

# Ethics and Graduate Recruitment

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AAGE Conference

Melbourne, November 2006



*“Corporate sustainability has matured beyond being a trendy phrase. Companies that have embedded its main tenets - social, environmental and economic responsibility - in their culture and operations are being rewarded with long-term growth.”* **BRW June 2006**

# Acknowledgements:



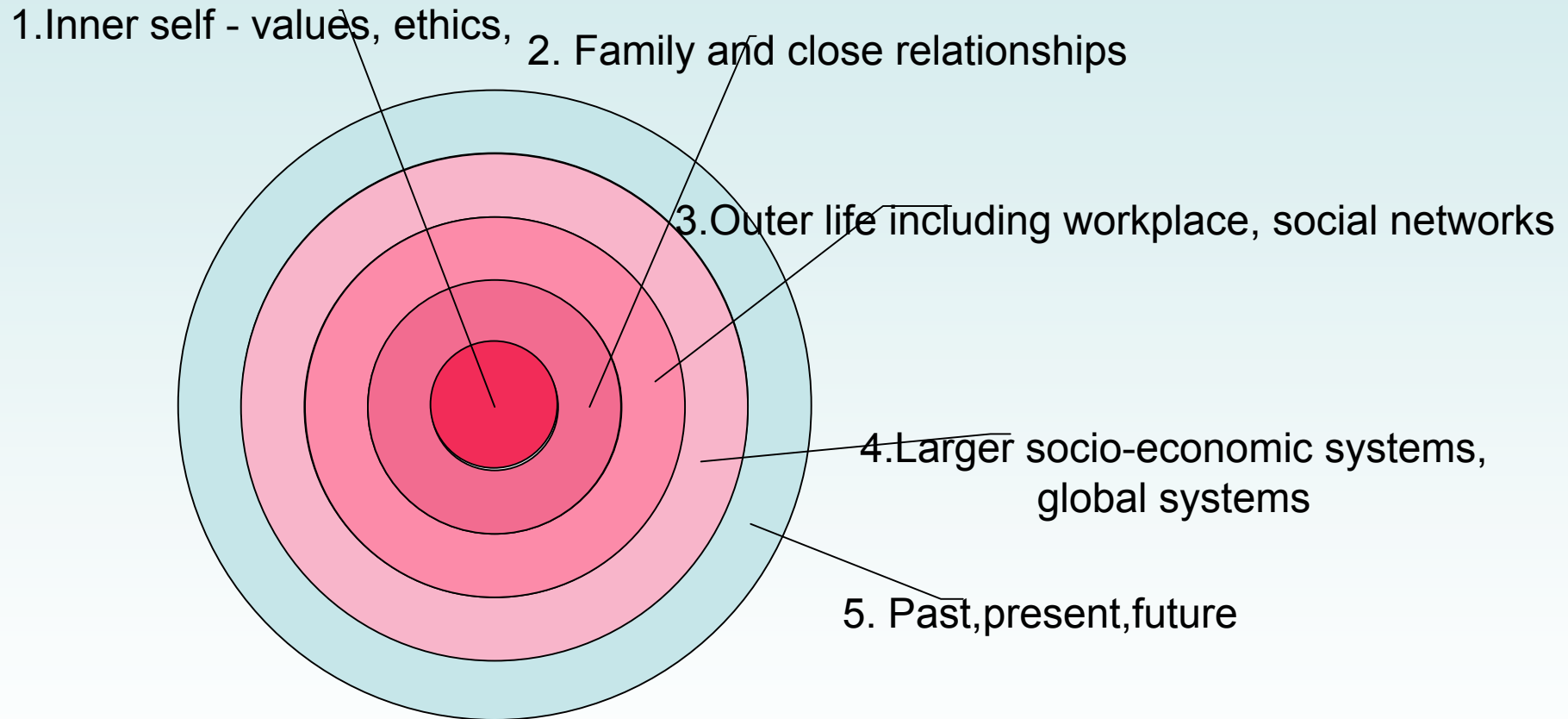
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# Overview

- Background:
  - Current Careers Thinking
  - Corporate Responsibility –Definitions and Context
- Research on the Importance of CSR in choice of employer.
  - Current research findings
  - Scoping study
  - Follow up research (current)
- Resource Development
- How to Communicate CSR to prospective recruits?

