STRATEGIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Finding Partners for Journey
February 13, 2006
Feb 13, 2006- “Finding partners for our journey”

Discussion board news:
1) Post your discussions as (DDMM), name, topic on all postings
2) If you are replying to a specific person, please use the “reply” function rather than “new discussion” - this will help streamline the board
3) Please select the “printed” rather than the popup option under the text box

- In a posting, there was a suggestion about accountability and there was a primer on sustainability, talking about how one can define sustainability as a destination and it sums up to the idea that “Sustainability is about behaving and behaving in a way that can be continued.” (Dave Thomas’s 2nd postings)- this provides a nice balance between those who believe that the destination has to be defines.

- In the Fortune 500, they always list who was in the list now versus who was in the list in previous years. Only 1 company has been in business for the entire history (General Electrics) because these companies are bought up or go out of business.

- The public doesn’t want printing, they want multi-media, CDs, etc without any pre-press. If Heidelberg didn’t allow for the option of no lithography, then they would go out of business.

- To operate sustainability an organization must optimize environment, communities and the economies in which they operate.

- Reason to use local small business is that they are part of the economy and they pay taxes which helps support the community as well as the impact of their direct payroll in regards to their employees.

- The major competitors of our local printshop are in CA, but as long as clients get “free” delivery globalization is a reality.

- Next week there will be no summary discussion but there is a case and we expect you to discuss it on the discussion board. Also, there will be material on printing processes and the City of Cambridge. This will help you understand the process and the community & regulatory climate. So the next discussion in class will be Feb. 27th.

- In regards to reading, you can skim the supplementary readings - this is up to you, and what we encourage you to do is to post your research findings to the group (this will help you for the midterm and final, as well as your grad papers - and it is a way for the class to work together to conquer this material)

- The questions at the end of the narrative- these were to stimulate discussion and is a hold over from previous years that were not so active on the discussion board. In future weeks, there will only be questions in the case.
Feb 13, 2006- “Finding partners for our journey”

• Even the professors in the department can’t have any consensus on the topics we discuss in class- and that is true. Each class in SD has a different perspective.
• There are 5 types of capitals involved and defining SD:
  – The Natural Capital- focus is on environment “live off interest of the land, and not touch the principle”
  – Social Capital & Human Capital
  – Financial & Manufactured Capital
• An example of an unsustainable company (oil) was mentioned as an unsustainable company- yet they are consistently named as some of the most sustainable companies in the corporate world- how do they do it?
  – They are investing in alternative technologies
  – They have far reaching goals that are creative and aim for more environmental and social goals
  – They have turned their business plans and looked at it as providing “energy” rather than oil- this paradigm shift has allowed them to look at their efforts in a different light and ultimately generated novel thinking
  – (Or, they are they are just really good at spinning their image and have only focused on those aspects of SD that benefit them- corporate social responsibility, transparency, environmental improvements on their end but not the upstream/downstream impacts of their products)

• What did you take away from the discussion this week?
• S: Building consensus before you begin this process. How do you go about building energy and a common goal?
• P: You use the diverse interests to distill the commonalities within the business. And interests change frequently and dramatically- frequently generated by a terrible event that is covered in the news. So stakeholders are a good gauge of the common interests and reporting to them is a “first pass” at a watchdog agency. Building consensus is something different and there are tools that can help you build consensus including Delphi. This is a tool that allows you to drive consensus within an organization- it is more difficult to do in a social setting. But you hold focus groups, the individuals talk about what is important to them regarding the topic, then you talk to each person in the group about what others have said, and you cycle through the group, eventually distilling the points upon which everyone agrees. The social research literature has many methods that can be used to interview stakeholders and systematically find points of agreement that can then be used to build consensus. Also, once the teams start working on a project those actions will lead to consensus.
• S: I agree with that to a certain extent, I also believe that it is important to build consensus.
• P: The workers getting involved, and workers will be given an opportunity to tell management their ideas, and workers never resist their own ideas. So the system we will go through in this class will eventually address them.
Feb 13, 2006- “Finding partners for our journey”

- S: You don’t think that consensus building isn’t like “geez, here’s another consultant.” You think that by asking the employees their opinions will build the necessary energy?
- P: I think it is best to use “in-house” talent based upon the unique opportunities within their own process to become more sustainability. And that this will lead to “compliance by prevention” because you will have changed your process such that you do not need to be regulated.
- S: Staying on stakeholders, how much would you like to engage stakeholders since you are just beginning to understand your process. The more you involve the stakeholders, the more likely you are going to risk failure or fail to meet their expectations. So you could be setting yourself up for failure.
- P: The only stakeholders that you engage at this point is the key stakeholders and you have the opportunity to decide who they are at this point (owners, managers, employees, Regulators? Neighbors?) Focus groups are typically about 5-9 people, in social research you ask questions of this group (warm up, cool down, and then the important ones buried in the middle) and what you are trying to get them to do is to react to a question or a scenario. Also, you could have a focus group that shows them the process- this will allow you identify aspects that resonate or generate ideas/concerns. For instance, can you do something to the process that will lead to source reduction (think changing inks to something less toxic) which will allow you to prevent the possibility of an accidental release, remove regulations (if it was a toxic agent), etc.
  - www.victoriasdirtysecret.net: the nonprofit group that is trying to limit the number of catalogues being printed and are currently going after Victoria Secret’s. Catalogue companies do not have a trade organization currently
- S: When you put future generations in their stakeholders, it is a nice idea, but is impractical. Who would represent future generations?
- P: Working with First Nation groups, future generations are involved in all decisions. Japan writes 100 year business plans. So it is possible for the current generation to take a long term viewpoint and take into consideration future generations. The accountability information at www.accountability.org.uk (click on “Resources” and then “AccountAbility Primers” and then “Sustainability”) is a good, moderate approach for considering stakeholders.

