

# CAMIF, an SME Repositioning Its Line as Sustainable Development Products

Leïla Loussaïef<sup>1</sup> & Bénédicte Bourcier-Bequaert<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ISC Paris School of Management, Paris, France

Correspondence: Leïla Loussaïef, ISC Paris School of Management, 22 Bd du Fort de Vaux, 75017 Paris, France.  
Tel: 33-1-4053-9999. E-mail: lloussaief@iscparis.com

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to review the application of Sustainable Development (SD) in the marketing strategies of French firms, and to show how one SME, CAMIF, has repositioned its product line around SD. Although SD policies in France are now driven by rising demands from lawmakers and consumers alike, their application has not yet become a central feature of the strategies of major companies and SMEs. In this regard, the innovative repositioning of CAMIF around fair and responsible value is found to be consistent with the firm's values, and permeates its marketing mix.

**Keywords:** SD, CSR, SME, market positioning, furniture distribution

## 1. Introduction

Society now understands that our resources are limited. The emergence of the Sustainable Development (SD) movement is in part a response to this constraint. Companies are being introduced to it through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Some actions by firms to give greater consideration to the natural or social environment have been judged to be superficial or even misleading, and criticized as being attempts by the companies to lend acceptability to activities which were not initially conceived out of a respect for nature and mankind (Note 1). They also usually seem to be the prerogative of major companies, which have greater resources for engaging in these inconvenient policies than do smaller ones.

Nevertheless, nowadays CSR can no longer be a mere publicity exercise, or a purely ideological or activist approach: it is a necessity (Note 2). Accordingly, companies are now having to assign SD a central role.

The goal of the present study is to use an examination of a French SME, CAMIF, to show that SD is a powerful concept which, when it is placed at the heart of the marketing strategy, can successfully kick-start an activity.

We believe that the French economic situation is a relevant one for understanding the importance of CSR: it is representative of advanced Western societies in the awareness of SD among its consumers. Moreover, the country has a legislative framework establishing the information that companies must provide. The Act setting out the new economic regulations (NRE), passed in 2001, requires that firms listed on the stock exchange include in their annual report a set of information concerning the social and environmental consequences of their activities (Note 3). This obligation was extended to unlisted companies by the Grenelle I and II Acts (Note 4) with agreement for certification by an "independent third party".

The study of CAMIF's repositioning along SD lines has enabled us to establish that in certain cases SD is not a constraint but rather a growth concept. From a marketing standpoint, it can be used as a theme for differentiating the company's position. This theme can then be emphasized throughout the marketing mix. It can also guide the organization. The internet distribution adopted by CAMIF is a model that gets away from the traditional paper catalogs as well as the ecologic costs associated with stores. This economic model turns out to be consistent with small organizations from both the SD standpoint but also in purely economic terms.

We next examine the situation as regards SD and CSR generally, especially in France, and then describe CAMIF's business model in comparison with its competitors, and provide details of its actions regarding SD.

## Part I: SD and CSR in the Context of French Companies

Part I comprises two sections. In the first we describe the concepts of SD and CSR as well as the issues with which they are currently associated. In the second we review the current situation in France as regards the various stakeholders (companies, consumers, and public authorities).

### 2. CSR and SD

The theoretical background of this article is to be found in the literature devoted to Corporate Social Responsibility, and includes Sustainable Development as a key aspect of the discussion, especially as regards marketing.

#### 2.1 The Official Definitions of the SD and CSR Concepts

According to the definition proposed in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development, in the Brundtland Report, Sustainable Development is “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own.” Two concepts are inherent in this idea:

- The concept of “needs”, and in particular the essential needs of the most destitute, who should be assigned the highest priority.
- The notion of limits, which the state of our technology and our social organizations impose on the ability of the environment to meet current and future needs.

In parallel with this the European Commission defined CSR as a “*concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and in their interactions with their shareholders on a voluntary basis.*” or “*a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment*” (e.g., citation in Hartman, Rubin & Dhanda, 2007).

