

Our comparative study investigates the Chinese and Finnish managers' perceptions of corporate responsibility (CR) and how CR engagement can benefit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the mechanical wood processing industry. Based on the semi-structured interviews with 23 line managers between December 2009 and December 2010, our study provides evidence that with a focused stakeholder approach, managers in wood industry SMEs adopt informal corporate social responsibility strategies and tools to meet the specific expectations of their key stakeholders. Legal aspects were the key drivers of CR, whereas advanced production technology, efficient wood procurement, customer focus, and a competent workforce formed the four principal cornerstones in their pursuit of competitive advantage. Despite the two vastly different cultural and operational settings, the importance and the role of CR were found to follow a fairly similar logic in how CR was understood and implemented in the wood industry SMEs seeking for competitive advantage.

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