

Environmental IM PACT on Business Sustainability

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I. Introduction

Economic structures and policies create the context for throughput, but it is individual business operations that are responsible for the actual throughput activities in the production of goods and services. The specific technologies they use have a significant impact on the amount and types of materials that go through the production cycle of extraction, manufacture, use and waste. In the past, the impact of various technologies on the environment was not a significant issue for business planning and operation. The effects of burning coals were too obvious to ignore in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but even British royalty could not exert enough authority to reduce the pollution created. Concerns for the environmental impact of business activities arouse in earnest in the latter part of the 20th century with the evidence of chemical pollution, a variety of environmentally significant industrial accidents, opposition of indigenous peoples to logging and mining operations, and the discovery of human impacts on global systems such as the atmospheric ozone layer and climate

II. Importance Environmental business

Environmental sustainability involves making decisions and taking action that are in the interests of protecting the natural world, with particular emphasis on preserving the capability of the environment to support human life. It is an important topic at the present time, as people are realizing the full impact that businesses and individuals can have on the environment. Environmental sustainability is about making responsible decisions that will reduce your business' negative impact on the environment. It is not simply about reducing the amount of waste you produce or using less energy, but is concerned with developing processes that will lead to businesses becoming completely sustainable in the future. Currently, environmental sustainability is a topical issue that receives plenty of attention from the media and from different governmental departments. This is a result of the amount of research going into assessing the impact that human activity can have on the environment. Although the long term implications of this serious issue are not yet fully understood, it is generally agreed that the risk is high enough to merit an immediate response. Businesses are expected to lead in the area of environmental sustainability as they are considered to be the biggest contributors and are also in a position where they can make a significant difference.

Businesses can potentially cause damage to all areas of the environment. Some of the common environmental concerns include:

- damaging rainforests and woodlands through logging and agricultural clearing
- polluting and over-fishing of oceans, rivers and lakes
- polluting the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels
- damaging prime agricultural and cultivated land through the use of unsustainable farming practices

For much of the past, most businesses have acted with little regard or concern for the negative impact they have on the environment. Many large and small organisations are guilty of significantly polluting the environment and engaging in practices that are simply not sustainable. However, there are now an increasing number of businesses that are committed to reducing their damaging impact and even working towards having a positive influence on environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability forces businesses to look beyond making short term gains and look at the long term impact they are having on the natural world. You need to consider not only the immediate impact your actions have on the environment, but the long term implications as well. For example, when manufacturing a product, you need to look at the environmental impact of the products entire lifecycle, from development to disposal before finalizing your design

Sustainable business, or **green business**, is an enterprise that has minimal negative impact on the global or local environment, community, society, or economy a business that strives to meet the triple bottom line. Often, sustainable businesses have progressive environmental and human rights policies. In general, business is described as green if it matches the following four criteria:

- It incorporates principles of sustainability into each of its business decisions.
- It supplies environmentally friendly products or services that replace demand for non green products and/or services.
- It is greener than traditional competition.
- It has made an enduring commitment to environmental principles in its business operations.

Another key point in the business case for environmental sustainability is the potential to reduce your expenses in the medium to long term. For example, making your business more energy efficient will save you a significant amount on energy costs and help you to improve your bottom line. Performing a cost-benefit analysis will allow you to compare the benefits of environmentally sustainable practices with the total cost of implementation. Environmentally sustainable businesses may also have a competitive edge when it comes to attracting customers and investors. Modern consumers are aware of social and environmental issues and keep themselves informed about which businesses are acting responsibly in the community. Investors are equally aware of these issues and there is a trend developing towards investing in environmentally sustainable companies. Most importantly in considering the business case for environmental sustainability is the point that it doesn't negatively impact on a business' ability to generate a profit. In fact, in the long term it is considered to actually improve profitability through the reduction of expenses and increased competitiveness.

Economic Development

This is the issue that proves the most problematic as most people disagree on political ideology what is and is not economically sound, and how it will affect businesses and by extension, jobs and employability. It is also about providing incentives for businesses and other organisations to adhere to sustainability guidelines beyond their normal legislative requirements. Also, to encourage and foster incentives for the average person to do their bit where and when they can; one person can rarely achieve much, but taken as a group, effects in some areas are cumulative. The supply and demand market is consumerist in nature and modern life requires a lot of resources every single day; for the sake of the environment, getting what we consume under control is the paramount issue. Economic development is about giving people what they want without compromising quality of life, especially in the developing world, and reducing the financial burden and red tape of doing the right thing.

Social Development

There are many facets to this pillar. Most importantly is awareness of and legislation protection of the health of people from pollution and other harmful activities of business and other organisations. In North America, Europe and the rest of the developed world, there are strong checks and programmes of legislation in place to ensure that people's health and wellness is strongly protected. It is also about maintaining access to basic resources without compromising the quality of life. The biggest hot topic for many people right now is sustainable housing and how we can better build the homes we live in from sustainable material. The final element is education - encouraging people to participate in environmental sustainability and teaching them about the effects of environmental protection as well as warning of the dangers if we cannot achieve our goals.

Environmental Protection

We all know what we need to do to protect the environment, whether that is recycling, reducing our power consumption by switching electronic devices off rather than using standby, by walking short journeys instead of taking the bus. Businesses are regulated to prevent pollution and to keep their own carbon emissions low.

There are incentives to installing renewable power sources in our homes and businesses. Environmental protection is the third pillar and to many, the primary concern of the future of humanity. It defines how we should study and protect ecosystems, air quality, integrity and sustainability of our resources and focusing on the elements that place stress on the environment. It also concerns how technology will drive our greener future; the EPA recognized that developing technology is key to this sustainability, and protecting the environment of the future from potential damage that technological advances could potentially bring. The sustainable development professional network thinks, acts and works globally. In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development met to discuss and develop a set of goals to work towards; they grew out of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that claimed success in reducing global poverty while acknowledging there was still much more to do. The SDG eventually came up with a list of 17 items which included amongst other things:

- The end of poverty and hunger
- Better standards of education and healthcare - particularly as it pertains to water quality and better

Sanitation

- To achieve gender equality
- Sustainable economic growth while promoting jobs and stronger economies
- All of the above and more while tackling the effects of climate change, pollution and other Environmental factors that can harm and do harm people's health, livelihoods and lives.
- Sustainability to include health of the land, air and sea

III. Conclusion

The concept of nature having certain rights - that people have stewardship of the world and the importance of putting people at the forefront of solving the above global issues through management of the environment and of consumption (for example, reducing packaging and discouraging food waste as well as promoting the use of recyclable materials).

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