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Human resources management: supporting sustainable business

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Sustainable HRM (human resources management) is a combination of two elements: (1) **leveraging HR (human resources) tools and processes to support sustainable business objectives**, and (2) **performing HR sustainably**, that is, in a way which creates an organisational culture that is ethical, respectful and inclusive, invests in the development of employees and empowers them to engage at the maximum level of their capabilities (Cohen *et al.* 2012).

This chapter will help students understand the roles of HR teams in supporting sustainable business and the responsibility of HR teams to perform HR sustainably.

The learning outcomes of this chapter are:

- Students will be able to describe how HR supports sustainable business and the connection between HRM and sustainability
- Students will be able to understand examples of the way HR practices affect society and possible ways to integrate social and environmental considerations into

HR processes in order to improve the social and environmental impacts of business

- Students will be able to know where to find more information and examples of good practice in the area of sustainable HRM.
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Sustainable HR as part of sustainable business

Leveraging HR Tools and processes to support sustainable business is the extension of the HR business partnership role which the HR function has been aspiring to fill in the past decade or so. Rather than HR being the ‘voice of the employees’ or the ‘instrument of management’, or both, the more precise role of HR is to enhance organisational capability, by understanding what the business needs and what people, knowledge, skills and culture need to be in place to deliver those needs. As more and more companies today adopt strategies for sustainable business, so the HR understanding of how their role as not only business partner, but as sustainable business partner, needs to evolve. This of course assumes that HR understands what sustainable business is and how it differs in approach from business as usual as we have always known it.

The key attributes that distinguish sustainable business from business-as-usual are acceptance of **accountability for impacts on people, society and the environment**, and a willingness to **engage with stakeholders**, both internal and external, to ensure both an understanding of their expectations and an assessment of the way business impacts their lives in a range of different ways. Every business has an impact, whether it is a company which is small or large, local or global, private or public. (By the way, this applies not only to for-profit companies: this is equally relevant for not-for-profit organisations, public agencies and even governments.) By employing people, serving customers, erecting buildings, inhabiting offices, using transportation, manufacturing products, developing and marketing a product range or providing a service—every company has an impact on those around them.

In determining the appropriate business strategies to deliver growth and profit the bottom line, sustainable thinking demands consideration of both social and environmental needs, in addition to economic needs. Many such strategies require the active participation of the HR function in order to engage employees in their pursuit. By erecting a new manufacturing plant in accordance with 'green' principles and using, say, renewable energy sources such as solar power, a plant will both be more cost-efficient through the long term and have a much lower negative impact on climate change, avoiding the use of carbon-intensive fossil fuels. Undertaking such activity requires employees who have the skills and knowledge to design and implement green practices. Research has shown that by investing in employee health and wellbeing, beyond the minimum requirements of law, a business will reap the benefits of improved employee motivation and productivity while contributing to a healthier and more vital society (HBR 2010). By investing in community development activities, a business will make reputation gains which will serve its long-term ability to attract and retain investors and customers, while strengthening the fabric of the local community from which it also draws resources.

Sustainability is based on fundamental elements of **good governance, ethical conduct and compliance with the law**, while going beyond compliance with the law to generate additional opportunities to mitigate business risk, enhance business reputation and take advantage of new business developments. In adopting a sustainability strategy, companies contribute not only to the sustainability of the planet but also to their own sustainability as businesses. This approach is changing the way businesses develop strategy, take decisions, execute processes, engage with employees, consumers, external pressure groups and communities, and respond to the diverse expectations of all these groups in this fast-moving, transparent age of business. This requires not only a strategy for sustainable business but also a **culture** that supports strategy delivery.

The fundamental ability to deliver a strong sustainable business strategy lies with a company's leadership and is embodied in its **values, culture, capabilities and communications**. This means embedding a **sustainability-enabled culture** in all parts of the organisation. Business leaders need to ensure that employees, the group which most influences a business's results, and which is most directly influenced by the

employment practices of the business, understands, engages with and proactively advances the sustainability agenda.

