

Employees, sustainability and motivation: Increasing employee engagement by addressing sustainability and corporate social responsibility

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An increasing number of academic studies indicate that we as humans are exploiting the planet earth to an extent that is no longer bearable. Put differently, we are actively destroying our very own basis of existence, especially considering the generations to come. It is therefore becoming increasingly significant for companies to develop more social and environmentally friendly ways to produce and distribute their products and services. Moreover, this is reinforced by the rising public awareness of sustainability issues. Apart from this, demographic changes make it increasingly difficult to attract and hire enough qualified employees. Besides, many employees all over the world lack a deeper meaning in what they are doing and consequently job-related motivation and engagement is alarmingly low. Such an issue is signally relevant in particular for the hospitality industry, since hospitality jobs are considered to demand a high performance but are rather poorly paid, while at the same time the industry operates with a high labour intensity, which leads to a substantially high staff turnover rate. The combination of the problems mentioned may in fact have a comprehensive solution. The approach is to actively involve employees in sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) issues and in this way lead employees to the perception of their jobs as being meaningful. Consequentially, increased engagement is expected, which in turn is positively related to business performance and profitability. This research proposes an employee-focused process model that companies can exploit as a guideline towards greater sustainability, CSR and engagement.

Keywords: employee motivation, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, staff engagement

Introduction

The expectations placed on corporations, governments and institutions are changing dramatically. In addition to ensuring profitability, organisations are increasingly expected to focus on social, environmental and economic goals (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, 488; Myung, McClaren & Li, 2012; Singal, 2014; Kang et al., 2012; Millar & Baloglu, 2011). There is good reason for this. If we as humans proceed doing “business as usual”, it is estimated that we will need the equivalent of two planets by 2030 to meet our annual demands (World Wildlife Fund, 2012, p. 3). Moreover, it is often argued that organisations are the main cause for environmental problems (Renwick, Redman & Maguire, 2012, p. 8) and these in turn are very often the cause of social problems (World Wildlife Fund, 2012). Besides all this, the world of employment is facing a radical change. Employees are increasingly questioning the meaning of their work. Those companies that will not find answers to employees’ concerns will lose the fight for qualified and engaged staff (Wissmann, 2013, p. 17). Expressed differently, the need to more effectively understand and use employees’ concerns, talents, skills and energy is becoming more important than ever (Gallup Institute, 2013, p. 6). The combination of these problematic situations can lead to a comprehensive solution that includes more sustainability, corporate social responsibility and employee engagement. However, to achieve this solution companies have to go through an incremental change. Therefore the approach of

the paper at hand is to create and review a procedure model for the corresponding change process. In order to do so, the paper is structured as follows:

To introduce the reader to the overall issues there is a brief description of the current social, political and environmental conditions as well as the current state of the global work engagement. This will be followed by some general definitions of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) to clarify the foundation of the subject. In addition to this, the second part of the paper identifies the hypothesised process model and subsequently examines the individual steps in greater detail. Last but not least, a review and conclusion finish the paper and give an outlook on future research.

Literature review

Our environmental, political and social situation

Newly industrialised countries such as China or India are experiencing vast economic growth. This development intensifies the competition for rare resources like oil and gas and has “added a geopolitical dimension to sustainability” (Lubin & Esty, 2010, p. 1). Furthermore, the world is facing an intense growth in population and a decreasing availability of water resources. As a consequence “water shortages will be the key constraint to growth in many countries. And one of our scarcest natural resources – the atmosphere – will require dramatic shifts in human behaviour to keep it from being depleted further” (Davis & Stephenson, 2013). On the whole, global consumption of resources is steadily increasing

to sustain worldwide economic growth. Still, the resources themselves are limited, which means that reserves are shrinking, while prices are rising (World Wildlife Fund, 2012, p. 6). An estimate by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) emphasises the relevance of this development: The world is striving for the western lifestyle but “if everyone lived like an average resident of the USA, a total of four Earths would be required to regenerate humanity’s annual demand on nature” (Cramer & Karabell, 2010, pp. 4–5). Figure 1 depicts human demands on the biosphere by comparing the renewable resources people are consuming against the Earth’s regenerative capacity. The figure clearly indicates that humanity is ecologically transgressing the fossil fuel and renewable resources of the planet: it currently takes one-and-a-half years for the Earth to fully regenerate the renewable resources that people are using in a single year.

