

Chapter 10

Green Business: Not Just the Color of Money



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Abstract Sustainable business development has moved into the social fabric of corporations alongside historical parameters of business performance such as profit margins and return on investment. The transition to envelope a mindset beyond profits has been supported by initiatives founded by the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, sustainable business development faces challenges in both emerging and developed nations to infuse corporate social responsibility and innovation to address current environmental conditions that endanger public health. The UN suggests that to achieve these measures will require new economic paradigms, behavioral pattern changes in corporate and consumer consumption of natural resources, adaptive policy, and commitments to limit resource use. This chapter defines the evolution of sustainability and presents key components from a business perspective. Next, the impact of business environmental sustainability on public health is discussed using several examples of how corporations address important problems such as e-waste, natural habitat conservation, and employee safety and health. From there, we review management tools to assess sustainability providing insight to corporate business ventures that are best aligned with SDGs. Finally, we summarize key points of the material and present a high-level list of best practices.

10.1 Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), and other sustainable business perspectives are driving the application of environmental sustainability to the core of business principles under equal consideration with traditional business performance measures such as profit margins and returns on

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investment. The application of sustainability principles is no longer tenuous or an urgent response to remedy bad public relations after hazardous contamination has been uncovered. Instead, they have become important factors in new business development considering the impact to the community, public health, and the planetary ecosystem from the onset.

(PWC Global 2015, p.6):

Increasingly, companies from all sectors are having to confront and adapt to a range of disruptive forces including globalization, increased urbanization, intense competition for raw materials and natural resources and a revolution in technology that is challenging the business models of many sectors while forcing all companies to be more accountable to, and transparent with, all their stakeholders.

The well-being of all living things is dependent upon understanding the functioning of the Earth's systems and taking actions to eliminate detrimental causes towards the healthy operation of the global ecosystem. With this aim, in 2000, world leaders gathered at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York and developed the first set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Later, at the beginning of 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) came into effect with a leading focus on eradicating poverty and hunger. Other SDGs are specifically important items to this chapter including—Goal 3, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”; Goal 8, “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”; Goal 9, “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”; and Goal 12, “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.” These highlighted SDGs demonstrate the elegant, interdependent, complex, and interconnected nature of the multiple objectives that prompt strategies to improve the plight of humanity without devouring limited natural resources.

Worldwide actions by proponents of sustainable development, such as the UN MDGs and SDGs, have had remarkable influence towards the incorporation of these goals into the role of business entities. However, the transition from sound, global environmental objectives to local implementation has been fraught with typical policy hurdles—political and economic feasibility. Unlike the MDGs, SDGs are proposed to be universal and therefore apply to all countries. Thus, achieving the SDGs requires worldwide collaboration, such as the partnership of governments, participation of organizations, private sector, civil society, and consumers. Collaboration in this fashion may be the backbone from which the possibility of transferring a healthy and livable planet for future generations can be realized.

Furthermore, UN projections for success recognize the need for new economic paradigms, behavioral pattern changes, policy adaption, and resource commitments. This suggests the emergence of a circular economy—one in which the resource inputs and waste generated by production can be regenerated minimizing resource depletion through a system of multiple strategies for reutilization.

A recent study on SDGs assessment scores display relevant and significant challenges even for the most developed nations (Osborn et al. 2015). The study identifies the most common transformational challenges facing developed countries as

the goals of sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), sustainable energy (SDG 7) and combating climate change (SDG 13) (Osborn et al. 2015).

The greatest transformational challenges for emerging countries are variable but generally face limited opportunity for economic development. Thus, they are entering their own industrial era without the benefit of advanced technologies to abate persistent environmental problems such as pollution or waste management. Additionally, limited infrastructure and regulatory representation represent small but growing areas of opportunity or platforms from which leaders can initiate change.

A brighter future for emerging nations and thus, global health, will incorporate the collaborative visions of C-suite senior corporate executives to positively influence change and achieve competitive advantage by moving from “sustainability attempts” to ingraining the notion into their foundation. In the words of Yoda, Star Wars’ (a registered trademark of Lucasfilm, Ltd) Jedi leader, “Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZbVLvT7qBU>). Moving forward, business leaders, business stakeholders, and impacted communities must grasp that sustainability and responsible business practices outline the new path to business survival, solutions to countless environmental problems, and present an opportunity for green employment.

“As companies navigate this uncertain business landscape, having a cohesive vision of environmental and social sustainability will help them develop new models for growth and opportunities to be product, service and market leaders” (PWC Global 2015, p.6). In turn, these actions should prompt individual citizens to respond and engage through innovative methods that promote sustainable consumption patterns under environmental conditions that support public health.

Therefore, this chapter provides a general overview of the evolution of sustainability in the business world and defines the important constructs of sustainable business perspectives leading to the positive impact of business environmental sustainability actions on societal well-being. Next, the chapter highlights some of the best sustainable business practices in leading corporations and discusses how their actions meet some of the important global sustainability goals. The chapter concludes with a summary highlighting key information and recommendations.

10.2 Evolution of Sustainability in the Business World

The meaning of sustainability and how companies view the concept have changed dramatically over the last few decades. Initially, sustainability was perceived by business entities as “little more than a peripheral ‘green’ issue—useful for reducing energy and waste disposal costs or supporting some worthy community causes but hardly central to a company’s core business” (PWC Global 2015, p.6). Sustainability has been elevated in current application and is defined as “a balance between ecological, social and economic indicators that ensures the maintenance of the environment and society over time” (Boxer 2007, p.87). Prior to this paradigm shift, the main objective of a corporation was to maximize profits to distribute earnings to

those who had invested in the company according to the number of stock shares they held. At that time, the word “sustainability” was perceived by business leaders as “to connote a company that had steady growth in its earnings” (Werbach 2013, p.8) before the concept of sustainability was cited in “Our Common Future” of UN World Commission on Environment and Development (Werbach 2013). The meaning of the term in the business world has changed over time because of the shifting perceptions of individuals, such as business leaders and grass root organizations, who began to realize the interdependence of development on environmental systems and social welfare in relation to the community and public health. Furthermore, consumers have pushed companies towards reforms that target business objectives beyond the notion of profits. Together, these factors form and continue to refine the current definition of sustainability.

True sustainability should cover four components with equal importance: (1) social, (2) economic, (3) environmental, and (4) cultural aspects (Werbach 2013). The social aspect focuses on the inclusion of all members of society to promote sustainability from several perspectives—public health, education, labor, and human rights, creating the conditions for improvement. Next, a focus on sustainability does not negate the need for the economic reality of profitable businesses; but achieving financial gain should not undermine social responsibility or the other aspects of sustainability. Environmental well-being is the third component of true sustainability that should be taken into consideration in every action. Protecting and restoring the ecosystem is on equal footing with the important social and economic aspects of sustainability. Cultural aspects are the final component of true sustainability (Werbach 2013) but are often considered a part of the social element or not specified in every sustainability definition. However, cultural diversity is an important merit of different societies. Protecting and valuing this asset is significant to achieving true sustainability as communities are permitted to maintain their unique identities from generation to generation.

Today, most corporations have come to the realization that sustainable business strategies must emphasize each one of Werbach’s (2013) components to achieve long-term success. Thus, integration of environmental, social, ethical, and economic issues into all corporate decisions should be at the core of today’s business sustainability principles (Mukherjee et al. 2016).

