

A Scrutiny on the Sustainability of Different Brands in Emerging Business Environment

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Abstract - The subject of Sustainability is an important aspect for any company which has an impact on the natural resources of our planet. This is one of the important subjects where the young generations must study upon as our planet has limited resources. Initiatives must be taken strictly to preserve the scarce resources and companies must use the greenest ways in their sectors of business and should reduce the polluting factors which cause harm to the environment. Our environment has "a red alarming issues". Some of the manufacturing and e- Commerce companies that are currently using the sustainable methods to develop their business and also protect the environment are IKEA, Coca-Cola, Forever 21, eBay, Ford, Starbucks. Even though some companies are using these green sustainable initiatives there are many companies which do not focus even on the basics of sustainability. It is very predominant that each and every human beings in the world has an obligation to protect the environment by "Three R's" which are Reduce, Reuse and Recycle – all help us to cut down the amount of waste, and we need to recycle and reuse the valuable material so it can go on to live another life as another useful product or another helpful purpose (Seow et al., 2009). This report will be an eye opener for the companies which don't focus on sustainability and the methods that the companies can adopt to be sustainable.

Key Words: sustainability, companies, environment, future generation, recycle, reuse, reduce

I. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of Sustainability is to achieve our own wants and needs whilst enabling to accommodate the wants and needs of the future generations. Sustainability revolves around not only taking necessary actions to save our surrounding environment but also social fairness and increase economic development and keep the resources of our planet for the longer periods. Companies can reduce their waste by using green initiatives. Using sustainable initiatives business can save the way for our generations. Vedan Enterprise Corporation, Taiwan was established in 1954. And Vedan Vietnam Enterprise Corporation Limited was established in 1991 (Vedan, 2018). The company headquartered in Long Thanh District, Dong Nai province which is a part of the biggest city in South Vietnam is Ho Chi Minh city (Vedan Vietnam, 2018). Vedan company is the manufacturers of MSG (monosodium glutamate), glucose syrup, soda, acid and modified starch in Vietnam and other ASEAN countries. But in 2008, The Environmental Police Department coordinated with Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment discovered an action to the company for polluting the environment by discharged untreated wastewater about 5000m³/day into the Thi Vai River (Vietnam News, 2009).

That is an issue that the company needs to face to protect the river, protect the environment and also our planet.



(Source: Sggp New, 2009)

II. SUSTAINABILITY LITERATURE REVIEW



“Sustainability is the ability of a program to operate on its core beliefs and values (its reading culture) and use them to guide essential and inevitable program adaptations over time while maintaining improved outcomes.” (Century and Levy, 2002). It means that a sustainable business is a business which can make more profit but minimizes the damage to the environment (Kuhlman, 2010). Sustainability involves social fairness and economic development, it is not only about taking care of surrounding of the environment (Schaltegger, 2016). All of the organizations must consider the sustainable ways in their business. Nowadays, many corporations have tried to adopt the principles of social and environmental responsibility in their business (Werbach, 2009). The organizations are aware and understanding of the importance of the environment in their business in the future (Waas et al., 2014). People and Planet affect to sustain for long-term success in any organization (Hay et al., 2005).



(Source: Worldsteel, 2018)

The three-essential important in sustainable development are environmental protection, economic growth, and social equity (Lackmann, Ernstberger, and Stich, 2012). And good governance also is the basis for sustainable development.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) also is one of the factors can help the business sustain in the future (James,ER., 2012). In fact, even a small business, which put CSR at the core of their business, they also start the smallest change to protect the environment (Rob Fenn, 2013).



The sustainable initiatives in many organizations are Life Cycle Assessment or also called Life Cycle Analysis (LCA). According to Finkbeiner (2010), LCA helps the organization to evaluate the product's life cycle from assessing the cradle-to-grave of production systems. LCA impact on every step of the product's life from the raw materials to their end for the product (Imrohorglu et al., 1995). The goals of LCA done by analysis product with the environment through each step of producing a product (Afshari, 2016). One of the important concept is the "Three R's" which are Reduce, Reuse and Recycle – all help us to cut down the amount of waste, and we need to recycle and reuse the valuable material so it can go on to live another life as another useful product or another helpful purpose (Seow et al., 2009). These are some organizations were thinking about the needs for the company and also for the future generations which have taken upon the sustainability in their business. The future generations will be tough if the resources are being consumed in this rapid pace for the survival.

The Afterlife of a Coke Container

Coca-Cola introduced the world to the first beverage bottle made with recycled content material in 1991. Coca-Cola also is dedicated to increasing recycling rates for beverage packaging, currently aiming to recover bottles and cans equivalent to 50 percent of the packaging it produces by 2015. The materials are reused in multiple ways, from the creation of new cans and bottles to an array of fun and functional merchandise.