# A Systems View of the Individual



# Careers Construction Theory

Mark Savickas, Australian Association of Careers Counsellors Conference Proceedings, 2006

- Rapid pace of change in the labour market creates heightened need to impose **meaning on vocational behaviour**.
- Global economy poses new questions about career and meaning: how do individuals navigate a lifetime of job changes without losing their **sense of self and social identity**.
- In negotiating each new work opportunity we seek not just to negotiate salary but to negotiate **meaningful work**.

# Defining Corporate Responsibility

"a company's positive impact on **society** and the **environment** through its operations, products or services and through its interaction with key stakeholders such as **employees, customers, investors, communities and suppliers**" *Business in the Community, UK*

*CR casts a wide net over: Ethical governance/ environmental impact/ community or social impact/ workplace practices / business conduct.*

# Public vs Private Sector

- Terminology can be confusing.
- Corporate Responsibility = Organisational Responsibility
- Special opportunities for the public sector and its intrinsic civic purpose.



# Context

- ***“Large companies need to build social issues into strategy in a way which reflects their actual business importance (in a way which is) less defensive than most current CSR approaches”.***

Ian Davis, Global MD McKinseys, The Economist 2005.

- ***"Companies are not islands that exist separately from the communities within which they operate. Successful companies understand and engage with their customers, their staff and their communities."***

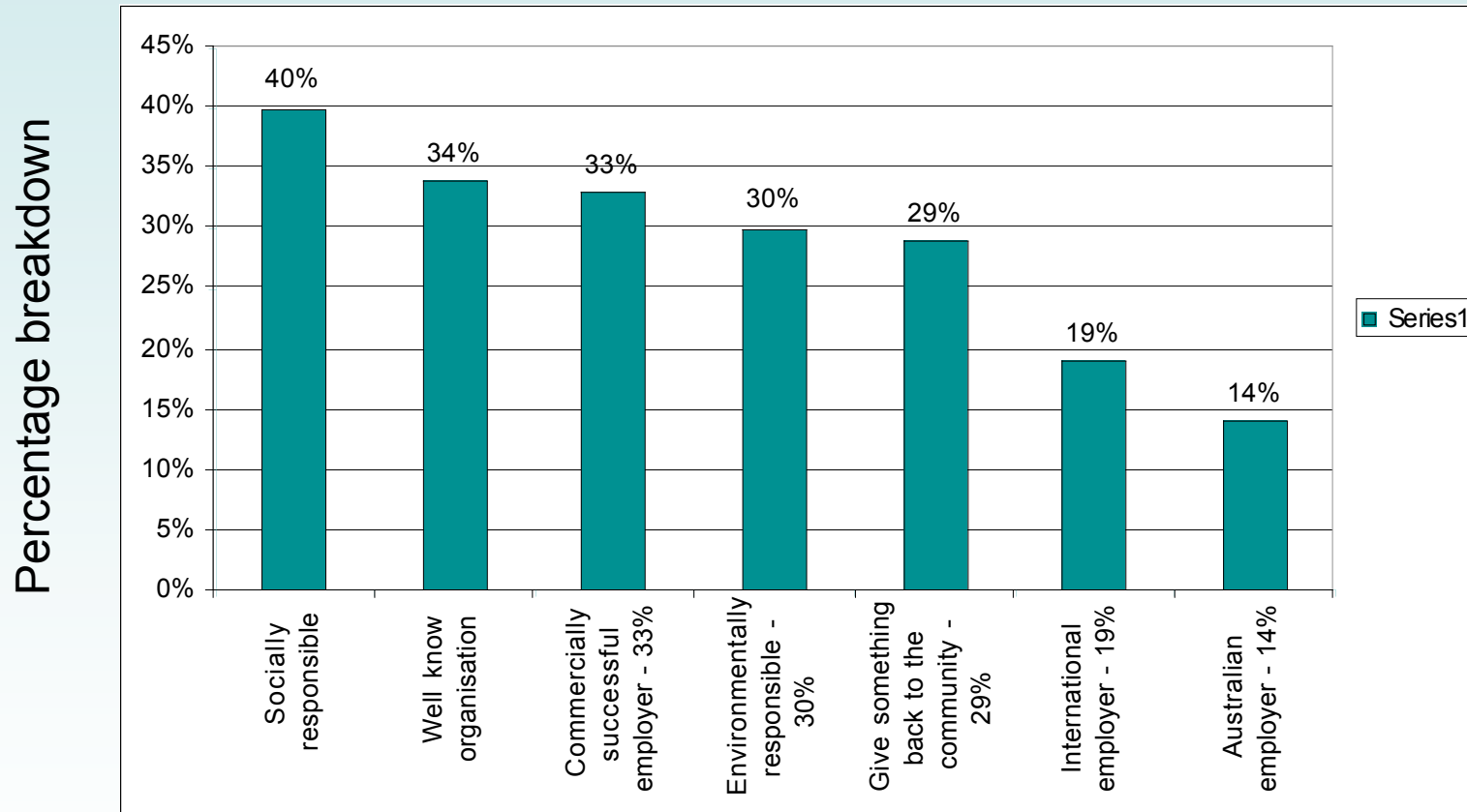
John McFarlane, ANZ CEO, Management Today, April 2006.