The impact of human behaviour on nature gives increasing rise to public and governmental concern. Organisations are expected to actively consider issues that go beyond the traditional scope of profit-making organisations (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 488). Energy consumption, climate change and the excessive consumption of raw materials receive much public attention (Cramer & Karabell, 2010, p. 4). Hospitality companies in particular try to adapt to this given attention since they operate on a resource intensive level, especially when they have food and/or beverage outlets (Zhang, Joglekar & Verma, 2012). This is related to continuous economic growth. Even today’s society faces economic crises, since societies and economies grow without considering environmental aspects. Today, however, “economic growth is seen as the result of abstention from current consumption”

(Cavagnaro & Curiel, 2012, p. 19), which also is not reflected in the consumer’s mind. However, outstanding incidents attract worldwide attention, whether arising from specific treaties to combat climate change (e.g. Kyoto in 1997), high-profile industrial accidents such as at the BP Texas City Refinery in 2005 or the Fukushima earthquake in 2011 that caused an explosion at the Fukushima nuclear plant. The result is a rising number of consumers who seek out eco-friendly products and services and prefer socially responsible companies. In addition governments are interceding with unprecedented levels of new regulation: “from the recent SEC [(United States Securities and Exchange Commission)] ruling that climate risk is material to investors to the EPA’s [(United States Environmental Protection Agency)] mandate that greenhouse gases be regulated as a pollutant” (Lubin & Esty, 2010, p. 1). Moreover the relevance of public concerns is increasing in a time of social media, which allows people to share information about issues related to products and organisations (Milliman, Gonzalez-Padron, & Ferguson, 2012, p. 22). What this all adds up to is the fact that managers can no longer afford to ignore social and ecological issues as a central factor in their companies’ long-term competitiveness (Lubin & Esty, 2010, p. 1).

The world of employment lacks engagement

Looking at today’s employee, engagement and attachment present a bleak picture. Job satisfaction is steadily decreasing. Besides this, very few employees feel a strong emotional affiliation with their place of work (Wissmann, 2013, p. 21). According to a report by the Gallup Institute (2013), only 13% of employees across 142 countries worldwide are actually engaged with their jobs. In this context, engagement connotes