10.3 Sustainable Business Perspectives

Being sensitive and responsive to social and environmental welfare is not a new phenomenon in the business world. Today, corporate leaders and businesses are increasingly aware of the interdependence of environmental systems, social welfare (such as community and public health), and the companies’ well-being and growth. They follow this awareness by embedding sustainable business strategies into the core of their business functions. Organizational strategies that build environmental protection, economic development, stakeholder value improvement, and a safe, just,

and equitable societal support system (e.g., creating meaningful jobs, minimizing inequalities in quality of life) into their decision-making processes to bring forth best practices. This section covers information about how companies adopt these processes and what they can achieve resulting from these implementations. This section details some of the key aspects of sustainable business practices—Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Triple Bottom Line (TBL)—and the importance of adopting sustainable business strategies.

10.3.1 *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*

In the early twentieth century, growing concerns about large corporations and their extensive powers steered a new way of thinking, including initiating internal debates about corporate voluntary actions, as well as shaping the ideas of charity, responsible operations, and stewardship. During the 1970s, corporations were moved by social pressures to undergo an objective and systematic review of the impact of business on society (Frederick 1986, 1994). A focus on ethics shaped the relationship between business and society over time creating new social norms and requiring that businesses become involved with a wider span of problems, such as equal employment opportunities, pollution abatement, and poverty alleviation, previously restricted to government purview (Cannon 1992). Corporate leaders and managers began to think beyond improving monetary value for the corporate stockholders or improving statutory obligations to minimally comply with legislation. As a result, organizations increasingly began to take voluntary action to improve the quality of life for employees, their families, the local community, and society at large. Today, this concept is known as *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR).

CSR is defined as a concept whereby organizations consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, employees, shareholders, communities, and the environment in all aspects of their operations. The term is still widely used “even though competing, complementary and overlapping concepts such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, stakeholder management and sustainability are all vying to become the most accepted and widespread descriptor of the field” (Carroll and Shabana 2010, p.86).

Companies are adopting CSR in different ways to meet their varied perspectives on responsibility to society. Some of the corporations are taking very small steps in practicing CSR because their approach reflects Friedman’s controversial point of view. He defines social responsibility as spending “corporate resources for socially beneficial purposes regardless of whether those undertaken expenditures are designed to help achieve the financial ends” (Friedman 1970 p.298). In his article published by the *New York Times Magazine*, Friedman (1970) states that the spending of corporate resources for socially beneficial purposes is wrong and unacceptable. He advocates that “those who support the idea of ‘social responsibility’ of business executives in addition to maximizing the profits of the company, are incorrect” (Mukherjee et al. 2016, p.201). He argues that the executives’ job should be

focused on maximizing company profits and if the management spends company financial sources on socially responsible acts, this indicates that they are using money that belongs to the corporate owners, employees, or customers without their consent. First introduced about fifty years ago, the Friedman approach typically undertakes the value maximization of the shareholders (also called stockholders) as the ultimate basis for the corporate decision-making process. This argument, today known as shareholder theory, remains one of the most prominent, argued, as well as controversial approaches against corporate CSR management strategies.

Although some companies and their executives that reflect Friedman's point of view may see CSR as a burden on the companies' bottom line, many others counter the approach of solely maximizing the shareholder value by accepting the challenge of CSR and managing teams to infuse a moral compass into corporate decision-making. If the subject matter is argued within the context of moral terms, "at least some of Friedman's professed adherents appear to offer incoherent moral views" (Schaefer 2008, p.297) and instead choose to remain primarily concerned with their duties towards their shareholders.

Alternatively, there are numerous examples of companies that have embedded the notion of CSR in business management practices that include strategies to make a positive impact on society (Samy et al. 2010). As a part of their CSR activities, large companies are now issuing a CSR report containing their nonfinancial societal activities along with their annual fiscal report. The increased awareness of CSR has also come about because of the UN MDGs, in which a major goal is the increased contribution of assistance from large organizations, especially multinational corporations, to help alleviate poverty and hunger, global health and environmental issues, and for businesses to be more aware of their impact on society. CSR continues to offer a strong foundation from which community-based initiatives and business development can be applied, especially in poverty-stricken countries or communities.

10.3.2 Moving Towards a Sustainable Business Strategy: Triple Bottom Line

"The business community became fascinated with the notion of sustainability, or sustainable development, and this theme became an integral part of all CSR discussions" (Carroll and Shabana 2010, p.88) at the turn of the millennium. Efficient and effective characteristics of sustainability began to emerge including a long-term adopted business strategy, formally recognizing resource limits, protecting natural habitats, transforming current business practices, practicing fairness, and enhancing creativity. In this sustainability model, production and consumption of resources requires careful planning and management in a manner that produces economic gain while contributing to the social and environmental well-being of the community. This approach is also called a triple-bottom-line (TBL) (Elkington 1998) requiring three elements to measure if a business is successful—people, profit, and

the planet. The TBL strategy can be built into all aspects of business (e.g., manufacturing, supply chain management, labor practices, transportation, facilities management) to achieve corporate sustainability.

Corporations have devised community-oriented strategies to participate in creating a society that is more just and equitable while operating under the foundation of the TBL approach. New corporate TBL models have advanced from initial one-time community service projects to include broader community activating strategies, such as educational grants for local schools, and the incorporation of a methodological process to reuse materials obtained from foreign suppliers (Laff 2009; Liebowitz 2010). These anti-stockholder theory corporate strategies demonstrate two important factors as opposed to strictly focusing on how they are financially performing within the marketplace. First, corporations are placing an increased emphasis on the image they portray to the greater community by integrating social equity and justice factors into daily operations within the corporate structure. Second, they recognize that their community image reflects their position in the marketplace. This necessitates an emphasis on employee satisfaction, involvement, and participation that ensures that TBL and social equity factors specifically are ingrained in, as opposed to merely appended, to strategic plans after economic and environmental considerations have been considered. Therefore, a greater emphasis is placed on positively impacting the lives of employees and society at large (i.e., all the stakeholders) in ways that benefit not only the corporation, but local and global communities.

10.3.3 Importance of Adopting Sustainable Business Strategies: Company Perspective

The introduction of new strategies to create value and meet different stakeholder expectations in the evolving new business era has opened the door for companies to adopt a variety of sustainable business initiatives. Over twenty years ago renowned Harvard Business School Professor Michael Porter introduced the Porter hypothesis which states that “environmental regulation can benefit companies by nudging them to explore their current production methods and eliminate costly waste that they have been blissfully unaware of” (Kahn 2017, *para* 3; Porter and Van der Linde 1995). While cost reduction is prominent, there are many key benefits for companies that adopt sustainable business strategies including the following:

- **Reduced Costs:** Sustainable practices, such as using less natural resources, eliminating unnecessary processes, or altering supply chain, that can help companies reduce their costs associated with these activities and save money in the long run. Cost savings can be added into the company’s bottom-line and applied to other functions of the corporation towards achieving growth and a better position for the company in the marketplace (Mukherjee et al. 2016).
- **Market Opportunity:** Sustainability in the business setting is a new market opportunity for products and processes with fast pace growth that can help

companies to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the long-term with products that cannot be easily copied by competitors.