# Drivers

- Climate Change
- Corporate Collapse
- Ethical Investment
- Consumer awareness
- New Media
- Employees-attraction and retention

# “Very Important” Characteristic Of First Employer.

High Fliers Research, 2005.



Sample: 6227 final year students, Australia.

- **Guardian Survey, UK, 2006:**
  - Over 70% of students say company's ethical track record is a crucial factor
  - Students relying more heavily on the media to make this judgement
- **Stanford MBA study, US, 2004**
  - more than 97% of students willing to forgo financial benefits to work for an organisation with a "better reputation for corporate social responsibility and ethics"

***“The big surprise was that no one thought that corporate ethics was all that important to job seekers”***

# Scoping Survey

- *Does an organisation's Corporate Social Responsibility Practices and reputation influence your interest in applying to them?  
eg. Environmental impact/ community or social impact/ workplace practices / business conduct / ethical governance*
- *Are any of these areas or particular importance to you?*

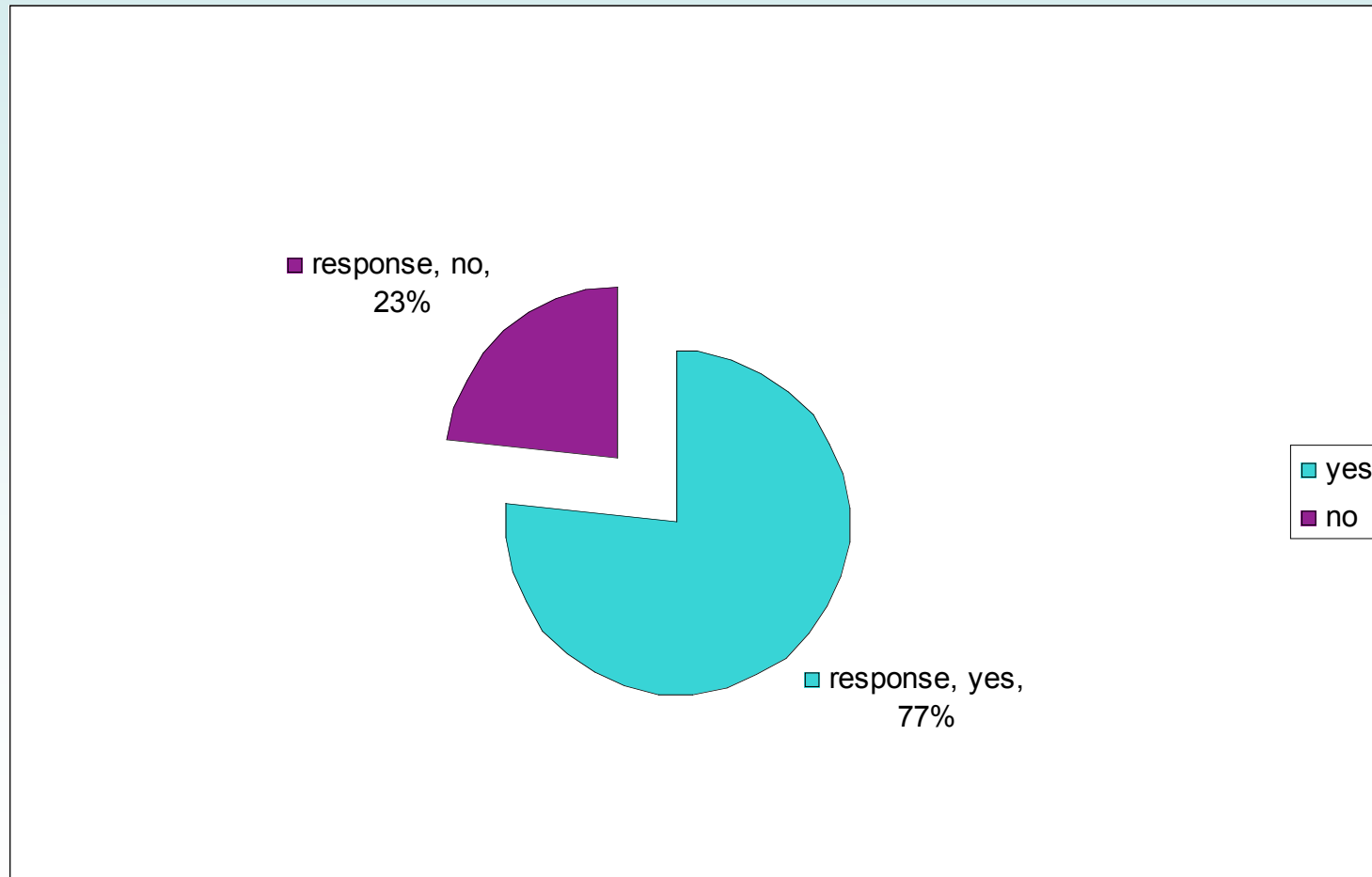
*\*Asked as part of an exit survey at the University of Sydney's annual Careers Fair.*



