Introduction

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The title of this volume has meanings that we hope do not escape the reader. Marketing comes first, so that we are talking about marketing and corporate social responsibility (CSR), not the other way round. It may seem a subtle point but it begs the larger question: does marketing drive social responsibilities associated with various stakeholders? If it does, then the role of marketing is much broader than many in the field might have anticipated.

Of course, it makes sense if one recognizes the boundary-spanning role of the field and its charge to understand consumers from their points of view. If marketing has the capacity to get underneath wants and needs of generations of people across nations, cultures and product categories, then why can’t practitioners use the same skill set for other populations of interest? The simple answer is that they can and do, or should. Thus the title is probably correct if the field hopes to maximize the potential contributions of socially responsible behaviors to the bottom line in particular as well as to humankind in general.

While such simple statements can be supported by research, the relationship between marketing and social responsibility is complex, as noted by the various contributions in this book. As you might imagine, we wanted to develop a cutting-edge framework that covered the most important but also up-and-coming areas within this domain. Additionally, we asked the very best scholars to contribute chapters that were within their areas of research expertise and interests. We hope you agree that we have been successful on both counts.

The parts that make up our examination of marketing and CSR include ‘Part I: The Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility Nexus’, which is designed to offer an overview of the interconnections between these two disciplines and a basis for understanding the remainder of this volume. The first chapter was written by Ryan Langan, who is completing his dissertation at University of South Florida on a highly related topic. The second chapter is by O.C. Ferrell, Linda Ferrell and Jennifer Sawaya. Their body of work and scholarly accomplishments make their name synonymous with marketing ethics. The third chapter in this part is by Gene Laczniak and Patrick Murphy, and their separate and joint
research agendas have defined what it means to be at the forefront of moral thinking within marketing.

‘Part II: Marketing Strategy and Corporate Social Responsibility’ begins our move into the nuanced perspectives of this relationship. We open with a chapter by Minette Drumwright, a noted scholar who has used qualitative methods to understand how strategic thinking and CSR create cohesive organizational directions. The next chapter is by Debbie Thorne and Floyd Quinn, who have worked to change the field’s view of how CSR activities are communicated. The final chapter comes from the team of John Schouten, Diane Martin and Henri Weijo, who are setting the stage for the next generation of research on marketing and sustainability.

‘Part III: Consumer Behavior and Corporate Social Responsibility’ discusses the most important issues from the perspective of the marketing subdiscipline that dominates much of the field. This part opens with a chapter by Karen Becker-Olsen, a scholar devoted to determining if the connections between business firms and nonprofit organizations are of value to both parties. The following chapter yields a very different but innovative look at consumers and CSR by two renowned researchers from Europe, Enrique Bigné and Rafael Currás-Pérez. The last chapter is by Justine Rapp, Donald Lehmann (the leading marketing scholar in the world) and Ronald Hill, and it examines the impact of restrictions on consumption and their CSR implications.

‘Part IV: Global Issues in Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility’ expands our offering in a much-needed direction, beyond the confines of the USA. The part aims to help readers comprehend differences around the world, and it begins with a discussion of how CSR manifests in Europe through the research of Sofía López and Craig Smith, a world-recognized ethics scholar with experience writing about both sides of the Atlantic. The next chapter considers the evolving impact of CSR on marketers in Asia, led by the leading marketing expert in this area, Charles Taylor, along with his colleagues Bowen and Ryu. The part closes with a view of the growth of interest in CSR within and across Latin America by a marketing authority, Francisco Guzmán.

‘Part V: Marketing Public Policy and Corporate Social Responsibility’ asks readers to consider what happens when businesses fail to meet their larger social responsibilities. The part begins by taking a bioeconomic approach from biological sciences and demonstrates that other animals have something to teach us about responsible and opportunistic behaviors. It is written by Deby Cassill, whose innovative approach helped renew dynamic systems thinking in this area. The next chapter offers a glimpse of what mandating CSR looks like, by emerging academics
Michael Pirson, Lerzan Aksoy and Yuliya Komarova. The final offering in this part considers how marketers have failed to fully understand the diverse set of people who are impacted by them; it comes from leading voices on diversity issues including Geraldine Henderson, Akon Ekpo and Zachary Yvaire.

‘Part VI: New Perspectives on Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility’ shows that there are a number of ways to contextualize complex relationships between marketing and CSR. The first chapter is by Kelly Martin and Ronald Hill, and it reviews whether marketers have failed to meet the many obligations for multinational businesses articulated by the United Nations. The next offering comes from cutting-edge and forward-looking scholars Julie Ozanne and Canan Corus; it reveals an alternative mode of discovery and inclusion through participatory action research. The last chapter in this part examines how firms can do both good and harm at the same time while pursuing CSR initiatives; it is penned by up-and-coming researchers Justine Rapp and Jessica Mikeska.

We hope that readers find their review of these chapters as enjoyable and engaging as they were to complete. It is rare to bring together so many accomplished scholars to create such a unique volume, and they have our deepest appreciation for their efforts. We also thank the many colleagues who have also informed these materials through generations of research. Finally we appreciate the efforts of Alan Sturmer and his associates at Edward Elgar Publishing that allowed this project to come to fruition.