Coca-Cola introduced the world to the first-ever fully recyclable PET plastic bottle made partially from plants. PlantBottle® packaging looks, feels and recycles just like traditional PET, but it is made from up to 30 percent plant material. It's available in more than 10 markets globally, and the company's goal is to use PlantBottle packaging for all of its plastic bottles by 2020.



PHOTOS: MICHAEL HENDRICKSON (SHIRTS, SWEATSHIRT, CHAIR, MESSENGER BAG, & HAT).

Coca-Cola company is one of the brands which uses the plastic bottles to create another stylish product (Saha et al., 2005). Coca-Cola company have to take an action to protect the environment because the company produced more than 110 billion plastic bottles per years (Andrew McMaster, 2017).

- Reducing: Try to save the amount of waste you produce. The company announced its "World Without Waste" (BBC News, 2018).
- Reusing: Think of the way to be used that product again in another situation as possible as you can. All the material, company reuse it in multiple ways from the creation of new cans or bottles to an array of fun and functional merchandise (Coca-Cola company, 2018).
- Recycling: The materials which can be used again by making them into a new product. Coca-Cola company recycle content material into different products like bag, chair, T-shirt, ... (Coca-Cola company, 2018).

End of Life Cycle is the final steps of a product's presence. Any organizations need to have the responsibility in disposing of the existing product into the environment. This might be a point to the development of a new product. This

initiative of sustainability gives the organization new acumen and new ideas to initiate in the business and help the organization become more viable (Eric Mieras, 2016). Nowadays, many organizations try to apply the sustainable into their business.

FOREVER 21®

Like you know that Forever 21 which is a leading clothing retailer in the US with "fast style" of their business. So, the company needs to produce and dispose of the product faster way. At first, the fast method for the company to dispose of the majority of the product at the end of useful life was boiler or junkyards. But after that, the company tried to have a better way to reuse and recycle the materials for another product. That is the good changing to protect our planet (HanishaMotwani, 2016).



eBay Inc. is a company that has taken up initiatives of sustainability. eBay company is one of the e-commerce companies that simplifies customer-to-customer and business-to-customer sales through their website. The company focuses on environmental sustainability while using their online platform to reach to customers where they will be able to buy, sell and exchange products which have a longer life cycle than disposing of them away. Customers can purchase used products through this e-commerce website which encourages environmental sustainability by promoting the customers to reuse used products (Erichlawson, 2018).

Climate change is an urgent issue affecting the whole planet. So many people and communities which is including many organizations have noticed the damage that can be affected by the environment and our planet (Sosik, 2018). And adopts sustainability is very important to the environment and can affect to the activities of an organization.



One of the frameworks can help the organization in sustainability is the triple bottom framework which is People, Planet, and Profit (Munoz, 2018). The triple bottom framework can give an advantage for the sustainable company which helps the organization to know more about social responsibility and environmental impact. There are many reasons why should adopt a sustainable strategy in the business. Business can achieve better profit, reduce the costs, become more efficient and provide a platform for innovation of the company (Baumgartner, 2017). Sustainability helps the organizations of Economic Development, Social Development and important is Environmental Protection. Protect the environment is our responsibility in our planet. And prevent pollution and to keep their carbon emissions low is any business responsibility (Proka, 2018). Nowadays, developing biotechnology and technology is a key to this sustainability to protect the environment in the future.



Automotive companies are the most reasons make heaviest polluters. Ford Motor Company is one of them. However, the company has put into action through environmental policies for many years. The company uses the recycle material like sustainable fabrics in the vehicle's product. Furthermore, the company also focuses on many different elements to produce a product and protect the environment too. Like particularly on the six-speed transmission, fuel efficiency, offering a clean diesel heavy-duty pickup truck or the recycle paint fumes. All of Ford's factories use the cooling systems to be making it can run on either gas or ethanol. So, Ford Motor Company owns the world's largest green roof and is the only company to have won the EPA Energy Star Award twice in a row.

Environmental Stewardship

- Reduction of Energy and Water consumption.
- Purchase renewable energy.
- Recycling & Reusable Cups.



Ethical Sourcing

- Coffee Purchasing
- Farmer Support Loans

Community

- Community Service.
- Coffee & Tea growing communities.
- Youth Actions Grands.