- **Source of Differentiation:** Competition drives companies to differentiate themselves as much as possible. Sustainability strategy adoption can provide a source of differentiation for companies to uniquely position themselves in the market.
- **Waste Reduction:** Sustainable business actions can address waste management and elimination to offset one of the costliest business functions.
- **Innovation and Long-Term Growth:** Companies, such as General Electric and their Ecomagination program (<http://www.ge.com/about-us/ecomagination>), that invest in research, reinvent business processes, and innovate green products to support their sustainable focus can achieve multiple corporate and community benefits. These actions also ensure sustained long-term company growth and profitability (Nidumolu et al. 2009).
- **Competitive Advantage:** A focus on corporate sustainability leads to outperforming the industry average by gaining competitive advantage through new market opportunities. Research shows that those corporation with adopted sustainable business strategies have been consistently outperforming their rivals that neglect the dimensions of sustainable development (Eccles et al. 2014).
- **Environmental Protection:** Widespread sustainable business activities can achieve and maintain a healthy natural environment, prompt corporate longevity, and preserve the ecological balance providing natural resources for future generations. Adopting sustainable business models and practices will optimize utilization of natural resources in the present and in the future.
- **Employee Motivation and Retention:** Companies that are environmentally responsible and value sustainability instills a sense of belonging, connection, and pride in their employees that, in turn, creates a unique corporate culture and team motivation leading to more engaged and productive employees. “At least one recent study found that companies that effectively engage employees on sustainability issues outperform others by wide margins, demonstrating 2.6 times higher earnings-to-share growth rates” (Ceres 2010, p.72).
- **Social Sphere and Cultural Diversity:** Sustainable business practices can contribute towards the operating environment of companies by introducing social and cultural improvements in the business and the community.
- **Added Value:** Companies continuously aim to improve their perceived value by consumers and investors by adding value to their products, services, and internal operations. Sustainable activities can innovate new processes, achieve higher market share with new or existing sustainable products, and improve employee retention and motivation.
- **Increased Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** In today’s competitive marketplace, practicing CSR is important for corporate survival. Corporate ideology that adopts sustainable strategies can significantly increase the social responsibility performance of companies and project an image of accountability to shareholders, government regulators, and consumers.

- **Increased Consumer Knowledge and Awareness:** The detrimental impact of many environmental problems could be solved by increasing consumer knowledge and awareness (Onel and Mukherjee 2016). Sustainable business actions can provide information about the status of the ecosystem and direct individuals to join in the fight. Moving towards responsible consumption habits could be possible with the help of environmentally responsible companies.
- **Responsiveness:** Consumers who are environmentally sensitive constitute a growing segment of the market. These consumers wish to put their money where their values are, demanding that companies function sustainably while they are producing goods and services that they purchase (Ceres 2010). Companies that promptly respond to consumer demands by incorporating sustainable practices benefit from doing the right thing and capturing this market segment.
- **Corporate Reputation:** Corporate reputation is defined as “a collective representation of a firm’s past actions and results that describe a firm’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders” (Fombrun and Van Riel 1997, p.10). A good reputation can be a way of differentiating the company from competitors (Pollach 2015). Good intention based on eco-sensitivity can establish a good company reputation with the positive benefits of competitive advantage and increased profits resulting from gaining customer trust.
- **Building Consumer Trust and Loyalty:** Moving a step forward by undertaking green initiatives demonstrates the company level of involvement with society and genuine moral obligation to be socially responsible. These are crucial aspects that increase consumer trust and generate loyalty. A long-term loyal customer can be more profitable than a single-transaction customer (Myler 2016). Therefore, maintaining a larger percentage of loyal customers for a longer time can build on a revenue foundation that is more predictable and, eventually, more profitable.
- **Improving Investor Perception and Relations:** Today, investors are increasingly interested in business sustainability initiatives and, therefore, they demand companies to detail and calculate sustainability risks and opportunities in their financial disclosures. As company owners, long-term investors demand solid management, strong governance and long-term thinking about future growth potential. Sustainability indicators are one in which investors evaluate these conditions. Thus, they value those companies that integrate sustainability into their strategic planning (Ceres 2010).
- **Meeting Regulations:** In recent years, there have been a growing number of rules and regulations related to environmental and human health protection. This trend is expected to continue due to global stakeholder pressure as many governmental bodies are working diligently to reduce or eliminate harm caused by unsustainable business practices. Adopting a sustainable roadmap can help companies to meet these laws and regulations in advance without additional costs, such as fines for noncompliance that may be incurred once they become enacted.

10.4 The Impact of Business Environmental Sustainability on Public Health

By adopting advanced business strategies, such as CSR and TBL, companies are increasingly becoming oriented towards environmental sustainability. Among the list of benefits from this new way of thinking are the remarkable positive impacts on societal well-being. In this section, we unfold the public health implications of business environmental sustainability activities to battle waste (particularly, electronic waste) and harmful emissions, partnering to address specific health crisis, actions to address employee well-being, such as employee safety and health, natural habitat conservation, conflict resources, customer protection and safety, and sustainable fair trade in some multinational conglomerates.

10.4.1 *Corporate Action to Reduce Waste and Harmful Emissions*

Companies affect the well-being of the planet, humans, and all other living entities through the accumulation of waste by-products of manufacturing, natural resource overconsumption, and pollutants in the air, water, and soil. Today, a growing number of firms are developing “innovative, resource-efficient solutions and effective waste management systems” so that they can capture value in their business settings and contribute to sustainable development (Kurdve et al. 2015, p.304). We will cover two important areas of focus under this category: reduction of electronic waste (e-waste) and harmful emissions.

10.4.1.1 E-waste

Although electronic products satisfy many of our needs including 24/7 global connectivity, these innovations are being rapidly replaced with new products as soon as they are introduced into the marketplace. As consumers are not aware of the ultimate consequences of their purchase and usage behaviors, they easily replace outdated products but often update perfectly viable systems to obtain the latest bells and whistles. This combination of negative behavioral patterns—consumer overconsumption and corporate behavior of rapid turnover innovation, result in massive amounts of electronic products discarded into landfills or shipped overseas to lesser developed nations to handle as recycling materials. This problem, often referred to as e-waste (i.e., variety of discarded electrical or electronic equipment and component parts), pollutes the environment and is becoming the fastest growing waste stream issue in the world (Lundgren 2012). Projections indicate that the global e-waste generated by humans can reach 65.4 million tons in 2017 (Breivik et al. 2014).

The health implications of e-waste are devastating when humans are exposed to hazardous substances decaying in soil, leaching into water supplies, or becoming par-

ticulate matter in dust or food supplies (Norman et al. 2013). Whether the exposure is direct or indirect, the health and environmental effects from many of the individual hazardous substances often found in e-waste are well established from existing studies, including studies in children (Grant et al. 2013; Lundgren 2012). Health consequences from e-waste exposure are plausible and may include changes in thyroid function, altered cellular expression and function, adverse neonatal outcomes, cognitive and behavioral changes, and decreased lung function (Grant et al. 2013). Several known developmental neurotoxicants are found in e-waste, such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and brominated flame retardants, which can lead to irreversible cognitive deficits in children and behavioral and motor skill dysfunction across their lifespan (Chen et al. 2011). These inform the public regarding the significant priority that electronic companies must place on their environmental activities: (1) to reduce the amount of harmful materials in their products, and (2) their obligation to implement actions to reduce post-use electronics with appropriate recycling programs. As a result, a growing number of companies, as well as nonprofits and industry associations such as the International Electronics Manufacturing Initiative (<http://www.inemi.org/>), are working to reduce or eliminate the use of toxic chemicals in electronic products and replace them with safer alternatives. Furthermore, those companies that are in the business of e-waste operations are implementing programs for their workers and surrounding communities by providing a variety of protective and exposure reduction systems.

