creates both risks and opportunities for BITC member companies and other businesses in terms of demands for greater accountability and transparency; and for new forms of stakeholder-engagement. Organisations are having to master new methods of communication: blogging, on-line chat-rooms, spoof websites.

New XBRL technology enables automatic, real-time comparisons of on-line data: for example between the on-line Sustainability / Corporate Responsibility reports of different companies. Just as BITC led the way in Corporate Responsibility Reporting with the Impact on Society taskforce and subsequent “Business Impact Reporting Group” (BIRG), so is there now an opportunity to help member companies leapfrog in the accessibility of their reporting - and ensure more user-friendly reports which are, therefore, more useful and more used? BITC has the convening power to persuade a critical mass of the major reporters to agree protocols for using the XBRL technology (unseen meta-tags on key data) which allows automatic on-line comparison with the same data in other reports.

These are just some of the topics and organisational issues raised so far in BITC’s Jubilee Dialogue. BITC now invites member companies and partners to contribute to the Jubilee Dialogue. The goal of the Dialogue is both to:
• build up the understanding of what has made BITC successful which can help other emerging business-led coalitions around the world in the Global Partners Network to leap-frog ahead in their ability to engage business;
• and to help BITC to shape Directions towards the Golden Jubilee!

NEXT STEPS – RESPONDING TO THE JUBILEE DIALOGUE: FOLLOWING UP THIS PUBLICATION

Please tell us:
• of any documents (reports, speeches, publications) that you have in your company / personal archives that relate to BITC and which might contribute to an official archive of BITC which it is hoped will be established this Jubilee year and housed at a major University
• whether you agree or disagree with the assessments offered in this paper of BITC’s (i) Critical Success Factors; (ii) areas where it could have/do better; and especially (iii ) New Challenges
• better still, host a Jubilee Dialogue discussion to give a broader, group feedback on BITC’s (i) Critical Success Factors; (ii) areas where it could have/do better; and especially (iii ) New Challenges

We would like to receive feedback on the above no later than November 16th 2007.

In addition to written feedback, BITC will be organising several Jubilee Dialogues both in London and around the UK, to provide more opportunities to debate these questions.

Please also to tell us of any factual errors and / or significant omissions in the Timeline or in the brief history of BITC contained in the Kennedy School of Government Working Paper on BITC, version of this paper; visit the Jubilee Timeline at www.bitc.org.uk and add your own ideas of the significant moments in BITC’s history; and help us to compile the “BITC wikipedia.”

If you would like to host such a Jubilee Dialogue or to attend one; or to contribute to the co-creation of BITC’s own “wikipedia,” please contact: Gemma McNeilis: gemma.mcneilis@bitc.org.uk

This is an abridged version of a longer paper incorporating a history of BITC which is to be published by the CSR Initiative at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard.
This is a personal contribution by the author and the views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views either of the CSR Initiative of the Kennedy School of Government nor of Business in the Community and its members.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Particular thanks are due to all who have been interviewed for the paper and / or commented on earlier drafts.

WORKSHOPS

There have also been a series of seminars and workshops: BITC All-Staff; BITC Senior Management Team; BITC Northern Ireland; BITC North-West; BITC “Next 25 Years” Group; BITC/Ethical Corporation “Responsible Business” Summit break-out session; Kennedy School of Government, Harvard in November 2006 and April 2007; MSc students in Sustainability, Bath University; seminar and separate dinner discussion at PWC, Sydney and seminar and separate dinner at Macquarie Bank, Melbourne (March 2007); and a series of dinners at Diageo corporate HQ in Feb-March 2007 looking specifically at experience of encouraging more business involvement in the community over the past 15 years.
Key Publications

**DIRECTIONS FOR THE NINETIES**
A Thames-side Company and their Partners in Community Involvement

**The Business Case for Corporate Responsibility**
Business leadership towards a low carbon economy

**The lambert commentary**
An MP's Guide to Responsible Business

**BENCHMARKING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICE**

**Advisory Services**

**Corporate Strategy**
- 2 in 5 companies link sustainability to environmental objectives for targets.
- 60% of companies ask board to provide information on their environmental performance.

**Executive Summary**
For the first year, climate change performance scores did not increase, staying at 50%.