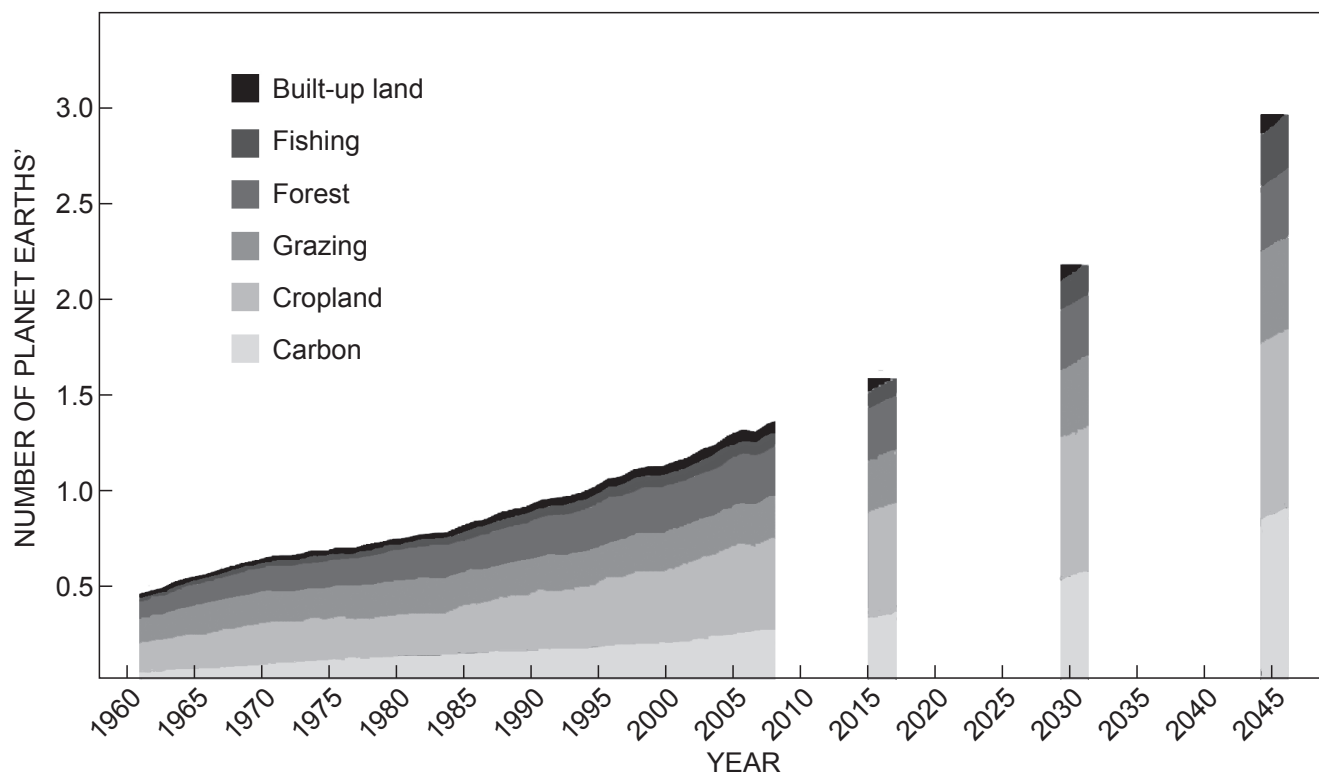


Figure 1: The global footprint 1961–2008 (World Wildlife Fund 2014)

a continuous emotional involvement and a focus on creating value for the employer and the company as a whole. As Figure 2 shows, 24% of employees surveyed are even actively disengaged. This means that they are negative and potentially hostile to their organisations, and even more, they continue to outnumber engaged employees at a rate of nearly 2 to 1 (Gallup Institute, 2013, p. 6).

In 2012 the business consultancy HayGroup and the online job portal StepStone recognised this issue. Hence they collaborated to carry out a representative survey of work motivation, which found that among 18 000 German employers 80% stated that a friendly and cooperative working environment motivates them the most. The second most important factor for job-related engagement was a fulfilling job (66%) followed by a decent wage, in the third place (56%). Good leadership and sufficient freedom of decision-making scored last in the survey (HayGroup and StepStone, 2012). What is striking is the fact that significance and collegiality are more important than monetary incentives (Wissmann, 2013, p. 21). Furthermore, the negative situation in regard to job-related engagement is exacerbated by current demographic trends around the world. On the one hand, several regions, like southern Europe, South Asia and the Middle East, are facing an unemployment rate among young people that breaks all records. On the other hand, large economies, including China, Japan, Germany and the USA, face talent shortages as their workforces age and shrink (Gallup Institute, 2013, p. 6). For example, it is predicted that in Germany there will be a shortage of 4.5 million qualified workers in 2030 (Plume, 2013, p. 5).

In sum, the brief description above demonstrates the importance of creating attractive and engaging work places, especially as engagement studies show a direct connection between employee engagement and business performance, indicated by profitability, productivity, customer ratings and quality defect rates, among others. Therefore, companies all over the world need to improve their ability to ensure that workers experience a friendly and cooperative work climate, are in the right roles and moreover appreciate their jobs as being fulfilling and meaningful (Gallup Institute, 2013, p. 22). However, feelings arise from the inside and an employer’s only chance is to create the right working conditions so that employees feel motivated and engaged (Wissmann, 2013, p. 25).

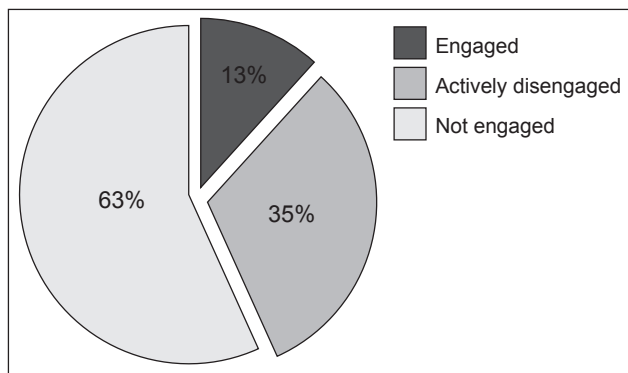


Figure 2: Worldwide work engagement (Gallup Institute 2013, 12)

Model and considerations

The following model visualises the main steps of the described hypothesised process (Figure 3):

The initiation of a vision

To begin with, possible initiation factors for the process towards sustainability and CSR goals will be described. The following section will identify concrete steps.

What are the triggers?

Within companies there is a rising awareness of the urgency to integrate sustainability and social responsibility aspects into their regular business activities. This is action caused by external pressures (i. e. social concerns, regulatory forces or competitive advantages), which call for more sustainable business routines and strategies (Paillé et al., 2012, pp. 1, 6). However, concerned employees themselves, for example, are also reported as a source of pressure to address environmental issues (Renwick et al., 2012, p. 6). Figure 4 illustrates these interdependencies of external factors and internal corporate sustainability.