A good example of corporate responsible action to reduce e-waste comes from Dell Inc. In 2014, the company launched a closed-loop recycling program that provides the company with an opportunity to turn old plastics into new Dell products. Hewlett Packard (HP), another large electronics company along a similar vein, is at work to get poly vinyl chloride (PVC) out of their power cables and to eliminate halogenated substances (SDG 9). Apple Inc., the world's largest information technology company by revenue and total assets, has eliminated their lead usage, reduced brominated flame retardants inclusion and stopped PVC usage in their power cords. The company also has eliminated using dangerous solvents that are harmful to workers during manufacturing processes (Cernansky 2016) addressing SDGs 9 and 12.

Dr. Paul Mazurkiewicz, senior scientist at HP's laboratory in Colorado, states that the company is striving to the point where electronics fit very neatly into the circular economy (SDG 12). He explains that for this reason they are developing the concept of a fully edible computer which they believe can be achieved within a reasonable timeframe (Cernansky 2016; HP 2017).

10.4.1.2 Other Waste and Harmful Emissions

Though an important step, electronic companies and other large corporations are not fixated on a single sustainability problem such as e-waste. The multidimensional approach is clearly demonstrated by Apple Inc.—the American multinational technology company headquartered in California (Apple Inc. 2017a) that was ranked third on the 2016 Fortune 500 list (D&B Hoovers 2017) and 92nd on the 2017 Best

Corporate Citizens (CR 2017). This electronics giant's global sustainability and CSR activities lead the way on abating environmental conditions that impact public health by helping their partners to minimize carbon emissions, eliminate landfill waste, conserve water, and replace unsafe chemicals throughout their supply chain while switching over to renewable energy resources. Another sustainable strategy the company follows is the creation of a zero-waste manufacturing facility by partnering with local recycling facilities to develop better processes for separating and recycling waste. Apple is also using responsible sourcing by mapping their supply chains in detail to provide the shortest routes to conserve fuel and minimize emissions.

U.S.-based Johnson & Johnson (J&J) is also heavily focusing on the betterment of the environmental conditions by adopting a variety of sustainable strategies. Listed in the 2016 Dow Jones Sustainability North America Index, J&J is increasingly focusing on reducing their greenhouse emissions and controlling supply chains. They joined more than 80 companies nationwide in signing the American Business Act on Climate Pledge (Lane 2015), partnered with the RE100 initiative—which is a global and collaborative initiative of influential businesses that are committed to 100% renewable electricity (RE100 2015), and partnered with World Wildlife Fund (<https://www.worldwildlife.org/>) to launch the Corporate Renewable Energy Buyers Principles (<http://buyersprinciples.org/>) (SDG 17). The principles create opportunities to raise awareness of the challenges faced by corporate energy purchasers to improve energy efficiency including the application of cogeneration (on-site generation of electricity and recovery of the wasted heat to increase overall efficiencies); on-site renewable energy that will not produce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions; renewable electric purchases; and carbon trading and sequestration. Carbon trading is defined as buying and selling licenses by companies and governments to produce CO₂ (Cambridge 2017) while carbon sequestration is described as processes (natural or deliberate) by which CO₂ is either diverted from the sources of emission or eliminated from the atmosphere and collected in different natural environments, such as ocean, vegetation, sediment, and other geologic formations (USGS 2016) (SDGs 9,12, and 14). J&J has also made incremental targets to reduce carbon emissions by 20% by 2020 working toward the objective to supply the power for all their facilities with clean and renewable energy by 2050 reducing emissions by 80% (Richardson 2015, *para* 4) (SDGs 7 and 13).

10.4.2 Corporate Action to Address Employees' Well-being

With the intense growth of globalization, companies function in many different countries employing local citizens in each country they practice. For example, Apple Inc. is responsible for two million jobs only in the United States (Apple Inc. 2017a) and maintains about 500 retail stores in 19 countries (Dunn 2017) with millions of additional workers (SDG 8). Employees' working conditions, their well-being, and continued positive relations with them are important corporate functions that should be paid attention as a part of sustainable roadmap. How they regulate

employee working conditions and monitor their progress towards sustainable goals will be in the spotlight here.

10.4.2.1 Employee Working Conditions, Safety, and Health

Multinational corporations operate in many developing nations where the working conditions generally have poor health implications for employees. To fight against this worldwide problem, Apple is committed to a strict internal “Code of Conduct” that requires their suppliers to “adhere to high standards for safe working conditions, fair treatment of workers, and environmentally safe manufacturing” (Apple Inc. 2017b, *para 2*). Consequently, Apple holds a vast and influential role in which rigid adherence to work environment and production standards is a model for the appropriate level of corporate responsibility. Precautions to protect employees in the work environment through the implementation of ethical standards and recognition of child labor restrictions that afford educational opportunities demonstrate the many facets of sustainable business development that promote human health and well-being (SDGs 3, 4, 10, and 16). Similarly, LG Electronics (<http://www.lg.com/us>) also has internal programs to increase employees’ awareness of environmental and social issues demonstrating ethical company communication with their customers, employees, and partners to reach their competitive outcomes.

Like Apple, ensuring employee safety and health is a focal point for Toyota Motor Corporation, one of the largest car companies founded in 1937 with corporate headquarters in Japan employing about 325,000 people worldwide (Toyota 2017a) selling their vehicles in more than 170 countries that are manufactured worldwide in 53 overseas facilities in 28 different countries (Toyota 2017b, *para 1*). This company’s focus was reflected in the advice to its employees in 1957 when Eiji Toyoda, Senior Managing Director at the time, advised employees that a “safe work is the gate to all work” (Toyota 2012, *para 1*). The company has a three-pronged approach to safety and health which is the roadmap toward achieving zero accidents. The three prongs are (1) developing people, (2) risk management, and (3) environment and facility preparation (Toyota 2016, p.46). Developing people focuses on ensuring that each person can detect risks. Risk management promotes a safe management system and environment in which preparing the facility and the machinery for workplace comfort and safety has a high priority. Developing strong employee relationships by addressing these conditions can improve employee retention rates, their contentment, and productivity levels—all of which are important management aspects for companies that want to stay competitive in the market.

10.4.2.2 Human Rights

Employee related human rights like initiatives, such as those put in place by Apple and Toyota, have also been successfully adopted by Costco Wholesale Corporation, the second-largest retailer in the U.S. behind Walmart (Bloomberg 2013), ranking number

16 on the Fortune Global 500 list (Fortune 2017). Costco has a global supplier code of conduct which prohibits human rights abuses in the supply chain. They specifically outlaw practices such as human trafficking, physical abuse of workers, confiscation of passports and worker documentation, unsafe work environments, failure to pay adequate wages, excessive and/or forced overtime, illegal child labor, and many other similar practices (Costco 2017a, *para* 1–2). Suppliers are contractually bound to follow the code of conduct, ensure that their sub-suppliers are also in compliance, and are subject to third-party facility audits for product quality and employee safety. This kind of supplier code of conduct has positive implications in other nations establishing that the company does not and will not support suppliers who violate human rights abuses.

10.4.2.3 Keeping Track: Corporate Monitoring and Reporting

Planning and implementing measurement goals are an important aspect of achieving corporate sustainability business objectives. Thus, monitoring and reporting must be embedded into the vision statements, mission statements, and corresponding goals of each company. For example, Apple administers yearly progress reports and assessments on several categories being monitored within the company based on a 100-point scale corresponding to their Code of Conduct. Apple reports indicate compliance rates of 85 or above for these labor and human rights, human health, and environmental indicators (Apple 2017b, *para* 4) while maintaining a profitable business and an ongoing interest to act on community needs by providing employee education, support, and training.

