HR’s Role in Building a Sustainable Enterprise: Insights from Some of the World’s Best Companies

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Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D., President of Jeana Wirtenberg & Associates, LLC, leads a high impact, results-oriented consulting firm specializing in building the Sustainable Enterprise, Organization Effectiveness, Leadership Development and Learning. Dr. Wirtenberg is the co-founder of The Institute for Sustainable Enterprise at Fairleigh Dickinson University, focused on educating current and future leaders about managing sustainably in the 21st century. Formerly, Jeana was an HR Director at Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG), where she was responsible for a wide variety of functions to transform the firm and build organizational capacity. Previously she held positions in AT&T Human Resources and Marketing, and worked in the federal government at the National Institute of Education and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Dr. Joel Harmon is a Professor of Management in the Silberman College of Business at Fairleigh Dickinson University, a Distinguished Faculty Fellow of its Center for Human Resource Management Studies and a co-leader of its recently formed Institute for Sustainable Enterprise. During his 23-year academic career, he has served as Department Chair, President of the University Faculty Senate, President of the Eastern Academy of Management, co-leader of the Sustainable Practices Action Research Community (SPARC) workshop series (1996-2006) at the Academy of Management, and founding member of the Academy’s Theory-to-Practice Executive Steering Committee. Dr. Harmon earned his doctorate from the State University of New York at Albany and specializes in organization strategy and transformation, focusing on linkages between people, learning practices and business performance.

William G. Russell
President, SKN Worldwide – USA Inc., Principal, Institute for Sustainable Enterprise

William Russell is a leader in advancing sustainable development aligned strategies and management systems. In 2003, he founded SKN Worldwide-USA, Inc., a sustainability consulting and technology services company. In 2004, he founded the Sustainability Knowledge Network (SKN), a collaborative workspace portal to educate and integrate diverse communities of people and engage stakeholder organizations working to implement whole system collaborative projects and programs that advance sustainability. Mr. Russell has a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Maryland and an MBA in finance from Rutgers University. He is also currently affiliated with The Center for Environmental and Economic Partnerships (CEEP), a non-profit 501c3 corporation facilitating public private partnerships and with FDU as an executive liaison and research associate within the ISE.

Kent Fairfield is an Assistant Professor of Management at the Silberman College of Business at Fairleigh Dickinson. Formerly a Vice President at the Chase Manhattan Bank, he then founded Kent Fairfield Associates and focuses on leadership development and change management. His current research concerns interdependence between employees and managers, between groups, and between organizations. He emphasizes learning from experience in his teaching, including requiring students to conduct community service projects and carry on mentor relationships with executives. He earned an M.A. and Ph.D. in organizational psychology from Columbia University and an MBA in finance from the Harvard Business School.

The presentation will review results and practical implications from an exploratory study of some of the world’s most sustainable firms such as Alcoa, BASF, Coca-Cola, Intel, Royal Philips, Novartis, and Unilever focused on their sustainability journeys and the role that Human Resources is playing. Topics include:

- Six core qualities of sustainable enterprises
- How HR can contribute
- Discussion of future directions for research and practice

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