The broader HR role in sustainability

HR teams are **critical partners** in making this happen. This means that HR must understand and engage with the new rules of business sustainability and align its support accordingly (Cohen 2010). For example, in a business which wishes to develop a new line of products marketed to women, a culture of **women's empowerment** within the business must be present for optimal results to be achieved. It can be argued that selling to women requires an understanding of women's needs and habits in relation to a particular product range. It is extremely challenging, if not impossible, for a business to succeed in marketing to women if women are not valued and empowered in the workplace. Helping to create **an inclusive culture** is a key role of the HR function which, in this case, can support the achievement of specific business objectives. Not only this, but there is a ripple effect in the local community when women are empowered (WEP 2012).

Another example might be the process of achieving energy efficiencies as businesses work towards being part of a low-carbon economy. Many companies have found that the formation of '**green teams**' in the business assists in generating awareness of energy savings, and recycling of waste among employees. Although they may be formed from volunteers within the business, green teams still require a framework of operation and a set of guidelines for ensuring they both deliver results as well as engage employees at different levels. In some cases, this might require specific training of employees, including green team leaders, or a broader communications process within the company. These are the tools that the HR function can provide and, in fact, HR is best positioned to provide such team-working frameworks and processes. Green teams not only help a company to reduce its costs and environmental impacts, but also engage employees in activities which enable them to experience additional purposeful contribution in the workplace. This has been correlated to increased retention, motivation and engagement (IESE 2013).

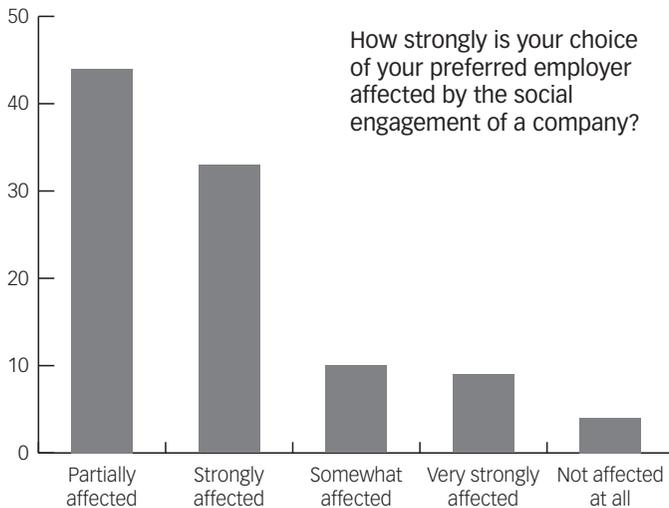
Not only this, but there is again a ripple effect in the community. As employees learn the benefits of **environmental efficiencies in the workplace**, they may take this learning home and apply similar practices in their homes. This saves them money and also reduces the environmental burden of private energy consumption and waste, etc.

Further, in today's 'war for talent', existing and potential **employees are searching for meaning** in their work, beyond receiving a salary slip at the end of each month (Ulrich and Ulrich 2010). Research from Universum's employer branding study in France, for example, showed that among more than 26,000 students there was an overwhelming response in favour of **CSR (corporate social responsibility)-oriented workplaces** (see Fig. 1). HR managers cannot afford to ignore this movement towards meaning.

Further research has shown that CSR 'enhances a corporation's reputation for prospective employees by increasing organizational attractiveness and firm familiarity, but also influences incumbent employees' (Gond *et al.* 2010).

Therefore, the role of HR in helping businesses become more sustainable can be demonstrated in different ways, and requires an understanding by HR leaders and team members of **sustainable business priorities**.

Figure 1: Importance placed by French students on companies with active CSR policies and practices when choosing an employer.



Source: Employer Branding Today (2011).