Apple conducted comprehensive site audits of 1.2 million employees at 705 facilities in 2016—the largest in company history, reporting working hours compliance in their manufacturing plants at 98% while reaching a first-time milestone at 100% UL Environment Zero-Waste to Landfill validation for all final assembly sites in China. UL Environment is a business unit of Underwriter’s Laboratory (<http://industries.ul.com/environment/zero-waste>). However, the supplier audit unveiled one instance of underage employment in China and bonded labor at another location in the United Arab Emirates. Apple required the Chinese supplier provide the underage worker safe passage home and to continue paying their wages while the worker participated in an education program. The subcontractor who withheld employee passports, provided lower-than-standard meal allowances, and held the employee accountable to unacceptable rules in the living quarters was removed from the subcontractor supply chain (SDGs 8, 10, and 16).

10.4.3 Partnering to Target Specific Public Health Crisis

Some corporations may build partnerships with other organizations to overcome widespread and challenging human health problems, such as pandemics or epidemics, as a part of their CSR and sustainability actions. For example, Apple has partnered with RED group (RED Group [n.d.](#))—a nonprofit organization that is striving

to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa (RED Group 2017). The company sells those products under this program named the “RED line” (e.g., Apple Watch Band, iPod Touch, iPod Nano, iPad Air 2 Smart Case, iPhone 6S case, and iPhone 6S Plus) in which a portion of profits gained is donated to the RED group’s Global Fund in the fight to cure the HIV epidemic in Africa (SDGs 3 and 17). RED attributed Apple with \$100 million in donations from product sales (RED Group n.d.). Through these and other proactive movements, Apple incorporates an element of civic engagement by using their large customer and economic power base to help those who are in need.

10.4.4 Natural Habitat Conservation

Natural habitat conservation is another important activity that many corporations are practicing as one element of their sustainable business strategy demonstrating positive impact on human health, well-being, and suggesting that healthy environments elicit healthy members of society. Toyota is currently using their worldwide brand awareness and strong economic capacity to improve living conditions for people, plants, and wildlife. This well-known giant in car production was ranked number eight on the 2016 Fortune Global 500 list, right before Apple (Fortune 2017) and the number 1 motor vehicle company for the third consecutive year on the Fortune’s “World’s Most Admired Companies” list (Toyota 2017c).

Toyota utilizes integration with the natural surroundings as a major sustainable objective at production sites that house their global manufacturing facilities. Some of their unique practices are impacting environmental conservation in Belgium and Brazil supporting projects to protect or increase the population of certain endangered or threatened species such as Macaws, preventing desertification and conducting reforestation in China, promoting environmental awareness through farming in Korea, and maintaining the ecological value of self-sustaining principles in the United Kingdom (Toyota 2017d).

10.4.5 Conflict Resources

Toyota expanded the local concept of workplace safety and comfort in 2012 when they invited their suppliers to engage in responsible material procurement. They followed this announcement with a full-scale investigation in 2013 to eliminate suppliers who utilized conflict resources—minerals or other materials mined from a war zone, or one experiencing civil unrest, in which items are sold to support that conflict. Toyota probed more deeply into this problem in 2015 by examining the global supply chain of their tier one suppliers to ensure that they were not unwittingly contributing to social unrest (Toyota 2017f).

Similarly, LG Electronics Inc., South Korean multinational electronics company, designs energy efficient products that limit the use of conflict minerals and hazardous components, and includes more recoverable materials in their products (LG Electronics 2017). Further, Lenovo Group Ltd., the Chinese multinational technology company, continuously works on life cycle management, uses more environmentally sensitive materials in products, puts together programs to promote product and parts recycling, reduces waste to landfills, and uses recycled post-consumer plastic in new designs (Lenova 2017)

10.4.6 Customer Protection and Safety

There are regulations, laws, and standards in place to protect the public against unforeseen risks associated with consumer products. In the U.S., Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) administers and enforces these federal laws (CPSC 2017a). When companies do not comply with these regulations and laws, they may see financial and reputational damages to the company. Children's robes sold on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), Inc. in August 2017, for example, were recalled by Belle Investment for failure to meet federal flammability standards posing a risk of children burn injuries (CPSC 2017b).

Some of the corporations who are strongly oriented towards sustainability are aiming to go a step forward in providing customer safety rather than minimally addressing consumer safety standards. An important human health implication of Toyota's business sustainability action is related to their strong customer orientation. Thus, their overarching goal as a prominent manufacturer of vehicles is to achieve zero casualties from traffic accidents in two primary ways: (1) development of safe vehicles, and (2) road safety education for drivers and pedestrians. Therefore, Toyota promotes an integrated three-part system for safety involving people, vehicles, and traffic environments. Consequently, the company has conducted traffic safety education activities continuously since the 1960s (Toyota 2017e). Viewing this activity from the business perspective, this kind of customer-focused business sustainability strategy is important to building a strong corporate image and improving customer value and trust.

10.4.7 Sustainable and Fair Trade

Global value chains of corporations are linking different countries to each other resulting in an increasing emphasis on global international trade. Although growth in trade may offer major opportunities for many countries, a growth-only focus causes some challenges for achieving sustainable development as well as meeting the SDGs (UNEP 2015). Countries that adopt sustainable trade and green global value chains can prosper and grow sustainably with the help of appropriate

environmental policy, social policy, and incentives. "Avenues for making trade more sustainable include a focus on enhanced production capacity, use and exchange of environmentally sound technologies, goods and services, increased resource efficiency, and reduced environmental and resource impacts through more sustainable consumption, production and life-cycle approaches" (UNEP 2015, p.2).

Starbucks Company, an American coffee company and coffeehouse chain, has grown to more than 25,000 stores in over 75 countries since 1971 (Starbucks 2017a). Today, the company is listed in the 2016 Dow Jones Sustainability North America Index and is committed to buying coffee beans from 100% ethical sources in partnership with Conservation International (Starbucks 2017b). The company takes a holistic approach to ethically source high-quality coffee using responsible purchasing practices, supporting loans for farmers, and collaborating with forest conservation programs. This kind of ethical sourcing helps foster improvements in sustainable working conditions for farmers and a stable regional natural climate (SDGs 8, 11–13, and 15).

Costco Wholesale Corporation also practices fair trade. This American company is committed to preserving and making a positive impact on the environment with the intention to benefit everyone everywhere. They work towards this by paying attention to how their products are sourced, packaged, and understanding how these products may affect the environment. For instance, they are a member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) (<http://www.rspo.org/>), a product from palm trees used in various products (e.g., soap, cooking oil), promoting the use of suppliers who have been designated RSPO-certified palm oil because they are using responsible agricultural practices. They also are partnered with IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative, Winrock International, and Cargill to support palm oil smallholders where they plan to develop a program to manage peat lands in a sustainable manner, increase market access, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Costco also participates in other product certification programs, such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified teak (Newman 2017) and the Rainforest Alliance (<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>) for rose growers (COSTCO 2017b) signifying their dedication to abate deforestation practices, protect ecosystems and wildlife habitats, conserve water and soil, promote decent and safe working conditions, and ensure that the farms are good neighbors to rural communities and wild lands.

10.5 Management Tools to Assess Sustainable Business Ventures and Corporate Status

Assessing an organization without standard metrics is a task without reward. However, there are numerous nonprofit organizations that examine corporate sustainability activity across the globe. They provide management tools from which to assess progress and performance of corporate social responsibility and to track the perceived character and status of an organization.