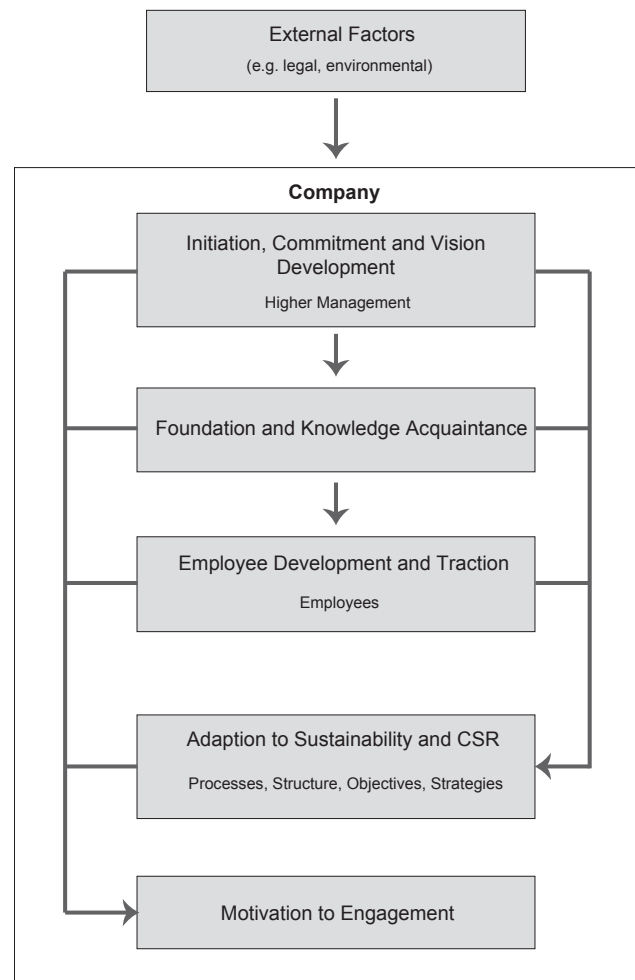


Figure 3: The process towards sustainability, CSR and engagement (created by the author)

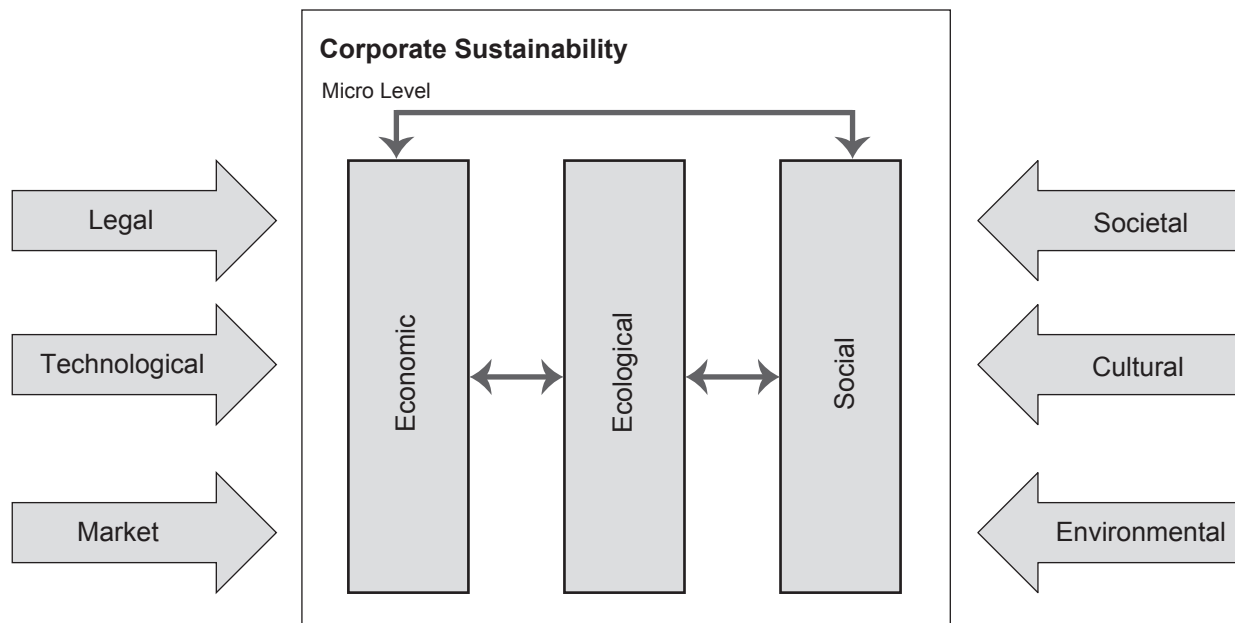


Figure 4: Corporate sustainability and its interdependences (Baumgartner and Ebner 2006)