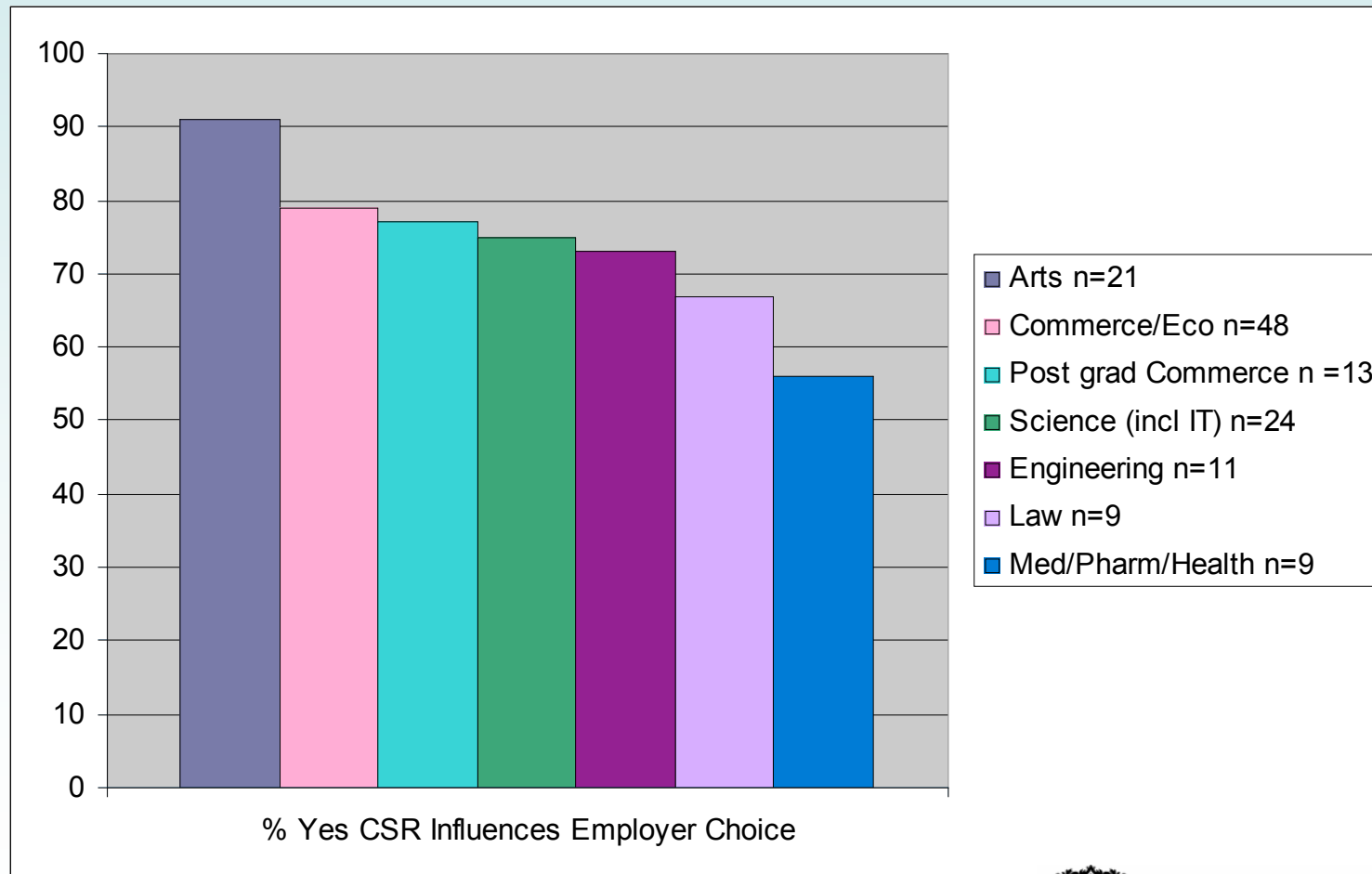
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# Is CSR an Influence in Choice of Employer?