(Source: Tacoma, 2018)

Sustainable initiatives can benefit an organization in multiple ways. Porter's theory on the triple-bottom line will give businesses the competitive edge over the competition (Porter, 2016). The main focus in the triple bottom line is towards the three P's Profit, People and Planet and these aspects will help businesses to decide as to what strategies they must implement in order to do its part with sustainability. Sustainability not only help the business in the finance base, it also helps the organizations to create brand recognition among the customers which are any business needs. Like Starbucks Company has done well to apply the environmental sustainability to the company. The company purchases certified organic coffee, Fairtrade certified, and try to achieve LED certifications in any outlets by creating "green store" and using the recycle material to make the company minimize the impact of the activities of the company as possible as to the environment. When the company earns the profit by service to the customer beverage or food, but besides that company also uses environmentally friendly material can be recycled. The

Triple-bottom line is being implemented at Starbucks. Corporate social responsibility has initiated Starbucks to implement and be a part of sustainability. So, they are providing only recycled tissues to the customers. By making changes in their outlets all over their world Starbucks is educating the society and also has a competitive edge over their customers. They have adopted initiatives such as reduce, reuse and recycle. By changing their tissues to 100% recycled tissues they reduce the waste, they promote customers to buy their eco-friendly beverage holder which will enable customers to reuse their can and reduces the use of plastic cups for their drinks and Starbucks also focuses on recycling through recycling their paper waste into tissue. It will create the good brand in customer mind because it will make the customer think that they also help to protect the environment, is also our planet (Erichlawson, 2018).



The first companies to report its emissions of the greenhouse gases was Hewlett-Packard. The company's harmful gases due to the production of their ink-cartridges as they reported. But after that, they have a plan to lay on the environment by taken up many initiatives to reduce the impact. Firstly, they designed an initiative to reuse and refill the existing ink cartridges to educating the customers on the importance of environmental hazards. Secondly, they had an initiative where they waste from the manufacturing process does not end up in landfills (Wang, 2015).



An initiative used by Nike where they are using polyester in the manufacturing process of their shoes. Nike has also taken steps to use clean energy in their factories where they produce their products. Nike being one of the most recognized brands around the world, has taken up green initiatives and this will appeal to their large customer base all around the world. (Angeles, 2014). This will in turn create a better brand image in the customer mind about the products that they purchase.

III. ADOPTING SUSTAINABILITY

Many companies in the world have been breaking the rules of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and in Vietnam, it is not an exception. Because of the globalization's competition and they want to gain more profits, so they

forgot their responsibility to the environment. Vedan company is one of them which can help the company save \$3 million a month by dumping untreated waste (Gezgin, U.B., 2009). The company should adopt the sustainable initiatives to protect the environment effectively in the manufacturing process of the company. The company should manage environmental treatment because every organization needs to analyze and think about the way to protect the environment and also improve the quality of life of the local communities.

Firstly, the company should develop and pledged to build a new effluent treatment system which is a system to pretend that they followed the law of the government. An effluent treatment system will help the company process the polluted waste treatment before discharging into the environment. Because the polluted river needs to take over than 20 years for recovery. As they are highly toxic, hazardous waste was endangering the living creatures in the river and the people's health as well (Duy, T.P., 2009). It is also the way to safeguard and protect the ecosystem of our planet.

Or the company can install the new system to reduce and recycle the wastewater in the company. Because the company discharges wastewater over ten times or more than the permitted limit for the production plant. So, the company can reduce the wastewater. And instead of that, the company also save the cost and increase the profits which are the way the company can recycle the water with their sewage.

The organization should optimize the design of the packaging. It can be done by designing a packet of the product more sustainably. They can use high quality of plastic for the product, and it can be recycled easily after use. If not, with the low quality of plastic, it can be damaged and cannot be recycled and reused. That also is the reason which affects the environment. The other recommendation is that the company can change to the paper packaging instead of plastic. It will be more efficient to be using paper material than plastic material. As plastic degrades over a very long period whereas paper does not take so long to degrade in the environment if they are not disposed of correctly.

If the company tries to adopt the initiatives to set up the new system, it will help the company improve its brand image in the customer's mind. That is one of the important necessities in any organizations. Because we can live without electric, paper but we cannot live without the basic necessity like water and air which is critically for the survival of humankind. So nowadays, the customers care a lot for the environment around them, and they will be considered before purchasing any products or services by a company's whose impact is important for the environment. Usually, they are more likely to purchase from the brand that has related to sustainable habits. It may help the

business to attract to the new customers, and it also can help to increase the sales of the company. It can also give companies an edge over its competitors.

The other ideas that the company need to install are the new system for reducing and recycling the wastewater. It will financially benefit the company if there are sustainable practices used by a company. Because when the company invests to install the system, it can help the company to reduce the water while producing products. The system also can recycle the wastewater, and the company also can reuse it. Because energy and water costs are the most concern for many manufacturers. So, implementing strategies such as reduce, recycle and reuse will help the company be more efficient and reduce the energy consumption, reduce cost, increase productivity, and save on supply costs. Besides helping the company's profitability, it also is one of the steps of the company help to protect the environment which improved the air and water quality for the future generations. That also is the reason why it will be more attractive to the employees and the investors.