- END HOUR 1
Feb 13, 2006- “Finding partners for our journey”

- S: What exactly were we supposed to take away from the first and second week of the class?
- P: The discussion board was pretty on target - a lot of material was presented and the discussions talked about what was involved with an organizing, defining, and understanding the initial steps for a company questioning a pursuit of sustainable development. And everyone had good points and it is good to engage other people, which is what this week was about - who are your stakeholders? And having a set of fresh eyes (you - the environmental management consultant) come into the organization allows you to view your process and actions and align your actions towards the goal of becoming more sustainable. The process that we will cover in this course (the 14 weekly topics) does meet the criteria of many international sustainable development reporting protocols.
- S: As a manager of a med. Equipment company, if I took over this position, I would end up making changes and the people involved would see these changes/actions being taken. For instance, changing a workstation, lighting, etc. in order to eventually meet these goals.
- P: Companies that that do go in and do actions without employee involvement, Kaizen would work so much better. Lean management is very effective at making things more productive and pleasing the customer, who is also a stakeholder. So these two managerial approaches are basically meeting stakeholder needs because they are focusing on quality, improvement, and meeting customers needs. Six Sigma is also a good program that is compatible for sustainable development. For example, if you switch from a carcinogenic solvent to an aqueous solvent system, you will have improved your environmental footprint and minimized exposure to a carcinogen, but you will have introduced new hazards into the workplace. And it is important to understand these trade offs, and the best approach you could possibly take into as an environmental manager is to work towards prevention. Can you change your process to remove or minimize all possible dangers. Print shops were chosen as a case study for a reason, because it is a very competitive industry and the industry is changing as digital technologies become more prevalent.
- S: The emphasis on service industries is interesting. But why do so many companies use a business plan of “planned obsolescence.”
- P: The companies that do this have access to plentiful natural resources and are fundamentally unsustainable. And customers will buy their products. (also the role of marketing) And since customers are basically stakeholders, the stakeholders are supporting this behavior.
Feb 13, 2006- “Finding partners for our journey”

- S: When a company has Sigma or another sustainability program, do you fuse the sustainability into the current program? Or would you implement a new program?
- P: If he brings on Sigma, for instance, the company will end up having two programs that will be competing with each other. Now, every company is different. But instead of having separate programs for each division, the focus needs to be switched so that it focuses on the process/product and the different divisions (purchasing, OH&S, etc) become activities that are supporting the production of the product. So it is a change in focus within the company-the environmental manager’s focus goes to making a non-toxic product instead of maintaining regulatory compliance; purchasing supports the idea of buying non-toxic products and leveraging purchase power to get the best deal on these products.
- S: You are telling us to use a systems approach. You said to view ourselves as an environmental manager and yet we need to become familiar with organizational management, technical processing, etc. This is a complex issue.
- P: Every organization has a product. The common denominator of any organization has a common mission and it is the mission of that company, everything else is a supporting process. For instance, Harvard’s mission is education- so everything else is a supporting process for education. And once you focus on the process of education, it provides a point of alignment for the organization and everyone can do the job for the process and not their own glory, so to speak. And it cuts through behavioral aspects that can hinder uniform action. By focusing on the main process, it allows for new thought/actions and re-frames the issues.
- S: You are talking about addressing processes at universities that are decentralized that does not have a single mission. All those processes are very varied from one school to another. And the biggest footprint of a university is the buildings- so it makes sense to focus on the buildings.
- P: But they are- universities have a mission. But how does a classroom at Harvard differ from a classroom anywhere else- and you can map the processes that happen within a classroom. And by finding the supporting processes.
- S: What has the biggest impact on the activity- is it the process or the actual building that houses those processes?
- P: Supporting processes are typically the most polluting. So it is important to understand the supporting process and how they can be minimized in order to meet their overarching environmental, social and economic goals. As soon as something takes the process focus, everyone can take that position and it eliminates a lot of conflict and competition between departments/divisions.
Feb 13, 2006- “Finding partners for our journey”

- S: I was wondering how the Systems Approach incorporates architecture and infra-structure. We are breaking out pieces of equipment but not necessarily what is housing the equipment.
- P: We will get to those issues, but the idea of circling the wagons around a process, it allows for you to identify specific worksteps that can improve the practice and how it will influence the upstream and downstream worksteps associated with that process.
- S: I understand how understanding processes make sense, but a lot of waste from Harvard comes from the building and the energy use from buildings. And this is a big issue that needs to be addressed.
- P: You can either ask what are people doing in that building or what processes are going on within that mission. A building can have multiple processes/missions.
- S: I think it would be helpful if we did some of that during discussion.
- P: If you are a graduate student, you will be able to do that as for your paper. But there is a difference between being an initial-driven program and a prevention based program.