Performing HR sustainably

Equally as important as supporting business objectives is the way HR performs its traditional functions so that, even in cases where sustainable business strategy has not been specifically articulated, **HR remains accountable for its impacts on society and the environment**. The implications on society of HR decisions in almost all aspects of HR work can be far-reaching, well beyond the primary considerations of business growth and profitability. Closing a factory, for example, and laying off employees may have extensive implications for the social and economic wellbeing of a local community. While HR considerations may not be enough to prevent closure, the way in which the HR leadership defines strategies to communicate, execute plans and support employees through a life-changing event can make a critical difference to individuals and families within the community. Sustainability, in this sense, means that HR takes into account these implications when formulating HR policies, plans and programmes.

Traditional core HR functions include recruitment and retention, training and development, compensation and benefits, organisational

Figure 2: Examples of the connection between HR policies and social and environmental impacts.



development and internal communications. HR has an inherent accountability to consider the **broader implications of HR decisions** not only on employees, but also on employee families, communities, economies and society in general (see Fig. 2).

By recruiting a **diverse workforce**, which is inclusive of different ethnic groups in society, or ensuring the recruitment of local nationals into key roles rather than expatriating managers for short time periods, HR plays a role in strengthening the fabric of local society. By investing in the employability of individuals in the organisation, and helping them manage their own careers, HR supports a more robust economy in today's society where 'jobs for life', once a key promise of many companies, can no longer be guaranteed. By paying a fair wage, or what is often called a '**living wage**', HR makes a difference by helping to reduce poverty in countries of operation and encouraging **investment back in the community**. By providing benefits such as health insurance and wellness programmes, HR contributes to a healthier society and reduces the burden of healthcare costs on economies and societies.

In so many ways, the decisions made by HR departments have potentially far-reaching, short- and long-term consequences for society, beyond the considerations of an individual company and its employees. While HR cannot be expected to single-handedly solve all of society's problems and inequalities, a **sustainable HR function understands the impacts it creates** and considers these broader needs when formulating policies.

Sustainable HR metrics

Performing HR sustainably can be measured in many ways. In almost all cases, a correlation can be established between HR performance and business outcomes and value generation. The specific correlation in each company may be a little different, but in general, the connection is not only possible, but imperative, in order to establish the financial value to the business of sustainable HRM. Table 1 shows some examples of the HR contribution and the aspects of business value that can be calculated. BT, for example, reports sick pay costs as a business value metric relating to employee health and safety (BT plc 2014).

Table 1: Examples of HRM metrics and connection to business outcomes and value.

HRM role	HRM objective	HRM metric	Business value
Values and ethics	Employees understand and behave in line with corporate values	Percentage of employees trained in values and ethics	Mitigation of risk due to unethical behaviour by employees. Improved corporate reputation and trust
		Percentage of employee responses in survey showing employee support company values	
Recruitment	Recruitment is based on diversity principles	Percentage of employees recruited by gender and by minority groups	Improved business results, innovation and customer satisfaction
Compensation	Compensation is driven by equal opportunity for men and women	Ratio of base salary men to women	Lower HR costs due to turnover, improved motivation and trust
	Compensation is linked to sustainability performance	Number of employees with sustainability targets in annual work-plans	Improved execution of sustainable business strategy
Wellbeing	Employees are fit to contribute to their maximum capability	Percentage of employees who engage in a corporate wellbeing program	Reduced business health costs, lower absenteeism, improved productivity
		Percentage improvements achieved in employee wellbeing (health, stress, diet etc)	
Development	Diverse employees are given opportunities to advance	Percentage of women in management positions	Improved business results, innovation and customer satisfaction
		Percentage of minorities in management positions	
Engagement	Employees enhance corporate community relations	Percentage of employees trained in sustainability	Improved execution of sustainable business strategy
		Percentage of employee volunteers	
		Percentage of employees participating in 'green' activities	
	Employees contribute to improving environmental impacts		Employee engagement, reputation benefits, enhanced community relationships
			Energy and materials costs reductions