CSR and SD, then, are two very similar concepts which have many points in common. Although the SD concept has long been employed both by consumers and by companies, companies now speak increasingly of CSR while the term SD is still mainly used by consumers. In what follows we make no distinction between the two terms.

#### 2.2 The Meaning of SD

Although it has been the subject of research since the 1950s, the meaning of the SD concept is still subject to the changing fashions of management science (Binninger & Robert, 2005). SD, which is often reduced to its ecologic dimension alone, actually identifies an overall approach which postulates that long-term development is viable only when it reconciles three aspects:

1. Respect for the environment
2. Social equity
3. Economic profitability

As regards the environment, in practical terms SD involves the necessity of maintaining or improving the quality of the natural environment, and ensuring the perpetuity of resources. The social implications of SD involve reducing differences in standards of living among the world’s populations and promoting the self-sufficiency of communities and respect for human rights. It thus embodies a close correlation between what have been called the 3 Ps of SD: People, Planet, and Profits.

A final aspect should be emphasized, concerning duration, since SD must enable the transfer of knowledge and resources (including natural resources) from one generation to the next.

The conceptualization of SD includes considerations of equity and social cohesion as well as the need to avoid threats to collective human wealth (Gabriel, 2003). When transposed to the company via CSR, the SD concept rests on the notion of overall quality at the human dimension, which leads corporate managers to ask themselves questions which go beyond issues of profitability, questions about the very foundations of the company, the use of manufactured products, and the entire manufacturing process. The firm is then refocused on humans rather than only on the pursuit of profit.

SD applies to the company as a whole. All of its operations should be concerned with and contribute to an overall policy of social responsibility. This implies that after having identified all of the stakeholders (investors, employees, customers, suppliers, public organizations, and so on), the company must incorporate its needs and its values into the framework of its strategic and operational decision process. Firms that commit to SD must bring to the table a variety of skills directly involving the management of people and, especially, of production. For this reason we will refer to the topic as “Sustainable Production”.

### 2.3 Sustainable Production: The Marketing Expression of SD

A detailed literature review has enabled us to establish a compilation of what can be achieved in terms of Sustainable Development. These actions can be evaluated with respect to the two linchpins of SD: the environment, and to a lesser extent social matters. To maximize their commitment to CSR, firms must position themselves to address as many items as possible. However, they rarely cover all the bases.

Table 1. Summary of actions implemented by companies to produce sustainably

Limitation of environmental impact		Ex. listed
<b>Manufacture</b>	Amount of resources/energy	Limited packaging, packaging employing recycled materials
	Nature of resources used/discarded	Products of organic agriculture
	Place of manufacture	Local products
<b>Transport</b>	Type of transport	River/rail
	Weight of products transported	Lighter products: containers (packaging) and contents (concentrated solutions)
	Distance transported	Seasonal products, local products
<b>Use</b>	Quantity of product	Pre-dosed products
	Product life	Guaranteed products, quality label
	Repairability of products	Accessible repair facilities
<b>Disposal</b>	Toxicity of products	
	Re-use of products	
	Recycling of products	Packaging returnable to point of sale for recycling
Limitation of social impacts		Ex. listed
<b>Manufacture</b>	Place	Local product
	Working conditions	Child labor
	Access to employment	Young or disabled persons
	Wages	Fair trade, equal pay for both sexes, profit-sharing

Thus whether they are mainly concerned with the environment or extend their interests to include social issues, companies do not lack for ideas for responsible actions: reduction of the environmental impacts of their products, eco-designed products, training plans, humanitarian activities, etc.

In addition to providing responsible products, SD also applies to the marketing mix. According to Lavorata et al. (2010), if we were to try to list all the possible actions, we might envisage:

- Giving a seal of approval to responsible (fair) pricing;
- Creating responsible public relations (responsible advertising, no green-washing, avoiding junk mail, etc.);
- Marketing in a sustainable manner (fair payment to producers, inspection and consciousness-raising for distributors, etc.).

