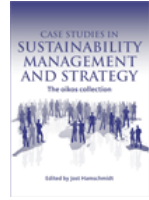




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Preface

This book has been produced to provide teaching cases for management education in the field of sustainability, management and strategy. The collection is based on the winning cases of the oikos Case Writing Competition¹—an annual competition organized by oikos: the International Student Organization for Sustainable Economics and Management. oikos aims to support the integration of sustainability issues into teaching and research at the world's faculties for economics and management. The oikos Case Collection reflects this objective and aims to add relevant content to corporate sustainability education at management schools worldwide. We see the case method as one important teaching concept that is able to intertwine theoretical concepts with hands-on experiences, based on real-life organizations. We believe that this is a method that prepares the business students of today to deal with contemporary challenges.

In view of the growing importance of various sustainability trends, management schools are increasingly integrating long-term economic, environmental and social issues into their teaching and research. Climate change, water scarcity, labor standards and human rights issues are among the many examples of issues that future decision-makers will need to face in their careers. Business education needs to reflect this and provide a broadened understanding of value creation. Sustainability is a concept that demands that organizations consider the legitimate expectations of different stakeholders in their value creation processes. At the same time, it underlines the fact that many sustainability trends offer interesting new business opportunities that entrepreneurs will seize. As a result, value creation processes need to be reorganized in order to create economic capital while developing social capital and preserving natural capital.

Indeed, organizations are increasingly dealing with these challenges. The 12 case studies in this book explore both the opportunities and pitfalls companies and NGOs face in targeting sustainability issues and how their values and core assumptions impact their business strategies.

1 For more information on this competition please consult Chapter 6.4 or <http://www.oikos-foundation.unisg.ch/homepage/case.htm>.

Surprisingly, there are only a few cases on multinational companies represented here. Although there is a growing need, the production of excellent teaching cases in the field of sustainable economics and management lags far behind. Despite the tide of publications on corporate social responsibility and sustainability management, few suitable cases on multinationals seem to be available. Therefore, we hope to stimulate the production of new cases with this volume. As an incentive, the reader will find in Chapter 1.2 an introduction to the characteristics of excellent cases. And in Chapter 6 we provide additional information on external sources dealing with the case writing process, international case competitions and case collections. We also present specific information on the oikos Case Writing Competition and provide short CVs of the oikos Award Committee, an international board of 20 selected scholars from Europe, the Americas and Asia. Finally, we provide background information on oikos, the International Student Organization for Sustainable Economics and Management.

*Jost Hamschmidt
St Gallen, June 2007*