Opportunities for sustainable HR management

Beyond fulfilling traditional roles as mentioned above, HR has an opportunity to use tools provided by a sustainable business approach to **engage employees in sustainable practices**. These are practices not typically undertaken by HR managers, and may include supporting environmental stewardship through **green team** development, or encouraging employee volunteer programmes in the community. For example, one telecommunications company, ECI Telecom, engages employees in environmental awareness through competitions which engage hundreds of employees and their families. In the ECI Telecom 2012 *Sustainability Report*, ECI displays photos from a 'green camera' competition in which employees of the company's Indian subsidiary participated (ECI Telecom 2013). **Raising awareness** is the first step in changing practice. In the US, the US Postal Service reports massive business savings through recycling, waste reduction, energy conservation and more through the activities of employee green teams throughout its US operations (USPS 2013).

Employee volunteering programmes

Employee volunteering is an opportunity to do more than simply give back to the community. The business benefits to be gained from **employee volunteer programmes** include increased employee satisfaction, motivation and loyalty, as well as innovative opportunities for employees to gain new experience and enhance their skills. For example, the health-care company GSK (GlaxoSmithKline) reports a 47% higher rate of promotion among volunteers who have participated in the company's PULSE volunteer programme (Korngold 2014: 122). GSK, as well as other companies such as IBM and Intel, maintains extensive volunteer programmes which involve sending employees outside of the organisation for weeks or even months to participate in volunteer activities to support social causes, often in emerging economies. The overriding experience of these employees is one of **learning, personal growth and development**,

leadership, communication and team-working skills which they bring back to benefit the business. Many employee volunteers keep journals, such as the GSK PULSE volunteer blog (<http://gskpulsevolunteers.com>), in which they record their experiences, thus helping to improve the company's reputation as well as advancing internal benefits, for example. In other cases, companies maintain many different types of volunteering programmes from a one-day annual corporate event for all employees, to ongoing local activities in different operating locations.

Whatever the nature or scale of volunteering activities, they universally contribute to motivation and skill development. HR must be a partner in developing such programmes in a way which meets both community needs and also strategic HR needs.

Human rights

Management of **human rights** is not something HR managers traditionally tend to consider as part of their job description. Most HR managers are conversant with labour laws or have in-house legal counsel. But human rights in a company's supply chain often goes beyond the minimum requirements of law, especially if a company is operating in emerging economies where legal frameworks are less developed or minimally enforced. As an HR function in a business whose extended responsibility includes those employees in its supply chain, HR must consider ways of supporting good HR practice beyond the traditional boundary of the organisation chart. In this way, for example, Nike conducts HR workshops for suppliers in its supply chain in Asia, recognising that an advanced approach to human resources can make the difference in reliable and responsible supply and overall sustainability of the business (Nike 2013). Ensuring a supply chain free from child labour, forced labour, human rights abuses and discrimination has now also become part of the role of HR management and goes beyond traditional relationships with suppliers and outsourcing vendors based on procurement contracts focusing on price, quality and service. For example, many companies have established ethical sourcing policies which require suppliers to commit to maintaining human rights and employee rights in

their companies. HR management has a role in assisting in the establishment, implementation and control of such practices.

Employee wellness

Beyond the requirement of compliance with health and safety laws, which is often an operational responsibility and not an HR responsibility, there exists great opportunity for HR management in **advancing employee wellness in the workplace**. Wellness and wellbeing are concepts which are not usually mandated by law but which can help organisations save on healthcare costs, protect business continuity and improve employee morale and productivity, while also improving their impacts on society. Large companies such as Unilever, Johnson & Johnson and Caesars Entertainment have advanced **employee wellbeing programmes**, including **employee health risk assessments**, and have found that the return on investment is significant. Caesars Entertainment, for example, quotes saving upwards of \$2.5 million per year through voluntary participation of employees in the company's wellbeing programme, while reducing health risks such as cholesterol, high blood pressure and glucose (diabetes) in double percentage points (Caesars 2013). The Caesars Entertainment wellness programme has 85% employee participation and provides incentives to employees who look after their own health in the form of healthcare costs savings and gifts. Ultimately, the organisation derives great benefit in employee productivity, and the burden of healthcare investment to local economies is reduced significantly.

