Environmental Sustainability as a Corporate Strategy

Instructor: Dr. Sheetal Gavankar  
TMP291SG  
Mon-Wed 12:30-1:45  
Bldg 387 103  
sheetal@tmp.ucsb.edu  
OH: by appointment or  
Right after the class  
https://gauchospace.ucsb.edu/

Course Description:

Consideration for environmental sustainability is no longer optional for today’s businesses, let alone techno-centric business. The issues such as global warming, electronic waste and non-renewable resources are challenging the conventional ways of doing technology business. Ignoring them, or trying to get by with the minimum, means leaving money on the table, or worse, exposing your enterprise to the regulatory and market risks. Folding-in environmental considerations in business operations need not assume a position contrary to that of the business goals. In fact, innovations and management of products, services and business models provide some of the key competitive strategies for doing ‘well’ while doing ‘good.’ However, to be effective on that front, technology managers and entrepreneurs need to take a holistic view of their product or service in the context of their business as well as environment. This course outlines reasons why businesses should care about sustainability issues, introduces environmental management tools and how these can be made part of corporate strategy to enhance the competitive advantage.

Course Objectives:

Through this course, the students will learn about:

1. Basic concepts in environmental sustainability.
2. Widely used frameworks, tools and practices to assess and better manage various aspects of environmental sustainability as part of strategic management.
3. Practical considerations in initiating and implementing successful sustainability initiatives.
4. Key protocols, regulations and market trends in environmental sustainability.
Grading

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Three case studies, 15% each</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Short presentation on ‘designing for environment’ (DfE) example</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Final Report (either 4a or 4b from below.)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Participation in class discussions</td>
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This is a discussion-heavy course, and students are expected to come prepared for the classroom discussions and debates.

1. A short write-up for each case is due at the beginning of the session assigned for that case. I don’t expect more than 500-600 words per case. Specific expectations / questions for each case are provided on the course website at Gauchospace and/or in class, at least a week before the case is due.

2. Share a real life example of DfE. Short presentation; 2-3 slides. If you are in the middle of your own start-up, you can use this opportunity to refine your DfE advantage.

3. Your final report is deliverable as in-class presentation and a short report. Select either “a” or “b”. We will discuss specifics of deliverables in the class. If you have any other topic more suitable for your purpose, it will be considered.
   a. Assess whether and how a company’s sustainability initiatives have generated value and competitive advantage. Preferably, companies that publish annual environmental reports should be considered. Seek other sources, such as the Internet, publicly available case studies, media analyses, academic publications, and financial sources to get information. You will need my prior permission if you want to work with a local company with no published information.
   b. If you are in the middle of your own start-up, you can apply the concepts learned in this course to explore the sustainability strategy of your own venture.

Course Material

Reading material, assignments and other lecture-specific details will be posted on the course web page on the Gauchospace one week before the quarter begins. The cases are available for purchase from Harvard Publishing (link on the Gauchospace course page). Lectures will be posted on the Gauchospace after each class.