The

‘Commitment to Sustainability’ program

The Center for Industrial Productivity and Sustainability

Summary:

A results-orientated, step-by-step, education program that guides managers through the beginning stages of sustainability. Throughout the program, participants develop customized work systems, examine ways to improve the products and services their businesses produce, and enhance production processes so that the businesses they manage become more profitable and sustainable, generate zero waste, and are a source of continuous improvement.

Objectives (program participants are expected to lay a foundation that will eventually achieve the following):

-Optimized use of human capital (e.g.: professional development, group dynamics, job safety and security…)
-Increases in efficiency and productivity
-Progressive cost savings
-Continuous increases in revenue and profit growth
-Substantial decreases in raw material consumption, energy use, and water use
-Substantial decreases in waste
-Substantial decreases in harmful emissions and pollutants

Guiding principles (UN PRME and SHE protocols anchor the framework of the program)**:**

-Increases in quality of life (inside and outside the business)
-Zero waste (inside and outside the business)
-Zero accidents (inside and outside the business)
-Zero casualties (inside and outside the business)
-Elimination of health hazards (inside and outside the business)
-Elimination of environmental degradation
-Protection and restoration of biodiversity (air, rivers, groundwater, soil, etc…)

Program description:

The program is divided into two core components: **waste elimination** and **resource-life extension**. Each component focuses on having participants develop systems (intra-business and inter-business) that consistently generate (and innovate) profitable and sustainable business practices. **They then estimate the financial effects these practices will have on their business**.

Methodology:

To begin, participants meet as a group (perhaps as part of an MBA program), learn the fundamentals of sustainability and related principles, and discuss (and establish) the sustainability goals they desire. Participants are then assigned a series of exercises designed to help them achieve their goals and are sent back to their place of work to complete the exercises.

Afterward, participants meet again to share their successes and/or difficulties. Group discussions ensue with the purpose of examining best practices and optimizing results. **Because the focus is on building inter-communication pathways and synergistic group dynamics, no confidential company information is required or needs to be revealed**.

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Next, the fundamentals of the following stage are explained and the process repeats itself until the entire program has been successfully completed. Experienced tutors and customized course materials guide the participants (and their businesses) through each stage of the program.

Duration of program:

Each half of the program can take 3-6 months to complete (estimated total program length: 6-12 months) and can be adjusted to fit into an academic semester or year.

Program highlights:

-**Value**. The program can pay for itself (and has done so) within a few hours. Upon completion, it can generate millions of dollars in total cost-savings and revenues.

-**Relevance**. Participants set priorities and goals that are appropriate and relevant to their business.

-**Convenience**. Sessions can be held on the campus of a business school, at a conference centre, or at the venue of a participating company.

-**Flexibility**. If one or more scheduled participants cannot attend due to an illness (or a busy work schedule), fellow managers/employees can take their place.

-**Certified Results**. The results each business achieves are verified by CIPS and its partner institutes (e.g.: *EFMD*, *PLI*, *and others*) and, if desired, can be displayed publically.

-**Profitable Collaboration**. After a business completes the program, it is eligible to offer the same program (under its name) to its suppliers, partners and distributors so that they can work together to save money (waste elimination) and make money (resource-life extension) by creating, adopting, and innovating even more profitable and sustainable business practices.

-**Academic credits**. When the program is done by a business school, participants can be awarded with academic credits for the work they perform.

Participant profile:

To ensure optimal results, the program requires the participation of 20-30 employees and/or managers in order to facilitate, and maximize the effects of, group dynamics and synergies.

If one company wants to undertake the program, participants should come from different departments, different factories, different retail centers, and/ or different company branches.

If separate companies take part in the program, the number of participants remains the same, but should still represent diverse backgrounds. For example, if *Company A* and *Company B* participate together, each company should send 10 to 15 employees. If five different companies want to participate, 5-6 employees from each company should take part.

Assessment and certification:

There are no lectures, no exams, and no essays. Assessment (and certification) is based on achieving the objectives of the exercises and on the quality of the work performed.

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Topics and issues examined in the program (an example)

From the course text: ***The Sustainable Business*** (2015, EFMD)

PREPARATION

-Understanding Waste

-Getting Started: What the Reformer is Up Against

-Establishing Sustainability as an Objective

PROCESSES

-Resource-Life Extension: Service and the Performance Economy

-Resource-Life Extension: Leasing and the Performance Economy

-Cooperative Networking

PRESERVATION

-Mapping the Waste Elimination Process

-On-Going Measurement and Record-Keeping

-Taxes and Legislation

-The Perils of Greenwashing

PEOPLE

-The Importance of Customers

-Managing Change (particularly: the development of continuous improvement processes)

-Building a Team

PLACE

-Building Better Buildings (making workplaces more efficient, secure, safe and productive)

-Saving Water

PRODUCT

-The Hidden History of Products

-Minimizing Packaging

-The Benefits of Reuse, Repair, Remanufacturing and Recycling

PRODUCTION (including office systems)

-Sustainable Production Locations (synergistic industrial ecology / eco-industrial parks)

-Clean and Closed-Loop Production (including standardization of materials, components, processes, system interfaces, etc…)

-Motors and Pumps (efficiency); Waste Resource Recovery (e.g.: heat); Continuous Processing, etc…

Supplemental program text: ***The Performance Economy*** (2010, Palgrave MacMillan)

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