This type of programme is clearly within the framework of the HR role, which can provide tools, processes and internal communications to help the programme succeed. In addition to the internal and external benefits, this is also an area in which the HR function can demonstrate a direct contribution to the business bottom line, a perfect match of sustainability and business objectives.

Summary

The above examples show how HR can leverage its core competencies in any company to support sustainable business objectives and perform HR sustainably. In doing so, HR must be concerned not only with the business objectives defined by management and employee needs, but also with the **wider impacts of HR decisions** and performance on **communities and the environment**. The essence of this approach is for HR managers to understand the concepts, principles and strategy of **sustainable business** and to recreate HR management processes in a way that leverages HR capabilities for the broader good, not only of the company and its employees, but also of society as a whole.

Suggested seminars

Seminar 1: Case study—sustainable HRM reporting

Split into teams of two. Each team selects a sustainability report published within the past year by an organisation of your choice. These are freely available to download from the corporate websites of companies that report on sustainability. Each team should analyse the report and identify all the disclosures relating to employees and human resources practices. Formulate answers to the questions listed below.

Report analysis questions

1. What aspects of human resources practices are referenced in the report?
2. Of all the human resources elements disclosed by the company, which would be the most important for you and why, if you were:
 - a. A shareholder in the company?
 - b. An employee of the company?
 - c. A potential recruit?
 - d. A family member of an employee of the company?
 - e. A local city council official in a city where a number of the company's employees are located?
3. Review commonalities and differences in the way companies report on human resources aspects of their sustainability performance. What can you infer from the content and style of their disclosures about the organisational culture of the company?
4. Review whether the disclosures related to human resources and organisational development are linked to the business performance of the company, and if so, state in what ways. What metrics connect HR performance to business results?

5. Have these disclosures increased your level of trust in this company?
6. Would you want to work for this company?

After you have answered these questions in your teams, get together as a group and review your findings. Consider the differences and similarities, and the elements which have inspired greater trust in the company as a result of their sustainability disclosures.

As a group, agree on the top five characteristics of HR sustainability reporting that you feel are essential to any sustainability report on HR practices.

Seminar 2: Sustainable organisation culture

In a sustainable organisation, as in any organisation, the underlying culture can be both a reflection and a predictor of sustainable business results. In a sustainable organisation, values are emphasised as part of the organisation's way of operating, communications are frequent and intensive, and individuals feel instilled with a sense of purpose and are empowered to make a difference. More than concerned with their specific roles and direct business results, they are conscious of their responsibilities to society and the environment, and the impacts which result from the things they do and the way they do them. These impacts are felt both internally and externally. In the sustainable organisation, values must offer a certain common ground to enable the wide engagement of employees in a shared culture which continues to respect and celebrate the diversity of individuals.

It is always difficult to assess how people understand and prioritise values and therefore what is necessary in order to motivate and frame common behaviours driven by shared values. Describing values in visual terms is often an excellent way of demonstrating alignment, or otherwise, with the values which underpin a sustainable business.

In this seminar, participants have the opportunity to create a visual expression of the way they see sustainable organisations add the values that helped them become sustainable.

This seminar requires teams of four, working together. The tools required are large 1 m² canvases (on easels if possible), paints and paint-brushes.

Each team should collaborate to create their portrait entitled 'The Ideal Sustainable Company'. No more than 40 minutes should be allocated to creating the portrait.

Once all the portraits are complete, each team should present its picture to the other teams, explaining the different elements in the image and why priority has been given to certain elements. Following the presentations, a group discussion should address the following questions:

1. What were the common visual elements in the portraits?
2. What were the values that stood out as the most significant in all the portraits?
3. Did different visual elements portray the same values or different values? What does this tell us about the way values can be embedded in organisations?
4. What does this exercise tell us about the values that we see as important for sustainable organisations? Would we have created different portraits 20 years ago? Are any of these visual elements used in employer branding or companies that you are aware of?
5. Did the process of creating the canvasses engage team members in discussion about the relative importance and prioritisation of different values for sustainable organisations? Would this be a useful exercise to conduct within company teams?