Incidentally, whatever the outward signs, in recent years the CSR approach has experienced a significant expansion within companies (Laville & Dupré, 2008; Heslin & Ochoa, 2008 cited by Robinot & Giannelloni, 2009). This fashion has been legitimized by factors within the firm (here legitimacy is defined as a resource instrumentalized to achieve the company's objectives) or represents the fruit of a process of standardization that may, for example, enable conformance with a particular activity sector (Béji-Becheur & Bensebaa, 2009). A more detailed review in Part II will provide an assessment of these advances.

## 3. The Situation in France: What Is the Status of SD and CSR Today?

### 3.1 Current Corporate Practice

French firms are increasingly involved in SD. A survey of 200 decision-makers in companies with more than 500 employees (SOFRES, 2010) found that the financial crisis had not put a brake on their commitment to SD and that the scope of SD policies was expanding, with a greater emphasis on social and societal themes, along with environmental ones. The fight against discrimination, the integration of disadvantaged persons, responsible purchasing, and partnerships with local communities are priorities that are becoming more prominent.

However, in spite of the advances recently registered, in France the results are still mixed. Firms which have adopted approaches that have made an impact on their practices and processes are fairly rare (Novethic, 2009). Firstly, as regards major companies a study of the SD reports issued by firms in the CAC 40 shows, for example,

that in terms of mobilization of employees, the results leave something to be desired. In this regard, seven observations may be presented (Novethic, 2009) (Note 5).

- The involvement or mobilization of co-workers is not always presented as a strategic issue;
- Specific, concrete indicators are rare;
- The activities presented are of limited scope;
- The actions are presented “in a disorganized manner”;
- The resources implemented to deploy the strategy seem limited;
- The partnership approach is weakly developed;
- The form of the reports leaves little room for employee views.

Although the number of achievements presented is greater than in the preceding report, this advance conceals areas of improvement. The approach appears to be strategic or central in very few of the firms (such as ST Microelectronics, Bouygues, l'Oréal, and Carrefour), and remains weak or even nonexistent in groups such as Air Liquide, Schneider, and Lagardère.

The same observation could be made regarding SMEs. A poll of 1700 firms located in Paris and its suburbs shows that few companies with under 250 employees are really committed to SD programs (CROCIS, 2008) (Note 6). Although they are now well informed about the SD concept, and their managers are more aware of the importance of a structural approach, the perception of SD remains restricted to its environmental aspects, and programs for concrete actions are either nonexistent or limited to a few specific steps such as the sorting of wastes or compliance with certain environmental standards.

Nevertheless, the progress is real and arises mainly from two factors: legislative pressure and pressure from consumers.

### *3.2 Pressure from Public Authorities*

In France, the pressures exerted by consumers and non-governmental organizations are increasingly expressed at the legislative level.

Article 116 of the Act of May 15, 2001 concerning the new economic regulations (NRE) made it mandatory for listed companies to include social and environmental information in their annual reports, beginning in 2003. However, the act has two loopholes: In its current version it does not provide any penalty for possible infractions, but instead relies on the conscience of the company managers, and market self-regulation driven by the joint action of the stakeholders. Moreover, the obligation to have the report confirmed by an outside body was not included in the initial text: it was only in 2011 that an external audit was imposed. In spite of these shortcomings France has become one of the first European countries, along with Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, to require that companies publish information on the social and environmental consequences of their activities. This requirement for listed companies is to be extended to other types of companies. In this regard the Grenelle I and II Acts have expanded the area covered by obligations for societal transparency to unlisted companies. As of 2011 firms with more than 5000 employees should be covered by the obligation to issue an annual report, and the threshold will probably fall to 500 in 2013.

### *3.3 Pressures from Consumers*

French consumers, through their awareness of SD and its issues and by their purchasing behavior, are pushing companies to act more responsibly.