sample size=231



# CSR As Influencer Of Employer Choice Across Disciplines



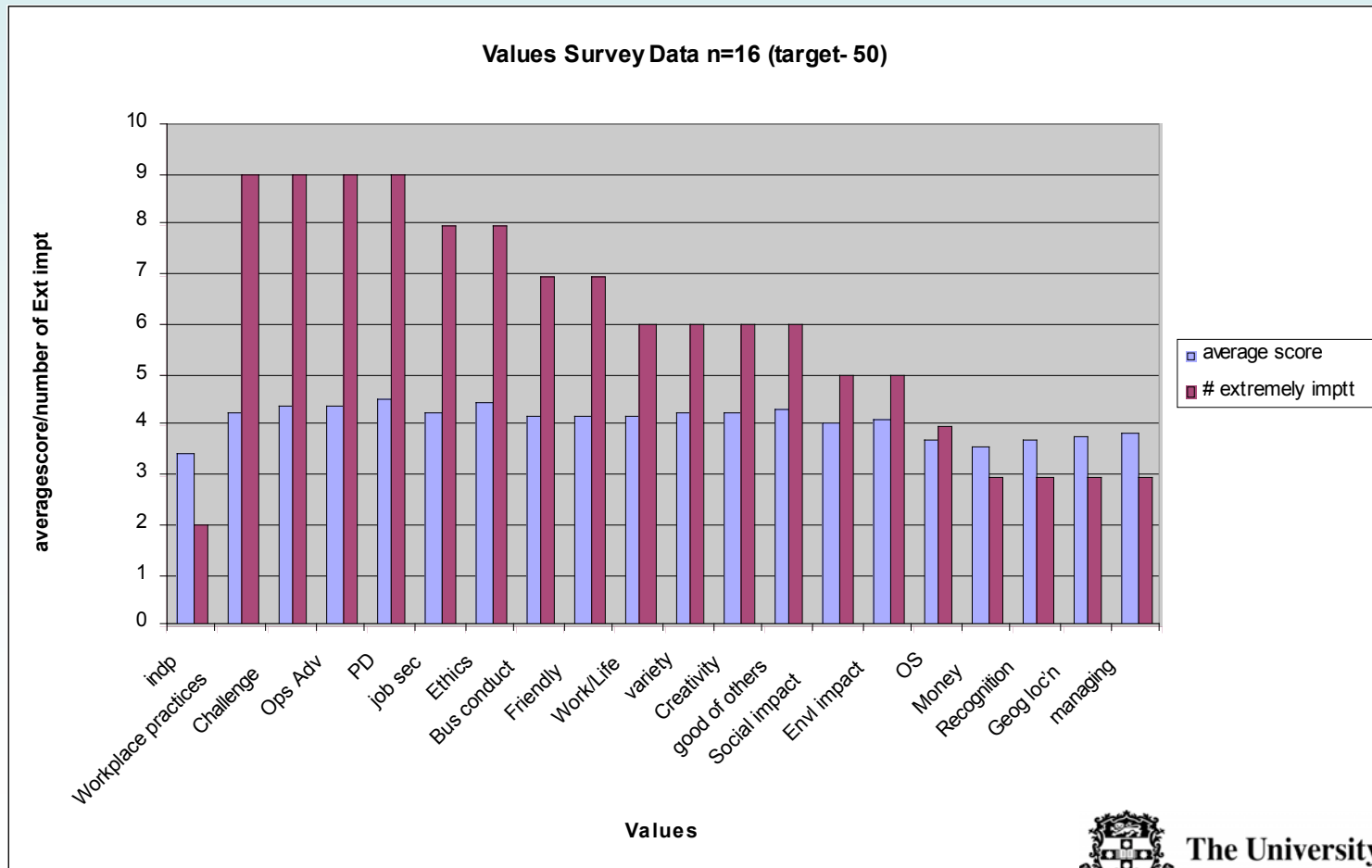


