

SOCIAL BUSINESS

Special Issue on *New Paradigms in Business: Engaging for Sustainability*

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Social Business invites contributions for a Special Issue on *New Paradigms in Business: Engaging for Sustainability*.

This issue responds to the key themes of the journal and, in particular, its priority area of exploring the shift in, and the incentives for business practices leading to more pronounced engagement of organisations with societal needs. It intends to deepen the conversation about how business organisations might better respond to the dynamism of societal preferences and values in respect to a range of social and economic issues by giving options and leaving choices to their principal stakeholders. In this Special Issue we wish to advance the debate about the firm-level capacity to secure sustainability at a societal level.

The contributions will reflect on innovative visions for organisational and managerial practices that go beyond the ethics of sustainability. We wish to account also for the cost of sustainability and explore innovative forms of connecting with society and individuals, while exploiting academic rigour and drawing upon narratives from the frontline of practice. The issue will discuss the evidence of current dynamics in the development of what has been widely accepted by the theorists and practitioners as the most desirable and suitable business model – *business societal responsibility*, with its strong emphasis on the ethical component in decision making and operations.

A new organisational mindset, consistent with the sustainability agenda and based on the concept of ‘shared value’ (Porter & Kramer, 2011) would require a transition from self-awareness, social responsiveness and responsibility (when it might be sufficient to focus on minimising or avoiding harm to stakeholders and do the ‘right’ things) towards societal responsibility that implies ‘doing the right things right’ (Carroll, 1981; Carroll, 1999; Stiglitz, 2006; van Tulder, van Wijk & Kolk, 2009; van Tulder & van der Zwart, 2006).

The concept of sustainable development encompasses three dimensions – economic, environment and social (OECD, 2005) and in our view these dimensions are not easily disentangled. At the same time, some would argue that these dimensions are not easily reconciled unless they are embedded into the core operations of organisations. Similarly, the sustainability ideal will only receive support if the issues it promotes can be seen to be as relevant to people as, for example, education or healthcare are (Devinney, 2012). Both individuals and organisations will prioritise issues if they see their relevance to everyday life.

The focus of the special issue is the analysis of lasting solutions to sustainability challenges in and by organisations, be it environmental solutions (the need to reduce carbon footprints, for example) or economic (sink costs and exit factors, employment, efficiency, ethical stance, compensatory mechanisms for negative externalities, etc.), or social (poverty reduction, well-being, etc.) – *the solutions that cannot be quick fixes*.

This special issue will be coordinated by members of the Sustainable and Ethical Enterprise Group (SEEG) at the Manchester Metropolitan University Business School. The editors are committed to secure a balanced representation of academic and practice based submissions. We invite conceptual, secondary and empirical research along with case studies, commentaries, thought pieces and reviews.

It has been shown that the sustainability agenda in its widest sense may only receive support from stakeholders if the issues it promotes are seen as relevant to organisations and people. With this in mind, we endeavour to include in the Special Issue a rich range of multi- and cross-disciplinary topics, as we consider new and innovative ways of societal interaction implemented through business performance, as well as the stakeholders’ engagement. We are looking for contributions that will expand existing research on CSR and ethical practices adopted by the companies by incorporating issues related to business legitimacy in its different aspects. Can business organisations create innovative methods of operation aligned with the changing societal preferences for sustainability while being mindful of the societal cost of their actions? We are also interested in seeing articles that explore how new technologies can help to resolve the incongruity of divergent interests of individuals, business and the demands of sustainability. What are the examples of innovative practices that deserve wider adoption? In addition, how the convergence of the interests can be achieved through the implementation of the innovative practices, procedures and technologies under the conditions of globalisation and strategic short-termism caused by the global economic slowdown?

We particularly welcome interdisciplinary approaches to the exploration of the above issues leading to diversity of thinking conducive to path-breaking insights in the theme of the Special Issue. Research questions of potential interest include, but are not limited to the following topics:

- social initiatives by businesses and evolution of practices of social performance
- the alignment of public attitudes and business practices in social business and sustainability
- socially sustainable business practices and processes and their national variations
- incentives for sustainable choices
- managing intangible assets within sustainability agenda
- the role of global players in creating social capital and their impact on sustainable practices
- self-certification and business legitimacy
- internationalization of CSR
- measurements of sustainable practices
- educating business leaders of the future
- links between sustainable business practices and business ethics and values for organisational sustainability
- sustainable consumption and ethical customer
- new paradigms of development without growth and anti-sustainable development scholarship, green hypocrisy and 'greenwashing'
- circular business practices
- carbon accounting and organisational consequences
- application of complexity science and non-linear systems models to sustainable development.

Submission guidelines

Submission of papers deadline: 08 March 2013

Submitted papers should make clear their relevance to the call, their academic and practical significance. The authors are encouraged to keep the length of the paper within 5,000-6,000 words limit. The presentation and referencing should follow the editorial guidelines. These can be obtained from the 'Guidelines for Authors' website at: <http://www.westburn-publishers.com/sb-guidelines/>

Manuscripts should be submitted online using the Social Business ScholarOne Manuscripts site (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/wpsb>) New users should first create an account. Once a user is logged onto the site submissions should be made via the Author Centre. Authors should prepare and upload two versions of their manuscript. One should be a complete text, while in the second all document information identifying the author should be removed from the files to allow them to be sent anonymously to referees. When uploading files authors will then be able to define the non-anonymous version as "Complete paper with author details", and the anonymous version as "Main document minus author information".

To submit your manuscript to the Special Issue choose the type of submission (e.g. original paper, commentary, case study etc.) from the Manuscript Type list when you come to submit your paper. Then, when you come to the 'Details and Comments' page, answer 'Yes' to the question 'Is this manuscript a candidate for a special issue?' and insert the title 'New Paradigms in Business: Engaging for Sustainability' in the text field provided.

If you have any queries you can direct these to the guest editors:

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