An IPSOS survey (2009) reveals that 97% of the French population is now familiar with the term SD, and almost all are in agreement concerning the principal global problems: more than 90% say they are worried about climate change, the increasing scarcity of natural resources, social inequalities, and the housing problem. In addition 77% of the French believe that it is an idea whose time has come (TNS Sofres survey, 2008) and 71% think that SD is becoming a necessity (Ethicity, 2011). The study *Conditions de vie et aspirations des Français*, issued by CEDOC in early 2007, notes that 44% of consumers say that when they shop they now take into account child labor, animal welfare, and pollution hazards. Some of these consumers, referred to as “consum-actors” and estimated at 17% of the population, have even made SD a central feature of their concerns (Laville & Devaux, in Dion, Wolff et al., 2008).

Beyond these attitudes, overall behaviors are changing: 26% of the French boycott firms that are polluters or that contravene environmental-protection regulations (TNS Sofres survey, 2008). The market share of “green” and

organic products, although usually only between 1 and 4%, is rising rapidly. For example, sales of organic products are currently rising at 10% annually on average, and sales of fair-trade products carrying the Max Havelaar label have multiplied by a factor of 14 in five years (Note 7).

### *3.4 Towards an Awareness of the Advantages of CSR*

Pressures from legislation and consumers are encouraging companies to make more effort in terms of SD. In parallel with this, firms are becoming more aware of the advantages associated with establishing a more aggressive policy in this regard.

In fact, responsible strategies secure market benefits (increased market share, improvement of the firm's image and recognition, etc.), internal benefits (lower production costs, strengthening of the corporate culture, greater creativity, product innovations, and so on), and the establishment of legitimacy in confrontations with stakeholders (Grandval & Soparnot in Dion, Wolff et al., 2008). Ultimately, a strategy backed by a genuine SD policy can increase commercial and financial performance, reduce risk, and strengthen the firm's competitiveness (Note 8).

In marketing, SD actions build strong brand relationships: a number of studies have shown that they have a positive impact on trust and satisfaction (Gupta & Pirsh, 2008; Swaen & Chumpitaz, 2008). There is also a positive impact on the image of firms that are active regarding SD. Although consumers seem to be aware of a possible opportunism on the part of the brands, they associate very positive feelings with bold brands, such as the aspects 'responsible', 'human', or 'innovative' (Robinot & Ginanelloni, 2009; Cacho-Elizondo & Loussaïef, 2010).

Ultimately, and in spite of all the advantages of a commitment to SD, France may be voluntarist in this area but it has so far taken only tentative steps in this direction, especially as regards its SMEs. Moreover, few companies have adopted SD as a central concept in their strategy: it is not always seen as an investment, but rather as a cost (following the example of quality management). It is more of a constraint than an opportunity to be seized: a tactic rather than a strategic issue.

Nevertheless there are some relatively small companies whose development model is built from the ground up as being sustainable, and which it appears interesting to examine. This is precisely true of CAMIF, which we have selected to illustrate the vigorous deployment of an SD policy.

## **Part II: The Vigorous Deployment of the SD Theme in CAMIF, an SME in the Distribution Sector**

After a review which highlights the main events in CAMIF's corporate history, this section describes the position occupied by the firm in its competitive universe. CAMIF's values and marketing strategy are then outlined. Together, these various items portray CAMIF as a model of marketing development on the theme of sustainable development. This led to its selection for our study.

Moreover, distribution is a pertinent sector for studying SD. According to Lavorata et al. (2010), at the scale of the distributor the range of possible SD-related actions is a wide one, and beyond eco-design initiatives carried out at points of sale it involves the development of "sustainable" products, social actions (an interest in the well-being of employees, mixing of the sexes, social audits of suppliers, partnerships with NGOs, sponsorships, etc.), and the establishment of partnerships with supply chains and suppliers.

In order to examine CAMIF's marketing strategy we conducted a sectoral study of furniture distribution. This investigation was carried out by compiling a variety of existing data on the sector, and an analysis of competitors' catalogs and websites. Information on CAMIF was obtained from the recent business press (Note 9) and from interviews with company executives: CEO, Marketing Manager, Administrative and Financial Manager. An onsite visit was also undertaken.