Moreover Cantor, Morrow, and Montabon (2012) state that due to increased pressures from key stakeholders who value sustainable organisations, the importance of employees who engage in pro-environmental behaviours arises (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 45). Nevertheless, corporations often have trouble implementing sustainability activities, as this implies long-term activities and business process changes. Therefore, in many cases the change towards more sustainability and corporate social responsibility is simply done by a changed rhetoric and image campaigns. In other words, it is done by “green washing” (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2009, p. 76). But green washing does not fulfil the real demands for sustainability and CSR since the concrete implementation of corresponding measures into the creation of value is not included (Lin-Hi, 2013). Therefore, to sufficiently address ecological and social issues, managers have to commit to sustainability and corporate social responsibility and truly initiate and push corresponding process changes and strategies (Paillé et al., 2014, p. 6).

Commitment, vision and strategy

Top management support is one of the most important facilitators of pro-environmental and social initiatives (Dilchert & Ones, 2012, p. 506). Therefore, it is seen here as a basic prerequisite for the further process. Once the managerial level, respectively the individuals in charge, have recognised the importance of sustainability and CRS, they have to elaborate how to address and implement the social, ecological and economic aspects of CSR and sustainability into business procedures and strategies. They have to develop a vision guideline for shaping the strategy and the subsequent actions (Paillé et al., 2014, p. 3). The extent to which these changes take place leaves room for different generic possibilities.

Nowadays, management teams of any organisation realise that during the development of their processes and strategies it is not acceptable only to follow their own insights and

forget about sustainability (Cavagnaro & Curiel, 2012, p. 169). Cavagnaro and Curiel stated in 2012 that companies can operate between two paradigms: the economically oriented paradigm and the environmentally oriented paradigm: where the economically oriented paradigm focuses on profit and stakeholder’s pressure, the environmental paradigm takes sustainable aspects into consideration. Consequently, organisations need to find a balance between the two to operate efficiently and sustainably.

The aim of this paper is to create a theoretical process model, which corporations need to execute in order to successfully realise a holistic sustainability strategy. The reason to target this, in a way, is the final stage of an evolutionary process that is both the most challenging as well as the most rewarding stage. It meets the needs of our current situation and predicted future. Furthermore it addresses the demands of stakeholders like customers, governments and employees; it considers every aspect of sustainability (people, planet and profit) and creates a lasting competitive advantage (Milliman et al., 2012, p. 33; Lubin & Esty, 2010, p. 1). Besides, the remarks on sustainability and CSR already alert us to the fact that a holistic approach is required. Therefore, to further discuss the visionary strategy in greater detail, a systematic approach will be applied. In this context, systematic means to consider both the outside-in as well as the inside-out effects. A merely outside-in view would also be conceivable, considering only external factors and the implicated market opportunities. A systematic visionary strategy however, supplements this conventional approach while focusing on the internal resources. For the inside-out effects sustainable and socially responsible development has to be deeply integrated in the normative level of the company (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2009, p. 78). The following conceptions focus on internal interrelations and approaches for more sustainability and CSR. To be more specific, the focus is human resource activities, employees, knowledge management and processes. To

establish a joint understanding and shared basis for further deliberations, short definitions of knowledge management and processes are given.

Knowledge management definition

Knowledge management deals with the acquirement, development, transfer, maintenance, organisation and application of knowledge (Frost, 2013). Therefore in simple terms sustainability and CSR related knowledge management is the application of such activities with the approach to keep and expand the sustainability related knowledge in the organisation (Baumgartner and Ebner, 2010, p. 79).

Process definition

Processes are defined as the entirety of the interdependent and linked procedures within a system. By the use of processes, inputs (materials, energy, information, money) are stored, transported or converted into new outputs (Berwanger et al., 2013). To have the ability to realise sustainable processes, corporations have to define how sustainability and CSR aspects are implemented in their processes (Wolf, 2012).

