

## What Would Mother Say?

### CSR in a Nutshell

Gayle Porter, PhD, SPHR/GPHR of Rutgers University provided an enlightening and engaging overview of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at this year's conference. Dr. Porter offered insight into how companies can approach CSR and explained the role of CSR in attracting and retaining key employees, enhancing community image, and adding value for investors. Ethics and socially responsible behavior can be answered with two questions "Would you want to see this in tomorrow's newspaper headlines?" and "Would you want your mother to know?"

As participants entered the session, Dr. Porter handed out 10 signs displaying various momisms such as "Because I'm the Mom and I said so" and "Wait until your father gets home". During the session, participants were asked to hold up the signs and read them in their "best Mom voice". Participants were able to relate the familiar sayings to the presentation points including the reasons behind CSR. CSR is the right thing to do, at a minimum to do no harm, and maintain fairness and dignity of all people. CSR is remedial in that large corporations have the obligation to fix problems they create. Large corporations also have a responsibility since they have greater resources and finally, CSR is just good business from a long-term perspective. Dr. Porter also gave tips about initiating CSR specifically examination and alignment with the mission, vision, or value statements. CSR should be meaningful to the organization and how the organizational definition of CSR. In closing, Dr. Porter opened the floor to further discussion and sharing personal experiences with CSR.

Dr. Porter's often humorous, lighthearted approach helped participants to understand and think differently about a complex subject. The interaction and use of phrases most participants grew up with and have used was effective in driving home the ageless importance of asking and applying the question "What would Mom think?", even in business.

Submitted by Dona M. Palermo