

BOOK REVIEW

THE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS HANDBOOK: A GUIDE TO BECOMING MORE INNOVATIVE, RESILIENT, AND SUCCESSFUL

Authors: David Grayson, Chris Coulter, and Mark Lee

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OVERVIEW

We are living in an era where the global business terrain is increasingly shaped by environmental, social, and economic challenges. It is important not only to know about sustainable principles, but also to understand how to turn this knowledge into tangible action. The core objective of “The Sustainable Business Handbook: A Guide to Becoming More Innovative, Resilient, and Successful” is to offer practical knowledge and insights to business operators. This book offers comprehensive guidance for organizations and leaders to navigate the complex situations of sustainable business management, transforming challenges into opportunities for innovation and success. Several case studies from real world businesses are provided throughout the book. This book has earned noteworthy recognition, being shortlisted for Project Syndicate's Sustainability Book Award 2023, and further acclaimed as the winner of the Business Book Awards 2023 in the Change and Sustainability category.

Remarkably, Project Syndicate is a renowned international media organization, widely acknowledged for its role in publishing and syndicating perceptive commentaries and analyses on a diverse array of global subjects (Project Syndicate, 2023).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Grayson, Chris Coulter, and Mark Lee, the co-authors of this book, are experts in the field of sustainable business management. David Grayson is Emeritus Professor of corporate social responsibility. He is chair of the Institute of Business Ethics, based in the UK, and has worked with businesses across the world in the area of sustainable development. Chris Coulter is the CEO of Globe Scan, a global consultancy company in Canada. His company assists the decision-makers of organizations to create strategies to lead a sustainable and equitable future (Globe Scan, 2023). Mark Lee is the Director of the SustainAbility Institute by ERM. His organization's functions are to define, accelerate,

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and scale, sustainability performance by developing actionable insights for businesses (Sustainability Ability Institute by ERM, 2023). Together, their combined knowledge and expertise enrich this book by identifying sustainability issues and providing guidance on how to overcome the challenges and become a more sustainable organization.

REVIEW

This book transcends the conventional confines of sustainability discourse by offering a holistic framework that blends theory and practice in harmonization. The authors smoothly guide the readers through the complexity of sustainable business management. The contents of this book are categorized into 3 parts: Part 1 Getting started, Part 2 Building it up, and Part 3 Taking it to the world. This flow of contents makes it easy for readers to follow and understand the rationale and practices behind sustainable business management. The authors structure the book with a similar pattern for all chapters. Each chapter consists of 8 components including: 1) What is it 2) Why it matters 3) How to do it 4) In practice 5) Summary 6) Action checklist 7) Further resources and 8) Endnotes. This outline provides a well-structured framework for the readers.

One of the book's significant strengths lies in its inclusive approach to sustainability. This encompasses environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability, recognizing the interplay among these dimensions. The authors emphasize that sustainability is not a siloed effort, but a multi-layered one, requiring a systems-thinking approach. By advocating for the integration of sustainability into the core business strategy, the authors position sustainability not as an add-on activity, but as a pivotal driver of innovation and resilience.

Another significant strength of this book which makes it different from others is that it provides "Further resources" at the end of every chapter. The aforementioned resources are, for instance, academic articles related to

sustainability issues from the Harvard Business Review, and recommended books about circular economy, to name a few. Readers are able to learn wider and deeper from the suggested resources selected.

As its name "Handbook" suggests, this book deserves to be a guidebook for businesses due to its practicality. The book equips readers with practical tools, frameworks, and real-world business case studies that facilitate the application of sustainable principles in business practice. The case studies from diverse industries ranging from household appliances such as Unilever, to apparels such as Patagonia, to automobiles such as Tata group, illustrate sustainable practices as well as their tangible impacts. For example, the book illustrates the case of Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan (USLP). One of its pivotal objectives is the remarkable reduction of the company's environmental impacts by half. Consequently, the company achieved noteworthy cost saving of 1 billion Euros from 2010 to 2020 through enhanced water and energy efficiency within its manufacturing facilities. This emphasis on pragmatic application enhances the book's value for leaders seeking to drive their organizations toward meaningful change.

CONCLUSION

The book is beneficial for organizations and leaders as well as those interested in sustainable business management. It is also a suitable book for higher education academicians to use as a supplementary reading for students particularly in business related fields. This book offers insights that resonate with scholars across disciplines. Its applicability to real-world scenarios and its emphasis on innovation and resilience make it a valuable resource for businesses seeking to navigate the challenges of the 21st century. It is worth noting that while the book caters comprehensively to practitioners, it may not fully meet the needs of researchers seeking an in-depth exploration of past research findings within the sustainability domain. Its primary focus on practical implementation, however,

underscores its value in guiding real-world actions. As a professor with a particular interest in sustainable business, I enthusiastically recommend this book as a must-read, designed to shape the future of responsible and impactful business practices.

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