At this point a rough vision has been defined: The objective is a holistic sustainability and CSR strategy, concentrating on the following internal aspects: human resource activities, employees, knowledge management and processes, while of course not neglecting the influences of and effects on external factors. Consequently, it has to be defined how the economic plus the interrelated social and environmental aspects of CSR and sustainability can be initiated and realised. In the paper at hand an approach is chosen that puts the human resource department in charge, regarding employees as the key source of competitive advantage (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 3). This is an approach that can also be described in terms of strategic human resource management (SHRM). SHRM places the highest priority on linking human resource management (HRM) with the strategic goals and objectives of a company (Paillé, 2012, p. 3), which in the context of this paper are, among others, sustainability and CSR.

Setting the foundations for change

The next section will give a deeper insight on how organisations can effectively realise sustainability and social responsibility objectives by developing their human resources and realise accreditation processes.

According to Garavan and McGuire, human resource development (HRD) can be subdivided into foundational, traction and integration activities (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 499). The first step, *foundation*, can be interpreted as the preparation phase and is elaborated on in this chapter. It includes the definition of responsibilities and roles plus the building of basic knowledge. The second step, *traction*, is about transferring this knowledge to the workforce, in order to gain traction for a shared CSR and sustainability vision. The final step then focuses on the full integration of CSR and sustainability into all aspects of the organisation. Recapitulated, the proposed process model of the paper at hand – especially steps two to four – make up this three-staged approach.

As a first step, the persons responsible for the implementation of HRD and their roles have to be defined. The roles of “HRD professionals” focus as well on creating policies as on the implementation through appropriate practices

(Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 501). To be more specific, there are four roles that HRD professionals can perform: strategic partner, administrative expert, change agent, and employee champion. Garavan and McGuire describe these roles as follows:

The administrative role enables the HRD specialist to develop the infrastructure to implement those strategies. The change agent role enables real cultural change to take place in the organization and facilitates the integration of these activities into strategy, culture, structure, and behaviour. The employee champion role helps to ensure that employee knowledge, skill, and competencies are linked to societal strategies and that issues of concern to employees are advocated at senior levels within the organization (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 501).

Nevertheless, to be able to develop the workforce of a company, the responsible personnel have to overcome some essential challenges and first of all put themselves in the position where they have the ability to train and influence the workforce. There is no universally applicable approach for implementing human resource activities in order to make a contribution to CSR and sustainability. The respective activities have to consider the initial conditions of the company, like the enterprise size, the sectorial and institutional context, former HRD activities and the skills and competencies of those responsible for driving the HRD agenda (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 492; Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). This also means that emerging societal trends as well as relevant environmental, social and ethical issues have to be identified in order to be able to respond to them. Above that, the responsible HR employees have to emphasise how HRD activities can contribute to delivering sustainable returns to investors, responding to government as well as regulatory expectations. Activities to develop the human resources have to unveil their strategic contribution to achieving an integrated sustainability agenda. The HR department has to understand how its strategies and practices can support sustainability goals (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 491; Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). In the knowledge management context this can be interpreted as sustainability, and CSR knowledge has to be acquired first before it can subsequently be transferred, maintained and applied.

Hence, sustainability and social responsibility can be highly efficiently executed by developing human resource policies. External accreditations are also a sufficient tool to reinforce sustainability, especially in hotels. The Centre of Hospitality Research (CHR) stated in 2011 that hotel leaders in the USA list sustainability as their top concern, which makes this sector an industry that invests a substantial annual budget into sustainability.

Talking about sustainability in the hospitality sector, this industry reflects current trends more than any other. According to HVS Hospitality Services (Goldstein & Primlani, 2012), recent energy efficiency and conservation measurements show that most of the hotel buildings across the world have higher energy consumptions than they actually require. This amounts to the fact that especially hotels admit to a substantial margin of costs that could be eliminated by a sufficient execution of technical environmental trends. This pushes hotel companies, especially in metropolitan areas, to be and to build sustainably

and thereby to stay certified, reputed and consequently competitive. This is an appreciable development, since as mentioned previously today's society focuses on CSR and sustainable aspects, also when booking a hotel room.

In order to ensure a good reputation and hold a competitive advantage, the hotel industry has countless CSR and sustainability certifications with different measurements and requirements licensing hotels to operate under the standards of each certificate. In other words, sustainability is the only way to ensure a successful hospitality operation (Myung et al., 2012), seeing that it offers a field to cut costs and a surface to build reputation upon at the same time.