# Current Research Project:

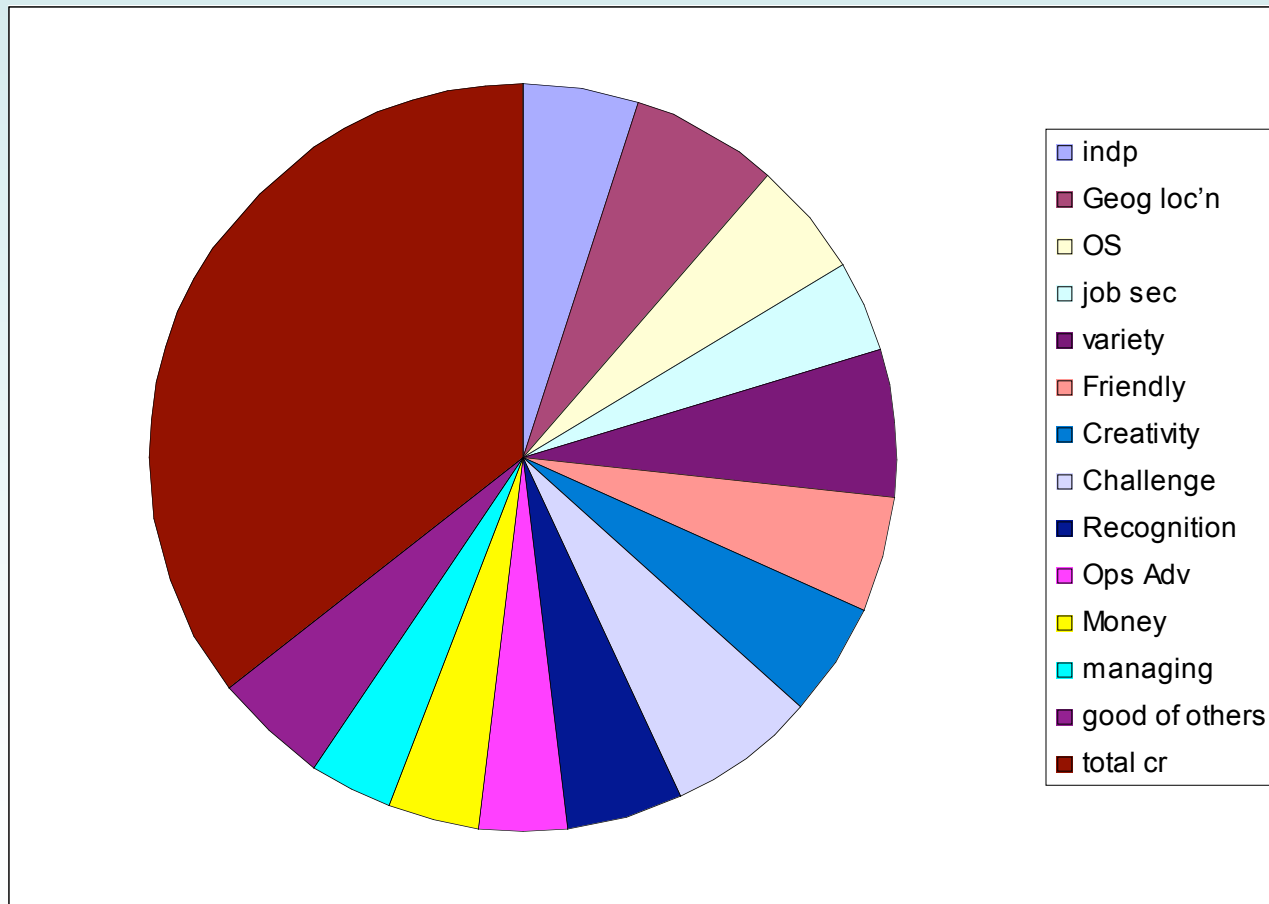
“Corporate Responsibility and Career Decision Making”

