

# DESPERATE TIMES – DESPERATE CONSUMERS

Best practices of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in UK from the consumer's point of view

Jane Clayton-Jones



# The Citizens Advice Service

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives



# CSR in UK

“The exchange is one in which the firm offers something of value – typically social benefit or public service – to an important constituency and, in turn anticipates receiving the approval and support of customers.” (*Murray and Vogel 1997*)

## Consumer drivers:

- Emotional value
- Social value
- Functional value



# UK Consumer Support For:

- Economic interest
  - Fair international trading relationships
- Environmental problems
  - Global warming and climate change
  - Environmental friendly products and services
  - Energy-efficient products and buildings
  - Reuse, recycling and waste management
- Social Concerns
  - Nutrition and health
  - Human rights and gender
  - Fair labour practices community involvement
  - Ethical treatment of animals.



# Desperate Times – Financial Crisis

- Increase in sharp practices around;
  - Finding work
  - Training
  - Affordable accommodation
  - Cutting expenditure
  - Increase returns on investments
- Personal finance
  - Debt
  - Bank Accounts
  - Credit



# UK CSR Case Study

- Barclays Bank and Citizens Advice
  - Independent Debt Advice
  - Providing Basic Bank Accounts
  - Affordable Credit through Credit Unions
  - Financial Literacy courses



# Outcomes

- Barclays:
  - Leader in the field
  - Better understanding and servicing of low income consumers
  - Improved relationship with government and consumer groups
  - Increased market share
- Citizens Advice:
  - Meets its aims – helps more people
- Consumer:
  - Ability to join main stream financial services
  - Knowledge and skills to empower them to use services and avoid debt
  - Improvement in confidence and ability to help themselves
  - Long term reduction in stress and improvement in health and wellbeing