10.5.1 Corporate Social Responsibility and Performance Reporting

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)—a U.S.-based, global nonprofit organization providing guidelines for reporting on corporate social responsibility and performance (e.g., environmental, social, and governance) has a reputation as one of the best guidelines because of the universal application of their metrics to all organizations (O'Rourke 2004). Since the inception of the organization in 1997 in Boston, GRI has refined and improved their guideline through several modifications with contributions from business, civil society, and the labor movement since G1—the first version, debuted as the first global framework for comprehensive sustainability in 2000 (GRI n.d.). In 2011, GRI's Sustainability Disclosure Database was launched to catalog all sustainability reports (GRI and non-GRI based) followed by the release of *The Reporting Principles, Standard Disclosures and Implementation Manual* with the fourth generation of Guidelines, G4, in 2013. This further supports the preparation of sustainability reports by organizations of any size or sector. Finally, in October 2016, GRI launched the first sustainability reporting global standards. With the help of GRI Standards, organizations can publicly report on their social, environmental and economic impacts, and by so doing, demonstrate their contribution towards sustainable development. (GRI n.d.).

The world's largest database of corporate sustainability reports is provided as a part of the United Nations Global Compact—a voluntary initiative that offers a policy framework for organizing and developing corporate sustainability strategies. Adopted in 2005, the initiative drives business awareness and is a platform to organizations encouraging innovative sustainability actions and partnerships with variety of stakeholders (UN Global Compact 2017a). The UN Global Compact's multi-year strategy needs voluntary commitment by the member corporate Chief Executive Officer to implement universal sustainability principles that contribute to achieving the SDGs by 2030 (UN Global Compact 2017b). These collaborative efforts hold promise as “the GRI, the United Nations Global Compact and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) have joined forces to mobilize the private sector as a key player in achieving our world's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” (GRI 2014, *para* 1).

10.5.2 Establishing Organizational Status

Assessing the organizational status of companies in terms of their sustainable engagement is made possible by determining their position in the marketplace using a variety of available rankings. One prominent initiative is the RepTrak model for analyzing the reputations of companies and institutions—best known via the Forbes-published Global RepTrak 100, the world's largest study of corporate reputations (Strauss 2017). The Reputation Institute, a reputation management consulting firm

founded in Boston in 1997, conducts an annual study and identifies the CSR reputation of the world's 100 most highly regarded and familiar global companies presented annually as the CSR Global RepTrak® 100 list (Reputation Institute 2017). The study covers 15 different countries and produces a list of the best corporate citizens by ranking them based on their weighted averages in relation to their activities on the environment, climate change, human rights, employee relations, corporate governance, philanthropy, and financial scores. Information about the company embedded in the results can become a model for other organizations to emulate.

A similar list comes from Corporate Knights—a Toronto-based magazine and research firm. Since 2005, the firm annually publishes the Global 100 that is a list of the world's most sustainable companies (Corporate Knights 2017). “Using publicly available data, Corporate Knights rates large firms on 14 key measures, evaluating their management of resources, finances and employees” (Kauflin 2017, *para* 1). The Global 100 process includes the conduct of four screening processes beginning each October 1 that establishes a short list followed by analysis of key performance indicators across global industry classification (GICs) standards until top performers emerge as the Global 100. “The Global 100 is calculated by Solactive, the German index provider” (Corporate Knights 2016, *para* 2).

Many corporations cite another important index in their CSR related websites—the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI), representing the top ten percent of the world's largest 2500 companies based on their economic, social, and environmental sustainability performance (DJSI World 2017, *para* 1). The methodology encompasses a variety of criteria, such as climate change strategies, energy consumption, corporate governance, human resources, knowledge management, and stakeholder relations. The index was launched as the first global sustainability benchmark for corporations in 1999 (RobecoSAM 2017, *para* 1). The DJSI North America Index, on the other hand, comprises North American sustainability leaders and represents the top twenty percent of the largest 600 North American companies with the same criteria of economic, environmental and social performance (DJSI North America 2017, *para* 1). DJSI North America Index comes from one of the world's largest providers of financial market indices, S&P Dow Jones Indices, and RobecoSAM—a sustainable investment specialist (<http://www.robecosam.com/>).

10.5.3 The Absence of “Best Companies” Addressing SDG Objectives

Notable is the absence of a single major corporation in the list of a variety of “Best Companies” that is adequately confronting issues identified by the SDGs, such as climate change and resource scarcity. When we examine the lists, we conclude that across multiple areas, such as supply chain management to carbon emissions reductions, a small but growing number of companies rank in the top tiers in terms of their performance. Therefore, identifying those companies that are genuinely working on

the sustainability initiatives by establishing best practices as well as ingraining sustainable strategies into their operations is important. However, the key question would be, “Are these best business practices able to capture and work towards resolving the world’s prominent SDGs?” Given the nonexclusionary supposition that all companies, regardless of size, can contribute to the SDGs and that the scale and scope of the global goals are unprecedented (UN Global Compact 2017c, *para* 1) thus warranting maximum participation for success, the next key question rests on, “Which companies demonstrate leadership and best practices towards achieving SDGs?” Answering these questions can help us identify the current areas of focus in today’s marketplace and will provide governments, organizations, corporations, and policy makers a direction towards a sustainable future. For this purpose, we will look at the best sustainable business ventures that are the leaders of many aspects of sustainable initiatives and have aligned their actions with the SDGs.

10.6 Corporate Business Ventures That Align with SDGs

An appropriate direction for corporate sustainable business initiatives is to link objectives to existing protocols established in the UN SDGs. According to the PwC Global (2015), compared to the general population, SDG awareness amongst the business community is almost three times higher (33% citizens vs. 92% businesses aware of SDGs). Although this is promising, linking and identifying how corporate objectives meet the protocols established in the UN SDGs recommendations with their current sustainability strategies is important to resolving the environmental conditions that impact public health and the ecosystem.

Global sustainability benchmarks and independent third-party sustainability (or CSR) rankings of companies underwent review to identify various corporate sustainability activities and their alignments with relevant SDGs. For this purpose, we used two lists: (1) 100 Best Corporate Citizens compiled annually by Corporate Responsibility Magazine (CR 2017) from metrics in seven data categories with 260 data elements in the CR Magazine Corporate Citizenship database (CR 2016), and (2) Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI World 2017), representing the top ten percent of the world’s largest companies based on their economic, social, and environmental sustainability performance. The following demonstrates how several corporations have successfully embedded the SDGs into their corporate objectives and strategies (Table 10.1).

10.6.1 Campbell Soup Company

The Campbell Soup Company is an American producer of canned soups and related services with manufacturing operations in six countries and products sold in 120 countries. The company employs more than 18,000 people and was ranked tenth in

Table 10.1 Corporate strategies aligning with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals^a

	Goal brief	Objective	Company
1	No poverty	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	All listed companies provide jobs
2	Zero hunger	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture	Campbell Soup Company; General Mills, Inc.
3	Good health and well-being	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Apple Inc.; Campbell Soup Company; Clorox Company; General Mills, Inc.; Hess Corporation
4	Quality education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all	Apple Inc.; Clorox Company
5	Gender equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Apple Inc.; General Mills, Inc.
6	Clean water and sanitation	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Apple Inc.; Campbell Soup Company; Clorox Company; General Mills, Inc.; Hess Corporation
7	Affordable and clean energy	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all	Apple Inc.; General Mills, Inc.; Hess Corporation; Johnson & Johnson
8	Decent work and economic growth	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Apple Inc.; Campbell Soup Company; Clorox Company; General Mills, Inc.; Hess Corporation; Nike, Inc.; Starbucks
9	Industry, innovation, and infrastructure	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation	Apple Inc.; Hess Corporation; Nike, Inc.; Hewlett Packard; Johnson & Johnson
10	Reduced inequalities	Reduce inequality within and among countries	Apple Inc.; General Mills, Inc.
11	Sustainable cities and communities	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Apple Inc.; Hess Corporation; Starbucks
12	Responsible consumption and production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Apple Inc.; Campbell Soup Company; General Mills, Inc.; Hewlett Packard; Johnson & Johnson; Starbucks; Nike, Inc.
13	Climate action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Apple Inc.; General Mills, Inc.; Hess Corporation; Johnson & Johnson; Nike, Inc.; Starbucks
14	Life below water	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development	Johnson & Johnson; Hess Corporation

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

	Goal brief	Objective	Company
15	Life on land	Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	Apple Inc.; Campbell Soup Company, Hess Corporation; Inc.; Johnson & Johnson; Starbucks
16	Peace, justice, and strong institutions	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels	Apple Inc.; Clorox Company; General Mills, Inc.
17	Partnerships for the goals	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	Apple Inc., Clorox Company; General Mills; Johnson & Johnson; Nike, Inc.