completion date early 2007

## Career values comparison



# Combined CR Values vs All Other Values



# Qualitative Findings

- **Ideal Company?:**
  - “Supportive”, “challenging”, “responsible”, “good reputation”
- **Reputation?:**
  - “Ethical”, “reliable”, “good results”, “positive social image”
- **Define Corporate Responsibility:**
  - “A responsible employer is one that treats its employees fairly, covering legal and ethical responsibilities, and those not necessarily required by law, e.g. environmental impacts - above and beyond regulation.”

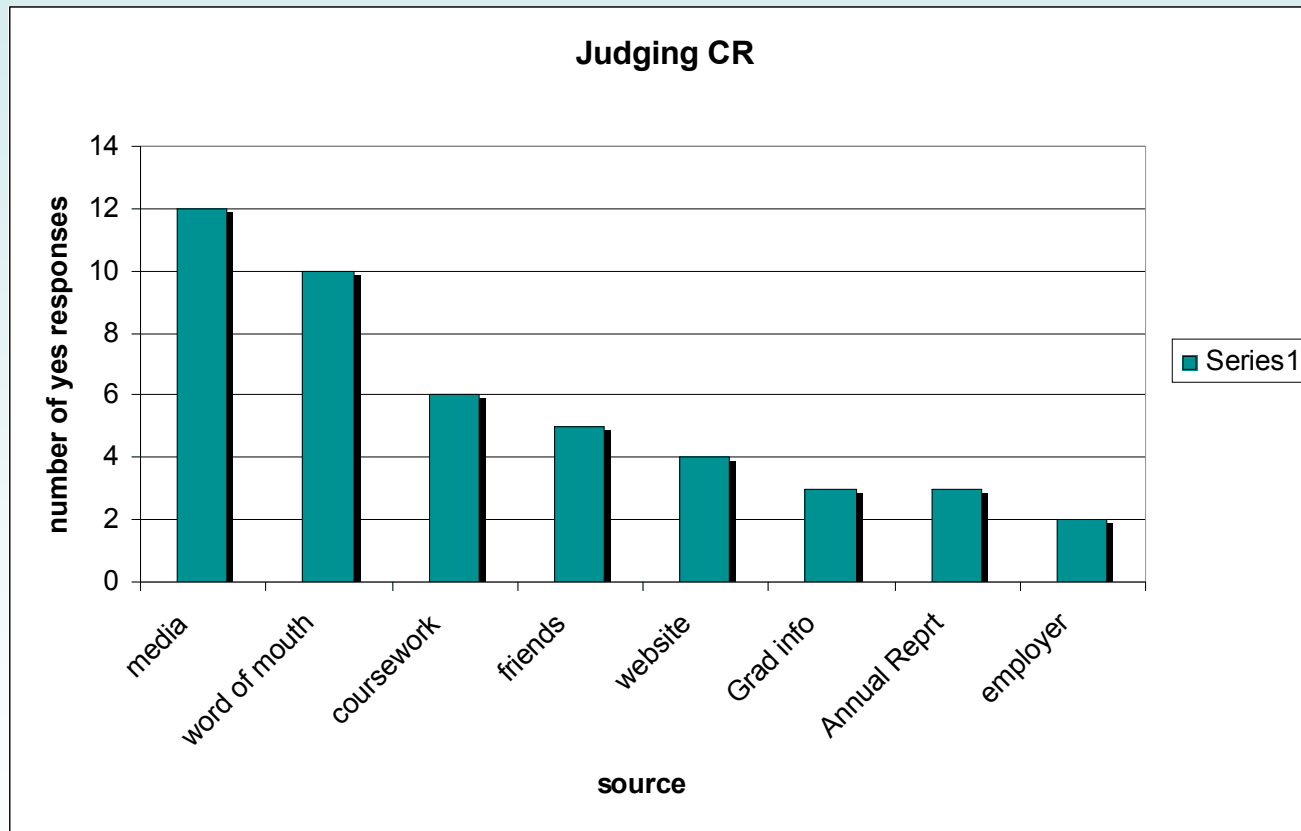


# Cont'd: How would you define corporate responsibility?

- “Internal – a company treating their employees responsibly is as important as external -products and services. Treat customers and clients with "equal moral level of care"
- “Need to strike a balance: between corporate desirability of profits weighed up constantly with CR. Its a juggle, a trade off.
- “A successful company is one which successfully achieves this balance- which is blown when the balance is out and media exposure ensues.”
- **“You can assess a company by the way they react to a problem-whether created by them or from outside- very interesting to see what response they take (responsive, reactive, procedures already in place etc.), whether they have the resources to deal with it, do they feel responsible...”**