### **4. CAMIF: From a Multiple Point of Sale Cooperative to an Internet Sales Firm**

CAMIF is an SME with about 50 employees (Note 10) distributing furniture and household goods mainly over the internet. This old company (established in 1947) has gone through various stages of development. In 2006 it was still France's third-largest distance-selling firm, and had a total of 780 employees at the time of its bankruptcy in 2008. In 2009 CAMIF rose from the ashes: the brand and its customer list were purchased by the Matelsom Group as part of a re-launching project, in partnership with Téléperformance and Géodis. This required a complete rebuilding of the organization. Activities resumed in July 2009 with the reactivation of the website.

The following table lists CAMIF's main operational and marketing changes, which we then discuss.

Table 2. CAMIF's Changing profile

	PRE-2008	TODAY
<b>Number of employees</b>	780	50
<b>Location</b>	Niort	Niort/Vernouillet
<b>Status</b>	Cooperative	Selling organization
<b>Distribution model</b>	Catalog (800 pages) Website: yes Stores: 15	Magalog: 2 per year, 72 pages Website: selling and forum Store: 1 (Niort)
<b>Product range</b>	Extensive: Multiple references (including textiles), later limited to furniture (after 2005)	Limited: Furniture, decoration, electrical appliances
<b>Positioning</b>	Careful selection: - The selector - The experts	Careful selection: - The SD selection - The educated buyer
<b>Target</b>	- Civil servants in the National Education system (members) - Non-member customers	- New customers: ecological commitment and high income - Former customers
<b>Price</b>	Accent on quality Wide price range, rather costly items	Accent on ecology Narrower price range, more costly
<b>Product</b>	Quality	Ethics
<b>Product selection criteria</b>	No special system	Decided by ethical criteria applied to choice of product
<b>Advertising</b>	Via the stores and the catalog	Via the web and the "magalog"

## 5. CAMIF and Its Competition

### 5.1 Status of Competition in the Online Furniture-distribution Sector: Overview of Competitors

In 2010 online sales accounted for 4% of furniture sales by value, or 31 billion euros. (Note 11)

The listed competitors have extremely varied profiles (see Table 3). Some of them are mail-order sales firms, others are offshoots of traditional distribution and have developed an additional ("click and mortar") site, and still others are online sales specialists, either generalists or focused on the web.

Table 3. Competitors active on the web

Actors with an internet presence*	Stores
Traditional catalog sellers	La Redoute (AM.PM.) Les 3 Suisses Quelle
The "click and mortar" group: Brands which have added online activities to their physical ones	The "Young Habitat" group: - www.ikea.fr - www.alinea.fr - www.maisonsdumonde.fr Home furnishings: - www.conforama.fr - www.but.fr Do-It-Yourself specialists: - www.leroymerline.fr - www.castorama.fr Top-of-the-Line sellers: - www.roche-bobois.com - www.cinna.fr
Online selling generalists	www.amazon.fr www.ebay.fr www.priceminister.fr www.venteprivee.fr www.mistergooddeal.fr
Furniture pure online players	Design: - www.myfab.com - www.lusineadesign.com Discount: www.kifici.com Full range: - www.delamaison.fr - www.matelsom.com

Note: \* Only the generalists are shown, which excludes the kitchen and bedding sectors.

## 5.2 Competitors Identified by CAMIF

According to CAMIF, its competitors were identified based on three criteria: the type of clientele that visits the various stores, a strong presence on the web, and a responsible positioning.

The identified competitors include:

- The very top-of-the-range stores, in view of the relatively high prices charged by CAMIF, e.g., Roche-Bobois.
- Web actors specializing in furnishings, such as AM.PM or Delamaison.
- Actors emphasizing ethical products. None of these is really a furniture seller. Only Maisons du Monde has a similar positioning, although it is more exotic than ethical. In this regard CAMIF has a **unique positioning**.

Since these competitors have very diverse origins, the business models they adopt are very different. They nevertheless appear to be rather inflexible, and incur major fixed costs either from their stores or from printing catalogs (see Table 4), except for Delamaison.