Hands-on employee development

Management encouragement and supervisory support

Encouragement and support by managerial staff for social or environmental initiatives is a way to gain employees' respective engagement to achieve environmental or social improvements (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 6). Especially supervisors are in a position to fill the role of the change agent who facilitates the integration of sustainability and CSR activities into company strategy, culture, structure, and behaviour. This is because supervisors give guidance on how employees should invest their time and effort. They can be initiators of risk taking, idea generation and experimentation on the job. Therefore Cantor et al. (2012) hypothesise that supervisory support can have a huge impact, if employees recognise that their supervisors provide the resources and feedback to participate in environmental initiatives, especially as supervisors actively foster a shared vision and consensus for new organisational practices among the employees they work with. Cantor et al. find evidence that this hypothesis is true. According to Larkin and Larkin (1996), supervisory support can even have a deeper impact on employees' work than top management support, meaning that employees attend more to the words and actions of their direct supervisors (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 37).

Training

Apart from supervision, support training is another key intervention to demonstrate organisational support and awareness for sustainability impacts (Renwick et al., 2012, p. 3). In general, training allows companies to acquire and develop their human capital, which in turn enhances organisational capacity (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 38). The provided information and objectives of training can vary "from the conveying of technical information, to socialisation, to the acceptance of new ideas" (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 37). In any case, the content of training signifies the objectives and values of an organisation. Furthermore, as training can provide the respective skills to achieve these goals, it can have a huge impact on companies' ways of working and thinking (Renwick et al., 2012, p. 3). It is then related to the development of social and environmental abilities and implies practices such as selecting, recruiting, training and developing social and environmental knowledge. Moreover, it also has a relation to the management and supervisory support mentioned above. It can encourage leadership and supervision to support sustainable and social responsible activities (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 3; Renwick et al., 2012, p. 4). Cantor et al. are able to present several studies that support the close connection between successful organisational change towards more

sustainability and respective training programmes. Hence they conclude that training programmes can not only train techniques like eco-design, life cycle assessment and recycling, but also signal support for eco-friendly or social behaviours (Renwick et al., 2012, p. 3; Cantor et al., 2012, p. 38).

Rewards and appraisal

Rewards and appraisal are another possible factor to motivate behaviour and reinforce job attitudes (Renwick et al., 2012, p. 5; Paillé et al., 2012, p. 3). Well-structured rewards, meaning that there is a clear connection between certain actions and rewards which seems fair and comprehensible to the employees, indicate that the organisation values: (1) the individual's contribution to the firm, (2) independent decision-making, (3) professional development activities, and (4) professional behaviour (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 38). Therefore the assumption is as follows: if the connection between action and reward shows a clear reference to sustainability and CSR issues, it can engage employees to search for innovative solutions to environmental, economic and social problems (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 38).

The final repercussion on employees

The fundamental hypothesis for this chapter and stage of the overall hypothesised process is as follows: Companies that support activities that are perceived as positive, important and meaningful, like environmental and social activities, for instance, have a good chance to increase employees' engagement and identification with the company. This hypothesis is supported by a study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Sloan Management Review and the Boston Consulting Group. According to the study results, employee recruitment, retention and engagement can be enhanced by organisational policies and practices that promote employee engagement in environmental behaviours (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 33). Furthermore, Paillé et al. (2012) state that several opportunities can be gained from a more ethical and participative approach to environmental and staff management. The greatest benefits are, among others, higher staff motivation and a greater degree of job satisfaction (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 2).

There are several theoretical concepts to explain this effect. Attachment theory can be used to understand how various aspects of work behaviour are correlated to certain attachment types. Social identity theory explains how individuals become attracted to groups and organisations and how they identify with them based on their CSR and sustainability activities (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 493). Cantor et al. again use and adapt organisational support theory (OST) to further investigate the relationship between employees' behaviours and attitudes on the one hand and sustainability and CSR on the other hand. Yet another concept is *organisational citizenship behaviours for the environment* (OCBE) (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 4). In the following, an attempt is made to describe the central ideas of the mentioned concepts in summary. The basic predication is that employees recognise the perceived treatment and support from their company. And furthermore, if it is perceived as being positive, employees are willing to reciprocate. This initiates behaviours that include, among others, increased efforts to help the organisation reach its objectives, good job performance and voluntary activities. Moreover, empirical research has even demonstrated

that the perceived organisational support is directly linked to employees' affective organisational commitment, which includes "emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation" (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 35). Especially, appropriate and respectful leadership, favourable work conditions, training and rewards are ways to increase the perception of organisational support.

