

MGT-422

Corporate strategies for global sustainability

Williams Amanda Nicole

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Management, Technology and Entrepreneurship minor	H	Opt.
Managmt, tech et entr.	MA1, MA3	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	4
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	During the semester
Workload	120h
Weeks	14
Hours	4 weekly
Lecture	2.5 weekly
Project	.5 weekly
Number of positions	

Summary

Students will develop the theoretical and practical basis for leveraging corporate strategies to foster global sustainable development. In teams, we will apply the strategic planning process to develop a strategy for solving real-world sustainability issues that our corporate partners are facing.

Content

In this course, we will learn about leveraging corporate strategies for fostering sustainable development on a global scale. Sustainable development is managing in a way that meets societal needs such as health and education while not exceeding the environmental boundaries of the planet and perhaps even restoring nature to a flourishing state. Sustainability issues are complex because they require understanding interconnected economic, social, and environmental issues beyond the firm level. Sustainability issues include climate change, protecting biodiversity, inequality, poverty, and others as defined by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Companies are now seen as key players in helping to achieve sustainability issues on a global scale and many corporations are far advanced on their sustainability journeys.

This course will begin with developing a holistic understanding of sustainability and the role that corporations have and can play in achieving sustainability. We will then learn the systemic mindset that is needed to solve holistic and complex sustainability challenges. A systemic mindset will provide the cognitive basis for the remainder of the course and our pursuit to develop a corporate sustainability strategy in collaboration with corporate partners. Then we will learn the steps of the strategic planning process in the context of global sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In groups, you will work with a real company for each phase of the strategic planning process. The groups will present their strategies to their classmates and companies at the end of the course.

Keywords

Corporate sustainability; strategic planning process; sustainable development goals (SDGs); planetary boundaries

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Analyze corporate sustainability practices leveraging the appropriate theoretical concepts
- Apply the strategic planning process in the context of sustainability
- Assess / Evaluate the current state of a company's sustainability strategy
- Design a new sustainability strategy for a corporate partner
- Defend your proposed corporate sustainability strategy
- Critique the strategic plans of other groups

Transversal skills

- Give feedback (critique) in an appropriate fashion.
- Set objectives and design an action plan to reach those objectives.
- Take responsibility for environmental impacts of her/ his actions and decisions.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
- Make an oral presentation.

Teaching methods

This course combines different learning approaches:

- In class lectures on theories and concepts related to corporate sustainability and the strategic planning process
- Readings and other materials to prepare for class lectures
- Group projects to develop a corporate sustainability strategy - the projects will be conducted in collaboration with a corporate partner thus offering an experiential learning approach
- Critical thinking for individual writing assignments
- Case studies to stimulate active thinking and analysis of complex situations
- Guest lectures from practitioners and academic experts

Expected student activities

- Working in teams on group exercises to develop a corporate sustainability strategy
- Presenting the results of the strategy
- Reading background materials
- Writing an essay to evaluate corporate sustainability practices
- Participating in case studies

Assessment methods

Individual Essay 25%

Group Assignments/ Project 50%

Final Individual Written Exam 25%

Resources

Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)

No

Moodle Link

- <https://go.epfl.ch/MGT-422>