# How to Judge an Organisation



# Resource Development: “HOW TO CHOOSE AN ETHICAL EMPLOYER”

*“Talk to employers at careers fairs, employer events and even job interviews. Ask them questions. Get the conversations going on these issues. If you ask questions about CSR, an organisation learns that this is an important driver in attracting new staff. It is also an opportunity for them to showcase their initiatives and receive some positive reinforcement.”*

**\* Now in national circulation across all university campuses in both Australia and the UK.**



# NAGCAS Sydney Industry Visits 2006

“the CSR theme gave the program coherency and a purpose beyond the grad recruitment focus. I have drawn on my Sydney experiences with students whose values suggest a more rewarding fit would be likely with potential employers who demonstrate a commitment to CSR. Counsellor and student awareness of CSR adds a **valuable dimension to career planning and job seeking strategies.**”

- University Careers Practitioner



*“...people are crucial to the innovation process in this complex rapidly changing world...need to be proactive not reactive....**Therefore it is important to recruit people who have an interest in sustainability innovation.**”*

“Opportunity Out of Uncertainty-Sustainability Innovation.”

Ernst & Young, Environment and Sustainability Services, 2006.



# How to Communicate Corporate Responsibility to Prospective Recruits?

- Begin with Internal Communication
  - information flows and linkages
- External Communication
  - creating an authentic message
- Doing nothing
  - reputational risk issues

# “How to be an Ethical Employee!”

...Walk the walk, talk the talk...

What would you like to see in this information sheet?

# Blog your thoughts!

[www.careerethics.com.au](http://www.careerethics.com.au)