Table 4. Business models of CAMIF's main competitors

Category	Stores	Number of stores	Catalog	Internet
Furniture distributors	Roche-Bobois	74	No catalog	Not a sales site No editorial content Sales site
	Maisons du Monde	200	Catalog: 520 pages	No editorial content
Web actors	AM.PM.	0	Catalog: 112 pages	Sales site No editorial content
			No catalog	Sales site
	Delamaison	0		No editorial content

## 6. Values Advanced by CAMIF

CAMIF was founded as a cooperative to finance certain guarantees not covered by MAIF (*Mutuelle d'Assurance des Instituteurs de France*). Although it was an interdependent (cooperative) undertaking, and a committed one (the members were teachers, and activists in the company), from the beginning it was in fact an atypical, "socially responsible" firm. Today the spirit of solidarity no longer binds the social group, and persists in the form of two commitments. The first is a **more universal commitment** to offer environment-friendly products and working conditions. The second is based on a **local undertaking expressed as a determination to strengthen the social fabric** by creating a center of expertise in the environmental field. The **CAMIF Village** project is a place for buying SD products but also a place for meeting and sharing information on this topic.

## 7. CAMIF's Strategic Marketing

CAMIF's marketing strategy is mainly expressed through its positioning and its product line.

### 7.1 Positioning

CAMIF's initial positioning depended on two linchpins: the quality of the products sold and careful attention to the product selection on offer. Thus on the one hand CAMIF proclaimed itself as **an expert** and on the other as a **"selector"**. The numerous advisors at its points of sale maintained this approach by helping customers to make the right choice.

The repositioning of the store is expressed as a natural extension of its initial approach. The **selector** side is still on display, with a line of products in solid wood, obtained from sustainably-managed forests, and manufactured in France or Europe. The **expert** aspect is maintained through guidance on purchasing, organized around two points:

- The website, the main distribution channel, provides tips for buying a product on the basis of the sustainable-development practices of its makers (labels, production materials, etc.). Although the sales advisors have disappeared now that sales are almost exclusively online, the ethical characteristics of the products are becoming the key input for visitors to the site and thereby constitute a way of differentiating it from the competition.
- The "magalog", a new version of the store's catalog, is a support for addressing the customer rather than a list of all the products sold. For example, it contains public-manifesto pages to explain the recovery of rainwater, or anti-mite treatment.

We see that the store's repositioning has remained consistent with its initial guiding principles. This consistency is combined with a strengthening of its commitment to **sustainable development**. The initial positioning had already implicitly expressed a sustainable approach. For example, the product selection might contain products manufactured in France, or made from wood obtained from sustainably-managed forests. Currently, the features related to sustainable development are not only more numerous, but also promoted via a distribution system and emphasizing the responsible nature of the firms involved.

In this regard:

- The range of actions has been considerable broadened as concerns products (georeferencing now possible, recyclable or organic raw materials, fair trade, etc.) and in addition expresses a strong involvement in community actions (CAMIF Village, signing of the diversity charter, association with the Emmaüs movement, etc.) and with stakeholders (partnerships with responsible suppliers, both local and quality labels).
- The distribution system and the advertising highlight these actions on the public-manifesto pages of the magalog, the sustainable-ideas tab on the sales site, and the ability to fill your cart on the basis of the particular ecologic characteristics of the manufacturers.

Rather than emphasizing price, the store's choice has been to **sell "fair ecologic value"**. The price differential with the competition is justified on the grounds of a selection of products that is more in harmony with the "consum-actor" and the planet. In this context the firm becomes clearly positioned on ethics and can target new consumers who are receptive to sustainable development: dominantly among the young and well-off socio-professional group.

## 7.2 CAMIF's Product Line

A careful examination of the company's product lines and publicity in the two mini-catalogs issued since the firm's re-launch, and on its website, identifies **numerous references to SD**.

This observation enables us to state that CAMIF's SD approach is a broad one: it is deployed in both the environmental and social arenas. It plays simultaneously on production, transport, use, and - a rarity - product recycling (see Table 5).