Seminar 3: Case study—diversity and inclusion

Read the following case study. Engage in a discussion and respond as a group to the questions at the end of the case study.

Diversity and inclusion

You are the HR manager of a supermarket chain which has been expanding rapidly in your country and is poised for overseas expansion in the coming years. You know that the ability of the company to expand depends on a constant stream of recruitment of the right quality people at all levels in the organisation. In fact, you have specific recruitment objectives which are more challenging than at any time in the past. You are very aware of the 'war for talent' and the fact that there is great competition for good people, especially university graduates. After talking with colleagues in the market, you and your HR team realise that you must proactively seek out innovative ways to attract new talent to your company. You believe that this means leveraging your reputation for sustainability more effectively during the recruitment process, as well as broadening your recruitment channels and reaching out proactively to a more diverse range of candidates from different backgrounds and minority groups.

Typically, diversity has not been a focus of your company and no special efforts have been made to increase diversity. In fact, this is not something that you and your HR team have focused on in any way in the past. Your workforce is predominantly led by males, while most of the unskilled roles are performed by women (e.g. check-out cashiers, shelf-stockers, cleaners, etc.). The population barely includes people with disabilities and ethnic groups in the population are not significantly represented.

In order to compete effectively in the 'war for talent', you believe your company must significantly rethink the way it recruits and who it recruits, in order to exploit fully the potential talent available in the market. Not only must the company now learn to recruit in a more diverse way, the organisation must be able to take diverse candidates on board successfully and enable them to progress within the company over time. You

charge yourself with delivering a plan to attract, recruit, advance and retain diverse candidates to meet the targets defined by your CEO within three years:

- 25% of the workforce (currently 10%) should be sourced from diverse groups
- 20% of management (currently 5%) should be women
- 5% of management should be from diverse groups (currently zero)

It won't be easy!

Questions for discussion

1. Who is affected by this situation and what is the impact on them? List all the relevant internal and external stakeholders and implications for them in this change in policy.
2. What tools does the HR manager have to increase diversity in recruitment processes? Which new channels can the HR manager open up? How do recruitment processes need to change?
3. What sort of organisational culture is necessary in order to attract, recruit and retain more diverse people? What needs to be done to ensure the right culture is in place? Which key HR processes and tools are required?
4. Which tools does the HR manager have to measure the impact of this change in policy on the business results, organisational culture, employees, local communities and the local economy? Which performance indicators should be developed to measure success?

Output required

1. State the top three actions you recommend the HR manager should advance during the next 12 months.
2. Explain why these are the most important things you should do.
3. Explain the role of the CEO and other managers in supporting this programme.

Additional teaching material and ideas

Made in Dagenham

www.imdb.com/title/tt1371155/

This movie is a dramatisation of the 1968 strike at the Ford Dagenham car plant, where female workers walked out in protest against sexual discrimination. There are several important elements in this movie which relate to the nature of power relationships in the workplace and the strength and courage it takes to drive change in support of human rights at work. While this scenario may seem rather outdated, the challenges of women in achieving equal rights are still relevant today in many workplaces, not to mention the challenges of other groups such as the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community. This movie can be the basis for a discussion about what needs to change in order to ensure that equal opportunity and equal rights become reality in all workplaces, and whose responsibility it is to fight for those rights.

BITC Competency Map

www.bitc.org.uk/services/learning-bitc/cr-practitioner-competency-map

This is a tool for CSR and HR managers. It provides a tool to better understand and develop the required behaviours of CSR managers, and includes a guide for HR managers to understand these behaviours so that they can develop programmes to encourage such behaviours in the organisation. The map provides case studies of how companies have used the competency map. The map can be a useful tool to teach approaches to CSR and the ways in which HR can support effective CSR and sustainability development in the organisation.

GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) Sustainability Disclosure Database

<http://database.globalreporting.org/>

This is a repository of sustainability reports from around the world, updated as reports are published. HR managers, seeking to understand the way in which sustainable HRM is reported, may search the database by company, sector or even by specific performance indicators and review how sustainability and HRM topics are practised and reported by

companies, providing both interesting insights and ideas as well as performance benchmarks against different metrics. The GRI database can be used as a basis for setting exercises to develop an understanding of sustainable HRM transparency.

UN Global Compact

www.unglobalcompact.org/

The UN Global Compact is a voluntary framework for responsible business based on ten principles which have been accepted by thousands of business organisations around the world. Seven of the ten principles have a clear link to HRM and HR process as they relate to upholding human rights, labour rights and maintaining an ethical culture which opposes corruption. The UN Global Compact is rich with information, reports and tools which can assist business in understanding the issues and developing management approaches and can be used in designing learning exercises in different areas of sustainable HRM.

Anita Roddick, Business as Unusual: My Entrepreneurial Journey—Profits with Principles (Roddick 2005)

www.anitaroddick.com/books.php

This book was not written specifically as a management teaching book in sustainable HRM. However, it is immensely readable and chronicles the experiences and conflicts inherent in developing a business based on social and environmentally responsible values. The book can be used as a basis for discussion about the ways in which socially responsible businesses create cultures in which values thrive and the challenges that business leaders face in selecting and developing employees.

Further reading

Cohen, E. (2010) *CSR for HR: A Necessary Partnership for Advancing Responsible Business Practices* (Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing).

The HR department can and should play an important role in CSR. This book is designed to assist practitioners in understanding how CSR is changing the HR function. It outlines the implications of the growing importance of CSR for different HR functions, examines how HR can help embed CSR and proposes the infrastructure needed. Effectively, *CSR for HR* is a guide for HR professionals in how to adopt a CSR approach to HRM.

Cohen, E., S. Taylor and M. Muller-Camen (2012) *HRM's Role in Corporate Social and Environmental Sustainability* (Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Management).

This report begins by examining the critical role HRM plays in sustainability and the HRM tools available to embed sustainability strategy in the organisation. The second section introduces a road map to sustainable HRM. It outlines global business approaches to sustainability, labour standards and specific aspects of sustainable practice such as employee volunteering, employer branding and green HRM. Finally, the report explores the new HR skills required for practising sustainable HRM and the applicability of sustainable HRM in different types of organisations.

Savitz, A. (2013) *Talent, Transformation and the Triple Bottom Line* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass).

Employees are central to creating sustainable organisations, yet they are left on the side-lines in most sustainability initiatives along with the HR professionals who should be helping to engage and energise them. This book shows business leaders and HR professionals how to: motivate employees to create economic, environmental and social value; facilitate necessary culture, strategic and organisational change; embed sustainability into the employee life-cycle; and strengthen existing capabilities and develop new ones necessary to support the transformation to sustainability.

SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) (2011) *Advancing Sustainability: HR's Role* (Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Management).

The majority of organisations in the US are engaged in some form of sustainable work practices and, of those that have calculated the return on investment, almost half have reported a positive outcome. This research is based on a 2010 survey of 728 HR professionals in the US. Other noteworthy findings were that the three key drivers for these activities were contribution to society, competitive financial advantage and environmental considerations. Moreover, one of the most important positive outcomes from sustainability initiatives was improved employee morale. In this report, you will find examples and case studies from a range of organisations and sustainable workplace practices.

Ulrich, Dave, and Wendy Ulrich (2010) *The Why of Work* (New York: McGraw Hill).

This book, while not specifically focusing on sustainable HRM, is certainly a precursor to the creation of an organisation in which sustainable principles form part of the culture. Drawing attention to the 'meaning' of work, and the reasons employees become motivated and engaged, beyond the pay slip, this is an enlightening, easy-to-read volume of how HR can support a purposeful culture and why this is important.

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