Source: *United Nations 2017

Notes: This table was created based on the chapter discussion content and company listing on one of the two indices (i.e., CR 2017 or DJSI World 2017). The chart is intended as a representative roadmap of sustainable actions and does not reflect an inclusive assessment of all activity

the annual 100 Best Corporate Citizens List in 2016 and fifth in 2017. Ranking improvements are very important for companies because progress reflects determination, consistency, and advances in CSR activities. Over the past seven years the company was named to the North American index and six times in the World index.

Campbell's sustainability actions focus on reducing energy and water use (SDG 6) and waste generation, increasing recycling and sustainable packaging (SDG 9), practicing sustainable agriculture by addressing the issues of soil health, pesticide use, deforestation, biodiversity, and water use to both improve human health and end hunger (SDGs 2, 3, and 15). They address these goals by optimizing supply chain operations and using their 2008 product portfolio as a baseline to ultimately reduce their environmental footprint by half in relation to food production measured in per tonnes (Campbell 2017). Since 2008, Campbell has reduced their water use by 17.8%, energy consumption by 15.6% and greenhouse gas emissions by 24.3% (Campbell 2017, p.40). The company has targeted the goal of reducing energy use by 35% and sourcing 40% of electricity from renewable or alternative energy sources by 2020. According to Campbell's 2016 CSR report, their global recycling rate is up to 86% and they plan to increase that to 95% within the next three years and have a strategy to derive 100% of their global packaging materials from either renewable, recyclable, or recycled content (Campbell 2017, pp.41–42).

The company also pays great attention to the rise in chronic diseases and takes product related actions in safety, quality and transparency to provide consumers with many healthy product alternatives (e.g., low salt), labeling foodstuffs with genetically modified organisms (GMO), ingredient safety, and extending packaged fresh options. As reported in the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans “rates of chronic diseases related to poor-quality diet and physical inactivity have increased, with half of all US adults having one or more preventable, diet-related

chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and overweight and obesity” (Campbell 2017, p.24). Thus, Campbell’s goals are to continue to limit negative nutrients and introduce positive nutritional benefits to become more health conscious for their consumers. Their product changes and increasingly transparent farm to table approach aligns with SDG 12 in terms of public information and providing healthy product options that was rewarded by \$2.9 billion of total gross sales of healthy foods (i.e., foods with nutritional profiles satisfying the criteria set by the FDA and other global organizations) in 2016 (Campbell 2017, p.26).

SDG 8 is met by Campbell through their inclusive approach to ethical business practices and sustainability activities where employees are actively engaged in the advancement of company Environmental Sustainability Policy. Sustainability Leadership Teams are called upon to observe environmental performance and active participation becomes embedded into the corporate culture resulting in positive employee morale, increased productivity, and improved employee retention. The company also focuses on a variety of human rights activities, diversity, and inclusion to better meet and more accurately reflect the changing demographics in society. Campbell achieves this by building awareness and capability through specific programs and engaging leaders, talents, and creating community. They also encourage the health and safety of not only their employees but each of their stakeholders as well by incorporating global safety standards, technological advances, and communication to increase positive social impacts.

10.6.2 Nike, Inc.

Nike, Inc. is an American multinational corporation engaging in the design, development, manufacturing, and worldwide marketing and sales of footwear, apparel, equipment, accessories, and services. The company is known for its innovative capacities and is now increasing its focus on sustainable initiatives. Mark Parker, President and CEO of Nike, Inc. outlines this effort, “At Nike, we believe it is not enough to adapt to what the future may bring—we’re creating the future we want to see through sustainable innovation” (Nike, Inc. 2017). The company ranks number 29 in the Global Best Corporate Citizens list of 2017 with a weighted average score of 88.57 (CR 2017).

Nike reaffirms commitment to environmental and social targets in their new sustainable business report reflecting the company’s efforts to create a new business model that enables low-carbon and closed-loop operations (Nike, Inc. 2016). Consequently, reduction of carbon emissions to a level that supports the global carbon budget is their priority and rests on the development and adoption of a business system named “low-carbon growth economy” for product and business model innovations. This company objective aligns with the SDG 13 to combat the impact of climate change. The company sustainable initiatives support the transition from linear to circular business models that move towards closed-loop products by using

fewer resources, better materials, and assembly methods allowing ease of reuse in new products. Because Nike considers every stage of the product life cycle including the end of a product's life, they build resilient infrastructures and create sustainable industry practice that foster innovation in line with SDGs 9 and 12, respectively.

The company has identified and focused on two important responsibilities: (1) environmental responsibility that includes chemistry, energy, GHG emissions, water use, nonrenewable resource depletion, and (2) socioeconomic responsibility that includes community impact, employment, excessive overtime, labor compliance, occupational health and safety, total compensation, and workforce development (SDG 8). The company pursues ongoing improvement in these areas and continues to monitor emerging issues. To deliver on their strategy, they also recognize that they must integrate sustainability throughout their business and external partnerships reflecting SDG 17.

10.6.3 Hess Corporation

Founded in 1920, Hess Corporation is an energy company that explores and produces natural gas, oil, and fossil fuel resources. Headquartered in the U.S., Hess was ranked number 26th and 51st in the Global Best Corporate Citizens list in 2016 and 2017, respectively. The company has earned a place on the DJSI North America for seven consecutive years between 2009 and 2015 (Hess 2017a). Hess reports according to the GRI framework and the requirements set forth by several organizations such as the 2010 International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, American Petroleum Industry, and the Oil and Gas Industry Guidance on Voluntary Sustainability Reporting. The company focuses on reducing water use, energy consumption, GHG emissions, and the use of pollutants. Activities providing tangential support to these high-level priorities include implementing spill prevention initiatives, conducting biodiversity screenings during site evaluation for operations, and using new drilling techniques to minimize environmental impacts.

The Hess CSR is centered on stakeholder engagement, social risk and impact management, and strategic social investments that facilitate direct and indirect local benefits. Hess demonstrates their global reach in two projects—the agricultural program in Equatorial Guinea and Wau Kite safety in Malaysia. In Equatorial Guinea, Hess provides equipment, financial and technical support, as well as guidance and training tools to locals with the aim of creating two small farming cooperatives for employment, decreasing rural flight and improving the quality of life (SDG 3). With the second project, Hess assists with the annual Kelantan International Kite Festival to increase safety awareness concerning helicopters used in oil and gas operations (SDG 11).

