

Book Review
Case Studies in Sustainability
Management:
The Oikos Collection Volume 3

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Sustainable management concepts and practices evolved in the 1980s in response to the incessant trends of higher consumption and less conservation of natural and material resources. These trends focused on current consumption as against conservation for the future generations which in turn led to significant resource depletion. This implied critical issues of inter-generational equity and social justice. The earth's carrying capacity (footprint) got eroded manifold since the 1970s as industrialized nations consumed more natural resources. The UN World Commission defined sustainable development as the ability of nations to take care of the future generations without sacrificing the needs of the present generations (1987)¹. The resource seeking international investment since last few decades has spotlighted such issues as: poverty, public health, environmental degradation and violation of human rights among others.

This volume is an outcome of Oikos case writing competition illustrating sustainability practices of large corporations. Jordi Vives Gabriel in his introduction traces the decade of history of case competition. The objective of this volume is to stimulate national and international debate on sustainability through applied learning.

¹ World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. Our Common Future. Oxford: Oxford University Press

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Sustainability Dilemmas

Novo Nordisk:

In the first section case one analyzes the issues faced by Novo Nordisk, world leader in diabetes drug manufacturing company. The case by Debapratim Purkayastha and Adapa Srinivas Rao identify and highlight how such a leading corporation had problems of achieving a 'balance between business and global health'. The company introduced management philosophy approach and adopted Triple Bottom Line measures, was engaged in stakeholder and environmental management. The company started producing its environmental reports.

Walmart

The second case is on Wal-Mart Company by Craig Smith and Robert J Crawford. The company founded in 1962 became the worlds' largest corporation in 2004 but not without its share of controversies: destroying local business, having adverse impact on environment, and controversial labor practices. The corporation introduced climate change measures, Wal-Mart's' Sustainable value Network, by 2002 the Golden Rules for responsible mining operations were introduced. Further the company introduced No Dirty Gold measures with a view to create multi stake holder system. It developed partnership model for traceable jewelry.

PepsiCo

In case three the authors Debapratim Purkayastha and Adapa Srinivas Rao focus attention on how market competition leads corporations to alter their strategies. By 2009 the company introduced a program called Performance with Purpose focusing on human and environment sustainability, talent sustainability water and energy conservation measures and encouraged workforce diversity.

Florida Ice and Farms

Case four by Andrea M Prado, John C Ickis and Ximena Gracia-Rada on Florida Ice and Farm once again illustrates how corporations when confronted with the changing contours of competition initiated sustainability measures. The corporation introduced measures such as: Tipple Bottom line, stakeholder dialogue, definition of objectives,

impact measurement, and accountability towards society and stakeholder engagement, among others.

Murray Silverman in his case on Sustainability at Holland American Line delineates the evolution of sustainability practice in the global cruise industry. HAL evolved into a leader in sustainability in this industry. The company had a good record of compliance of environmental and social regulations. The Fuel Conservation Committee had the responsibility of cost reduction. The fuel reduction targets were achieved by 2011. The company identified major threats to the oceans.

Managing Stakeholder Relationship

Hunghom Peninsula in Hong Kong (a,b,c):

In this case a housing scheme for the government was started but later suspended due to market trends and private developers were invited for a bid. Two developers already involved gave alternative proposals for owning the project. Sun Hunh Kai Properties (1972) was one of the largest companies in this sector, specializing in premium quality housing. The firm was committed to CSR roles. The company emphasized green construction

The second company was New World Development Company listed since 1972. It supported community development initiatives. These companies decided to demolish and redevelop the Peninsula, but due to the reactions from various local stakeholders they decided to change the demolition plan to renovation and reconfiguration

Modernizing Dharavi

In this case the authors Abhijit Roy and Mosumi Roy essay the vision of the consultant for providing a slum free facility to over 600,000 residents of Dharavi, The promoter was a consultant to Dharavi Redevelopment project. But there was stiff resistance from the slum dwellers' leader. For the consultant the dilemma was how to sell the concept of redevelopment of Dharavi slums to their leader?

Luluemom's Commitment to the Environment

A Eric Bass and Rebecca J Morris analyzed the reactions to the news report about the Seaweed clothing which raised questions of ethics, marketing

strategies and product integrity. An athlete apparel firm Lulemom was founded in 1998 in Canada. Since inception the company was dedicated to CSR and sustainability, under the name of community legacy; emphasis was on sourcing and manufacturing, efficiency and waste, and green building and spaces.

Sustainability as a Source of Differentiation Strategies

In the case on Burgerville: sustainability and sourcing in a QSR Supply chain Darrell Brown, Phil Berko, Petrick Dedrick, Brie Hillard and Joshua Pfleeger discuss how the company has followed positive environmental and social practices. The firm followed best practices for employee welfare. The company supports local farms and business.

The case on Portland Cement Company by Madeleine Pullman, Greg Stokes, Gregory Price, Mark Langstone and Brandon Arends analyze the notion of farm friendly coffee. There were key issues such as climate change impact, declining coffee production in the traditional lands and sustainability related certification.

In the case on Chipotle: Mexican Grill Inc. food with integrity Ram Subramanian focuses on company's practice of sustainable sourcing. The company installed solar panels which reduced its carbon footprint. By 2012 three of its restaurants were LEED certified. The increasing food costs raised the issue of pricing and whether revising prices upward was compatible with sustainability practices.

Researchers, teachers, public policy makers, executives dealing with CSR and sustainable development in industry, and those who are interested in the issues of intergenerational equity and social justice will find this volume a stimulating reading. The subject has already become very important in economic and trade policy reforms and now forms a part of curriculum in some Universities and management institutions with a view to create awareness. Case method is one of the very important methods of producing and disseminating knowledge and the present volume more than serves this purpose by providing a comprehensive treatment to the divergent and complex issues of sustainability.