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Sustainability Management

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Course aims and intended learning outcomes

The concept of sustainability is linked to the idea of a social and economic development that will meet the needs of the present without compromising the opportunities of future generations. To meet this challenge, over the past ten years, a wide range of actions and initiatives have been developed on the basis of the so-called triple bottom line (tbl). The tbl focuses on the ability of a company to achieve good results in terms of economic development, limiting their effects on the environment and contribution to social development. This capability enables companies to orient their strategy not only towards the profits' maximization but also to a wider social responsibility. The challenges of sustainability and social innovation lead companies to collaborate in order to contribute to the improvement of social, ecological and economic equilibrium.

Corporate sustainability is therefore a management approach that can simultaneously create value for shareholders and for the community, turning the issue of protection of scarce and non-renewable resources of the planet into an opportunity for efficiency and competitive advantage. The course objectives consist precisely in developing this managerial attitude and increasing expertise about best practices in place at the global level. The lessons focus alternately on theoretical frameworks, case studies and relevant practices.

The course aims to provide students with a wide knowledge about trends and practices in sustainability management. Each lesson will support students in the discussions of the main issues that a manager has to cope with in order to improve organizational performance: How can sustainability be managed to promote the competitiveness of a company? What choices allow to introduce it effectively in a company? How can a company be organized internally to manage the issue of sustainability?

The course enables students to understand issues related to sustainability in a critical way and to transfer these concepts into business strategy, management and reporting. By addressing specific case studies, the course also permits to discuss the conditions for implementing sustainability both at strategic and operational level.

Course content

The course develops following contents:

- Introduction to the concept of sustainability management;
- Integrating the three pillars of sustainability;
- Sustainability metrics and reporting;
- Sustainable human resource management and workforce wellbeing;
- Sustainable marketing;
- Sustainable operations and environmental management;
- Sustainable supply chain management;
- Sustainability, smart cities and urban development;
- Circular economy and sustainability;
- Partnership for sustainability: the UN SDG.



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Through the presentation and discussion of case studies, the course also gives students the opportunity to interpret the specific content of the sustainability management processes.

Reading list

Textbook

- Molthan-Hill, P. (2017) *The Business Student's Guide to Sustainable Management. Principles and Practice* (2nd edition)

Further readings:

- Carroll, A.B. (1979) *Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance*;
- European Commission (2018) *Communication on a monitoring framework for the circular economy*;
- Global Reporting Initiative (2016) *GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines*;
- Madu, C.N. and Kuei, C. (2011) *Introduction to sustainability management*;
- OECD (2011) *Sustainable manufacturing toolkit*;
- United Nations (2016) *SDG Compass. The guide for business action on the SDGs*.

Teaching method

The program will be developed through theoretical framework classes, case studies analysis and discussion, focuses on successful methodologies and experiences and relevant testimonials. Teaching methods have the common goal of developing the students' ability to analyze and interpret the implications of the sustainability approach in business strategies.

Assessment method and criteria

Course attendance is strongly recommended due to the course aim to develop analytical and managerial skills through case studies' discussion.

Evaluation methods for attending students

Class attendance is mandatory and each student must attend at least 24 hours. The overall evaluation is based on the outcome of 4 group assignments and a written test related to the entire course materials (course readings, teacher readings posted on Blackboard, slides, case studies).

The group assignment has a weight of 50% on the overall evaluation and consists of the analysis of sustainability management case study. Objective of the assignment is to evaluate the capacity of critical reading and interpretation of corporate dynamics in terms of sustainability. Each case study will be discussed in the class room.

The final test has a weight of 50% and it consists of a written examination that covers the entire course program. It includes 5 short open-ended questions that test the level of knowledge of the course content. Each question is 6 points/30.



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Evaluation mode for non-attending students

The overall evaluation is based 20% on an individual case memo chosen between three options available on blackboard and 80% on the outcome of a written test of 3 open questions which focuses on the course texts and materials provided by the teacher. Each question is 10 points/30. The individual assignment has a weight of 20% and it consists in the development of a short memo on a selected case study.

Notes and prerequisites

The course presupposes that students enrolling already have a good understanding of management and reporting. Information on office hours available on the teacher's personal web page at: <http://docenti.unicatt.it/>.