The company has a strong position on climate change resulting from rising greenhouse gas emissions and global temperatures that pose risks to society and ecosystems. Access to affordable energy is an important issue for Hess and for this reason the company is a proponent of cost-effective policy responses that balance mitigation, adaptation and societal priorities (Hess 2017b). The company is eco-sensitive and

contributes to the resolution of the world's growing energy needs with variety of projects, such as gas capture and recovery in North Dakota, transparency measures, and Hess greenhouse gas inventory protocol. They continuously monitor, measure, and reduce their carbon footprint (Hess 2017c) addressing SDG 7 for sustainable energy.

10.6.4 General Mills, Inc.

General Mills, Inc. is a U.S.-based company that has been making brand name food products, such as Cheerios, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, Haagen-Dazs and Cascadian Farm, for customers for over 150 years. The company is located throughout six continents in more than 100 different countries (General Mills 2014) providing over 39,000 jobs and careers to these communities. In 2016, the company's global sales were over 16.6 billion, and in 2017, the company was ranked number 19 in the annual 100 Best Corporate Citizens List with the number one ranking in the human rights category.

General Mills exercises its CSR by focusing on four main categories: health and wellness, sustainability, workplace, and community. Within the health and wellness category General Mills has a commitment to provide convenient, nutritious food (SDG 2) and when combined with diet and exercise this can lead to a healthier life for all (SDG 3). The company promotes environmentally sustainable and socially responsible practices across the entire value chain with the aim of protecting critical resources for the business (SDG 12). There are six main sustainability goals of the company: climate change, sustainable sourcing, water stewardship, human rights, animal welfare, and production operation environmental performance representing key SDGs 6, 7, and 13 to manage resources, sustainable energy, and climate change.

Within the workplace category, General Mills create a safe, ethical, diverse, and inclusive environment laying a foundation for their employees to prosper. For example, General Mills supports all forms and dimensions of diversity, not limited to race, gender, or sexual orientation but also aiming to include other aspects of diversity such as values, preference, beliefs, and communication styles, which is very well aligned with the SDG 8. Lastly, the goals from the community approach are to strengthen communities by increasing food security across the globe by advancing sustainable agriculture to address SDG Goal 2 to end hunger.

The major reason for General Mill's outstanding human rights ranking was because of the Policy on Human Rights launched in 2015. The company believes that societies, economies, and businesses thrive when human rights are protected and respected. Thus, the respect for human rights is a fundamental practice for the company is guided by the principles of human rights, labor, the environment and anti-corruption of United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). General Mills has been a signatory to the UNGC since 2008 aligning with SDG Goals 8 and 16 promoting inclusive employment, accountability, and justice. Finally, the company has also embraced the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles (General Mills 2015) to address gender equality in SDG Goal 5.

10.6.5 *Clorox Company*

Founded in 1913, the Clorox Company is a multinational consumer, professional product manufacturer and marketer with approximately 8000 employees worldwide. The company operates in over 25 countries and territories with 2016 reported sales of \$5.8 billion. The company is most famously known for their bleach and cleaning products such as Pine-Sol, Fresh Step cat litter, Brita water filtration systems, and Burt's Bees (Clorox Company 2017a). The company was ranked number 12 in the annual 100 Best Corporate Citizens List of 2017 with their best ranking in the climate change category at number 10.

The Clorox Company has a variety of CSR initiatives in place, such as the Safe Water Project, Disaster Relief program, and Public Health education. The Clorox Safe Water Project addresses the issue of unsafe drinking water in Peru (Rosenberg 2017). Through this project, Clorox has donated bleach to 21 different communities in Peru and provided over 100 million liters of safe drinking water annually to more than 25,000 people. The project is a two-step effort with bleach dispensers for water treatment and education sessions to the local communities to teach them the importance of bleach and disinfecting water. Also, in times of disasters, the Clorox company partners with the American Red Cross to provide financial support and product donations (American Red Cross 2017). For example, in recent years, Clorox has donated truckloads of products including Clorox liquid bleach and Glad trash bags to those experiencing flooding (e.g., Texas, Mississippi, South Carolina, Georgia, and Missouri) and the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador. Clorox products reduce virus outbreaks that are common after natural disasters, battle Ebola in West Africa, and Zika outbreaks in the Americas. The company leads education programs establishing methods to use bleach to stay healthy and promote public health. Cumulatively, these efforts by the Clorox Company reflect the SDG Goals 3, 4, and 6 ensuring healthy lives, providing opportunities for life-long learning, and aid in water resource management, respectively.

Clorox demonstrates their strong emphasis on employee relations by matching employee donations and contributing to their volunteer organizations through the employee-led GIFT program. In 2015, Clorox employees donated 123,053 hours of their time to hundreds of nonprofits and raised a little less than 5 million dollars to support more than 3500 nonprofit organizations with the matching contribution from the foundations. Almost half of the of Clorox employees annually (Clorox Company 2017b).

Many companies are “learning that providing employees with opportunities to participate in volunteer projects for the community can build the employees’ connection to their organization. Such volunteer projects enhance the employees’ pride in improving the community, teamwork in working with their coworkers, and pride in their employer” (Liebowitz 2010, p.54). This is also a good way of improving the awareness and educate the local communities on important sustainability issues. Two of the SDGs align well with these types of initiatives, SDG 8, “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” and SDG 17, “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.”

10.7 Conclusion

“Business should be neither harmful to nor a parasite on society, but purely a positive contributor to the wellbeing of the society” (Garriga and Mele 2004, p.62). Following this insight, sustainable business development has prompted a notable shift in the way emerging and developed nations extend their business goals to include concern for the global ecosystem and human development guided by the UN SDGs. The adoption of business practices that include CSR and TBL to profit objectives are important to building public trust and achieving corporate status. This is especially critical when corporations respond to consumer demand to advance material acquisition and processing methods that improve public health.

Consequently, these activities also position responsible corporations in the marketplace generating a loyal customer base. Thus, the effect of sustainable business practices presents an opportunity to address global environmental conditions, such as carbon emissions, e-waste, and natural habitat conservation while progressing business objectives. Key aspects of incorporating a socially responsible plan include understanding the impact of business environmental sustainability on public health and utilizing management tools to assess sustainable business ventures and corporate status. Another prominent aspect of this chapter is the recommendation to establish business ventures that align with SDGs as demonstrated by several case examples. The “common good” approach founded on the UN SDGs may be the best path to achieve the betterment of society across the globe.

Glossary

Carbon sequestration Processes (natural or deliberate) by which CO₂ is either diverted from the sources of emission or eliminated from the atmosphere and collected in different natural environments, such as ocean, vegetation, sediment, and other geologic formations (USGS 2016).

Carbon trading Buying and selling licenses by companies and governments to produce CO₂.

Circular economy System with the objective of reducing energy and material consumption in which the resource inputs and waste generated by production can be regenerated minimizing resource depletion through a system of multiple strategies for reutilization.

Conflict resources Natural resources mined in a zone experiencing social or civil unrest where profits are used to support continued aggression.

Equity An ethical and balanced attention to a problem, product, plan, or service.

Feasibility Realistic; acceptable viable options.

Financing Providing monetary support for a project, plan or product.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) A global independent nonprofit standards organization providing guidelines for reporting on corporate social responsibility aspects and performance (e.g., human rights, climate change, corruption).

Halogenated The appearance of chemicals called halogens (e.g., bromine, chlorine, fluorine) in other substances, such as carbon, that have a long-term environmental impact due to their characteristic stable structure; highly restricted use in production, banned in most countries.

Shareholder An entity (person or company) that owns a company stock share.

Stakeholder All those impacted by an organization's activities including businesses, competitors, government, community members, environment, and others.

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