After changing the packaging, the company needs to invest more in the manufacturing process because the cost of the packets may be increased and of the high quality of plastic materials or paper materials. But for the long-term, that is better for the business also is better for the environment because all of that materials can be recycled easily.

The company adopts these sustainable initiatives to their business the production cost may be changed. But there will help them get more benefits based on that. Vedan's Annual Revenue is 2.53 billion. After applying some of the sustainability initiatives, the revenue can be increased 15% of the annual revenue because that will help the company more attractive to a new customer and the investors. It means that will help increase sales, increase brand loyalty, and increase the market share of the company.

IV. ADOPTING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FUTURE

In the future, maybe many organizations will try to adopt sustainability because it will give more benefits to their business in the long run. "Life Cycle Assessment" is one of the sustainable initiatives that any organization can apply easily anywhere. Example of the small action like reducing the usage of paper in college or an office or we can reduce using the plastic bags or reuse the plastic bag and can even refuse to use them. It also is an action that we help to protect the environment around us. Furthermore, this is an initiative which is easy to adopt in any business. The Life Cycle Assessment process in the business will start in the materials, so Recycling is one of the steps that help the business which can have more materials and saving costs. After that, the materials will be sent to the manufacturer to be processed and packaged. The company can apply this sustainable initiative in the production easily. They can say

"No" to plastic materials and say "Yes" to paper materials or the other ways that they can use the high quality for plastic materials that can re-use or recycling avoid its damage in the future.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of preserving the environment is growing rapidly as pollution levels are increasing along with global warming. Our planet has limited resources and if we continue to over use these resources and not live in a world which is sustainable then the future generation will suffer. Deadly diseases are on the growth due to lack of waste management and garbage piles in many countries this is caused due to governments slacking initiatives to preserve and play their part in saving our planet. The changes made to the eco-system is due to humans over-exploiting the resources in our planet. This has led to extinction of few species of animals due to loss of habitat. This affects the food-chain which will lead to lack of food in the future to come.

Here are certain factors as to why companies are focusing and shifting towards sustainability.

Regulations by the Government – Governments in some countries have made it mandatory for businesses to change towards sustainability to protect their environment.

Public Relations - customers are increasingly looking to buy products which are greener this has forced many organizations to think about sustainability and slowly adopt green strategies to survive in the markets.

To Increase Sales - Greener products and services appeal is greater to customers than product which are not environmentally friendly as customers are growing more and more aware of the problems that are caused by plastics and other harmful products to the environment.

To Reduces Operating Costs – Sustainable energy is expensive at first to invest but in the long run sustainable energy like Solar, Wind generated electricity is more suitability than Coal and Nuclear produced energy.

Increase brand loyalty – when companies are environment friendly it encourages more customers to towards a brand. As sustainable businesses with green products and services are good for the society at large.

Some of the potential benefits of adopting sustainability in the business are: Reducing the costs, the risk and increase productivity for the industry, increase the revenue. The operations in the industry will be increased through sustainability activities (Hsu, et al., 2016). Because it will help the company arrange the activities in the better way by using the better resources which means that it can bring huge tax reductions, help the business reduce the costs, increase their profit and certain benefits from the governments (John Friedman, 2012). According to Ryan

Prestel (2015), creating a good reputation of a brand is the most valuable asset for any business. Sustainability of the company can prove to the customers, the investors and government that they are earning profit but also thinking to protect the environment. Sustainability will help the business attracts more customers. Nowadays, more and more people care about the environment. So, customers will be more attracted which has more innovation of product through sustainable products. Because the customers will think that using products good quality but also can protect the environment around them. That is an advantage for competitiveness because it helps to increase the market shares in the company and also increase the opportunities in the new market. Besides that, learning will be increased, satisfaction of stakeholder relationship and it is also the reason to attract to the employees. They are more expected for the job that to do something which means more than their salary.

Besides the benefit of the sustainability, there are also many effects of not adopting it. Nowadays, due to technology development any bad publicity of the business can reach to mass within a few minutes. So, the company needs to care about every production process and product. The Government Regulation also can be the affected if the business is not following the laws (Global Citizen, 2012). So, the business should be establishing a sustainability strategy to make sure long-term for the operations of the company. The company can get fined or can be stopped by the lawsuits of the government when the organizations break the regulations and the standards of the government by not using sustainable ways. Furthermore, it will be effective to the customer's perception of the brand equity and the loyalty, and the customers can find a better reputation in even the competitor's products or services more expensive because the brand name will be affected extensively. Our planet has limited natural resources so if all the organizations know corporate social responsibility and the environmental impact as using sustainability for the business and the resources will be available for the next generations (Pacheco-Blanco, et al., 2016). Sustainable business practice will help to save our resources and also help to protect the environment for a long time in the future.

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