Table 5. CAMIF's SD actions grouped by the various aspects of sustainable development

Limitation of environmental impact		Ex. listed
<b>Manufacture</b>	Amount of resources/energy	Packaging containing recycled materials
	Nature of resources used/discarded	Organic cotton, sustainably-managed forests
	Place of manufacture	Local products
<b>Transport</b>	Type of transport	
	Weight of products transported	
	Distance transported	Georeferencing (products according to the place of delivery)
<b>Use</b>	Quantity of product	
	Product life	Made in France/Europe, AFAQ [QA certification]
	Repairability of products	Accessible repair facilities
<b>Disposal</b>	Toxicity of products	
	Re-use of products	Products sent to Emmaüs.
	Recycling of products	Recyclable products
<b>Manufacture</b>	Place	Local product, firm represents living heritage
	Working conditions	Socially-responsible suppliers
	Access to employment	
	Wages	Fair trade

As regards the product lines produced, the product selection on the website offers both SD products, e.g., a water-saver, and products that are non-SD but distinguished by their respect for environmental or social issues.

The **advertising tools** are not mere sales supports but also, through the public-manifesto pages, **guides to best practice in SD matters** (such as when they explain how to recover rainwater). The catalog is certified to be *ImprimVert* ["green-printed"] and *PECF* (sustainably-managed forests).

Lastly, at the **organizational** level CAMIF is a signer of the **diversity charter**.

SD thus appears to be a central issue in the presentation of its product line, which reflects the values promoted within the company.

## 8. Conclusion

Today, companies can no longer afford to delay the implementation of a CSR strategy. The legislative environment is becoming ever more strict with firms, whatever their size. In addition, there is growing awareness among consumers of the importance of protecting the planet and its population.

In this regard, rather than undergoing pressure from their various stakeholders, a number of firms have chosen to make SD a theme in their positioning. This is the case for CAMIF, which since its “rebirth” in 2009 has moved not just to consolidate the company’s already responsible approach, but also to accentuate it. By targeting its former customers, and also new ones who are sensitive to SD issues, CAMIF now intends to become a company which delivers fair and responsible value and employs a marketing approach consistent with this positioning: a broad spectrum of sustainable products, involvement in community activities, consideration of its stakeholders, a project to create a village around SD, the possibility of purchasing on the basis of sustainable content, and so on. This choice is also expressed in a policy of fairly high prices justified by agreement to the costs of quality production, and advertising that make this point. More than a marketing position oriented on SD lines, which is highly original in furniture distribution, CAMIF is advancing a new business model in the sector.

This strong accent on SD identifies CAMIF as a pioneering SME in the distribution sector, and sets it apart from its competition. It demonstrates how SD can now become an anchor point for the re-launching of a company. The future will tell whether CAMIF’s choice will hold up over the long term, and serve as a model for other SMEs.

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## Notes

Note 1. Philippe Vasseur, “la RSE ne s’octroie pas, elle se partage”, Les Echos, 3/11/2011 – (special Sustainable Development issue).

Note 2. Dominique Desjeux, 10<sup>th</sup> National Marketing Day, ADETEM, Dec. 2010.

Note 3. Article 116 of the NRE Act, subsequently Article L. 225-102-1 of the Business Code.

Note 4. Acts signed in 2009 and 2010 respectively, as a result of the Grenelle Environment Round Table initiated in 2007.

Note 5. Analysis presented in the report by Novethic (2009) entitled “*Quelle place pour la mobilisation des salariés dans les rapports DD des entreprises du CAC 40?*” and available at: <http://www.novethic.fr/novethic/v3/les-etudes-rse-responsabilite-sociale-entreprise.jsp>.

Note 6. For a complete report on the results visit the website [www.crocis,ccip.fr](http://www.crocis,ccip.fr).

Note 7. However, the two-figure growth rates of fair-trade products are currently being slowed by the crisis (Ethicity, 2011).

Note 8. Source: ADEME website <http://www2.ademe.fr/>.

Note 9. 2008/2011, *Les Echos*, *La Tribune*.

Note 10. Company source.

Note 11. Xerfi study, 2010.