These examples demonstrate that the usual target of support is the employee himself. However, it is extrapolated that this focus can be shifted to other entities such as the "organizational support of the environment" (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 35). To be concrete, companies can, for example, reward a designer for an environmentally friendly product design or train their employees in sustainability issues like waste reduction and recycling. In addition to rewards and training, supervisory support and a good work-life balance are options to signal favourable treatment of the environment and social issues. The subsequent assumption is that such signals clarify the extent to which the company values these topics and seeks employee involvement in pro-environmental or pro-social behaviours (Wissmann, 2013, p. 21; Cantor et al., 2012, p. 36). Moreover, affective experiences can bring about change in social and environmental attitudes and behaviours (Dilchert & Ones, 2012, p. 505). If employees have developed such a positive and supportive attitude towards sustainability and CSR issues, even discretionary acts are to be expected. "Discretionary" means that the respective person is free to act or not to act. Such discretionary acts may be personal initiatives to improve the job held by the employee or they may be directed toward colleagues in the form of mutual support among employees. A third possibility is support for the organisation's commitments (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 4). Recapped, employees will identify with, focus on and involve themselves in social and environmental behaviours to the extent to which their employer values CSR and sustainability issues (Cantor et al., 2012, p. 44). What is more, if this appreciation exceeds employees' actual job duties, they may still fulfil discretionary sustainability and CSR tasks (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 4). This is because a close fit between personal values and the organisations' values is a real motivator and thus the chances are good to bring about highly engaged employees. With these findings in mind it is hardly surprising that companies increasingly start to adopt "green" activities, also in order to improve their selection attractiveness (Dilchert & Ones, 2012, p. 505; Renwick et al., 2012, p. 2; Paillé et al., 2012, p. 2).

Review and conclusion

The way to more sustainability and corporate social responsibility starts with an environmental and social vision, which is needed as a guideline for shaping a plan and a strategy. Second, responsibilities have to be assigned and employees must be qualified to understand the company's vision (Paillé et al., 2012, p. 3). On the whole, to thoroughly and successfully address sustainability and CSR, people from all levels – from top management to frontline workers – have to be involved and be aware of social and environmental concerns (Pojasek, 2008, p. 89). The literature review suggests that human resource activities, like training or managerial support and consultancy, focusing on the triple bottom line (economic, social and environmental) entail the potential to create a business

culture that is aware of social as well as environmental issues and their relation to business aspects. The individual concerns of each employee have to converge with the company's vision, including its goals and strategies. For organisations that consequently aspire to this status, it can be presumed that their employees' work motivation and identification with the company will be reinforced. Employees will perceive their organisation's endeavours as being positive and meaningful and thus be more engaged (Wissmann, 2013, p. 21). In addition, activities to develop employees can be used to enhance the skills and competencies needed to create social, eco-friendly and profitable solutions, innovations and ways of doing business (Dilchert & Ones, 2012, p. 504; cf. Renwick et al., 2012, p. 3). At this point, the internally taken measures and realised changes should have a positive influence on a company's reputation and image (Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 500). Certainly, sustainability and CSR values like environmental protection attract consumers and investors. Moreover, it improves the ability to recruit and retain highly talented and motivated job candidates (Kashmanian et al., 2010, p. 1; MacLean, 2010, p. 104, Renwick et al., 2012, p. 2). All in all, it is indicated that sustainability and CSR are positively linked to economic outcomes and firm financial performance (Wolf, 2012, p. 94; Garavan & McGuire, 2010, p. 500). Taken as a whole, the development of human resources – as described in this paper – is the prerequisite and beginning of a lasting change: change that begins in the minds of all staff; change that is continuous in the adaptation of visions, strategies, production processes and organisational structures; change that leads to sustainability, corporate social responsibility, motivation and engagement.

Directions for future research

The focus of this paper was on internal resources and processes. A deeper analysis of the effects on external stakeholders and productivity and profitability was not included as this was beyond the scope of this paper. However, an adjusted study looking at these effects would be of interest. Furthermore, the hypothesised process model was evaluated using *only* a literature review. Therefore, even though the literature review supported the hypothesised model, a specified survey would be desirable to verify the results of this paper. Also, because the literature search focused rather on finding supportive concepts than on finding contradictory reports, a further investigation would be desirable to reveal possible weak spots. In addition to that, literature on the relationship of motivation and sustainability is still rare (Renwick et al., 2012, p. 10).

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