This Special Issue of *Journal of Brand Management* (*JBM*) on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Brands aims at expanding the body of knowledge and research about CSR, marketing, communication and branding. It specifically wants to investigate how the changes in consumer expectations and behaviour in regard to CSR and brands, reported in different global studies, have influenced the ways brands operate and communicate in terms of CSR. It also seeks to examine various consumer/stakeholder responses on CSR efforts brands are trying to implement.

In the last decade or so we are witnessing some significant changes happening in consumption practices and consumer expectations. Reports such as Global CSR Study by CONE (2015) show that increasingly, consumers tend to act beyond their short-term and immediate interests and consider the impact of both - their own choices and the choices of (global) brands on wider society. Consumption practices have thus moved beyond the sheer utilitarian value; consumers now reflect their values and beliefs through (non)purchases (Shaw et al., 2006).

In the era of engagement and co-creation it is also increasingly important for brands to recognise that consumers are often co-creators of value they derive out of brands they are purchasing (Shaw et al., 2006). Branding practice proves that especially younger (and more conscious) generations of consumers feel as being defined by the brands they are purchasing and using. If a certain brand is perceived as a cheat they would discard it because it undermines their personal brand (Bashford, 2015). Consequently, they tend to be very active and engaged in many different ways – from volunteering, sharing positive information about brands and companies, and giving feedback on brand’s CSR activities (CONE, 2015).

All this places CSR in the midst of marketing, branding and communication efforts. It also changes the ways marketing communications and marketing are operating. Not only that consumers hold brands accountable for their CSR commitments and promises (CONE, 2015), they are not satisfied with brands just delivering their messages on the good deeds. They expect companies and brands to spend their marketing budgets on different solutions for engaging consumers to participate in CSR efforts and supporting them to live more sustainable themselves (Bashford, 2015).

We would like to bring these new and emerging issues to the forefront of this special issue on CSR and brands. We invite especially contributions with empirical insights that have strong implications for marketing and communication practice related to CSR as well as the ability to advance existing knowledge on CSR from marketing, communication and branding perspectives.
We welcome a broad range of topic areas within the broad theme of CSR interlinked to brands. They can be related (but not restricted) to the following:

- CSR as a brand’s competitive advantage and/or insurance
- Building corporate and product brands and their equity on CSR platform
- Integration of social, ethical and environmental issues in brand strategies and communications
- Role of CSR in building brand equity and reputation
- CSR branding DNA for SMEs
- Uses and misuses of CSR in brand building
- Using CSR for internal branding and brand ambassadors
- Motivations for CSR practices in branding practices
- Stakeholder brand engagement through CSR
- Consumer expectations of CSR and their (buying) behaviour
- Stakeholder skepticism of CSR practices
- Responsible consumers and their reactions to CSR practices of brands
- CSR issues in consumption
- Caused-related marketing and branding
- Socialization of brands into the CSR
- Eco branding
- CSR reporting and CSR brand communication in digital era
- Case studies on CSR branding

Submission and deadlines

Articles should not have been published elsewhere and should not be under consideration for publication in another journal. All papers will first be considered by the Guest Editors in terms of their suitability for this special edition and if found suitable will then undergo a double-blind reviewing process. The deadline for submission of full papers, formatted in accordance with the *Journal of Brand Management* style sheet (http://www.palgrave-journals.com/bm/author_instructions.html#Format-of-submissions), is 30th September, 2016. Papers should be submitted directly to the lead Guest Editor via the following email address: ursa.golob@fdv.uni-lj.si (please do not submit via the JBM online system). For any general queries with regard this special issue call for papers please contact the lead Guest Editor via the above.

References

