SUSTAINABLE HR RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (SHRRC)

ANNOUNCING A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR ORGANIZATIONS ON THE JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABILITY

OVERVIEW

Organizations today face the critical sustainability challenge of balancing social, environmental and economic factors for short- and long-term performance. The Sustainable HR Research Consortium (SHRRC) is being established in Spring 2007 to bring together a select group of forward-thinking HR executives. The Research Consortium builds on the results from recent exploratory research with nine of the world’s most sustainable companies, published in Human Resource Planning Journal’s special issue on the “Triple Bottom Line: HR’s Contribution,”¹ and a worldwide survey of more than 1500 HR and line executives.²

Our exploratory research found that these exemplary firms evidenced robust human resource activities related to sustainability in a broad spectrum of areas, with the HR function playing an active role in most. HR involvement around sustainability tended to be greatest in the more traditional HR areas such as leadership development, training, talent management, ethics, diversity, and employee engagement. A key finding was that “HR’s broad involvement appeared to be more likely in firms for which HR leaders were strategically positioned and influential in the firm.”

This exploratory research identified a pyramid of seven core qualities associated with highly successful sustainability strategies. By becoming a partner of SHRRC, you will be able to pursue the following research questions:

1. How are HR leaders of highly sustainable firms enabling their organizations to effectively implement sustainability strategies?
2. Which HR practices are most critical to supporting successful sustainability strategies?
3. How are sustainability-enhancing HRM practices linked to market and financial success?
4. How does my firm compare to other best-in-class companies with respect to our sustainability strategies and HR practices?

GOALS:

The Sustainable HR Research Consortium will comprise a select group of forward-thinking HR leaders who:

- are committed to putting and keeping their firms on the path to sustainability;
- seek best-practice insights about implementing sustainability strategies from an HR leadership perspective based on solid research;
- would like insights about their own firm’s standing regarding several key implementation factors; and

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would benefit from a stronger **business case** for investments in sustainability-enhancing HR practices.

The consortium members represent companies that are committed to learning. They wish to create the world’s most sustainable companies by maximizing HR’s contribution. These HR leaders will lay out their individual and collective needs to customize the research focus, help co-create the design of the research, and interpret the findings. In addition, our collaborative research project will draw on:

- Data on sustainability drivers, strategies, and practices from a 2007 worldwide survey of over 1500 executives (half in HR) in 14 countries;
- Privileged access to corporate sustainability ratings from Innovest Strategic Value Advisors3;
- A highly-respected team of research principals from the FDU Institute for Sustainable Enterprise who collectively possess over 70 years of executive-level management experience, 50 research publications, experience leading large-scale research projects, a broad array of quantitative and qualitative research skills, and diverse knowledge of sustainability, HRM, finance, environment, ethics, strategy, change management, and international business.

**RESEARCH METHODS:**

We will:

- Conduct in-depth interviews with line and HR managers about HR leadership/practices at 20 varied firms rated highly for sustainability and a comparison set of firms not rated highly;
- Combine thematically-coded interview data with worldwide survey data, Innovest ratings, and firm performance data; and
- Use state-of-the-art statistical techniques to establish the relationships among HR leadership, HR practices, sustainability, and firm performance.

More details are available upon request.

**DELIVERABLES:**

- SHRRC Launch Meeting at which you will:
  o Learn in-depth about research results to date;
  o Co-create the design of the research; and
  o Network with HR Executives from peer sustainable companies.
- Occasional informal progress updates from SHRRC principals;
- Webinar report of preliminary results after 6 months;
- Private Seminar Meeting after 12 months where you will:
  o See comprehensive final report on findings across all companies;
  o Receive confidential, individualized data feedback on your firm as compared with overall data; and

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3 Innovest is one of the world’s most highly respected sustainability rating firms (rated the #1 global provider of “extra-financial” research in the 2006 Thomson Extel survey of institutional investors). ISE has an agreement with Innovest to use their proprietary raw data for research purposes.
Continue networking with HR Executives from peer sustainable companies

Optional (at additional cost): We will make available our research team to conduct an Executive Retreat at your company’s location, where the overall results can be presented along with specific findings, implications and recommendations for your company.

WHAT DOES CONSORTIUM MEMBERSHIP ENTAIL?

• A contribution of $12,000 to cover research expenses.
• Access for research interviews with between 4 to 6 line and HR managers within your firm.

WHO IS THE INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE AND WHY THIS RESEARCH?

The Institute for Sustainable Enterprise (ISE) in the Silberman College of Business at Fairleigh Dickinson University was founded in 2005. Its mission is to bring people together to learn how to develop and lead thriving, sustainable enterprises that are “in and for the world.” By “sustainable,” we refer to organizations that are financially successful while living up to their social responsibilities and environmental stewardship, the so-called “triple bottom line” of “people, planet and profit.” ISE focuses on the critical role that businesses and other organizations play in creating and enhancing societal, environmental, and economic sustainability in a global business context. In short, ISE strives to illuminate two enduring pragmatic questions:

1. “How can we create more sustainable enterprises?”; and
2. “How can we help leaders and managers learn to manage sustainably?”

KEY BENEFITS FOR COMPANIES PARTICIPATING IN SHRRC

By becoming a partner of SHRRC, you will:

• Join a powerful and strategic peer group of HR leaders who are committed to sustainability;
• Identify sustainability-enhancing strategies and opportunities of utmost importance to line management, supported by HR, organization development and other resources;
• Assess the sustainability of your organization compared to other similar companies in the data base to help you on your journey to sustainability;
• Enable HR to make more effective contributions to your organizations by focusing your energies on those areas with the highest impact on the triple bottom line
• Meet your stakeholders’ increasing expectations for socially responsible and sustainable business practices
• Help build a business case based on rigorous research for HR’s involvement in sustainability initiatives
THE RESEARCH CONSORTIUM LEADERS

Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D., is president of Jeana Wirtenberg & Associates, LLC, a results-oriented consulting firm specializing in building the sustainable enterprise, organizational effectiveness, leadership development, and learning. She is a director and co-founder of The Institute for Sustainable Enterprise at Fairleigh Dickinson University, which is focused on bringing people together to learn how to develop and lead thriving, sustainable enterprises that are “in and for the world.” Formerly she was an HR director at Public Service Enterprise Group, where she was responsible for a variety of functions to transform the firm and build organizational capacity. Previously she held positions in AT&T Human Resources and Marketing and led research programs in the federal government at the National Institute of Education and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Dr. Wirtenberg earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in psychology from U.C.L.A.

Joel Harmon, Ph.D., 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 and a director of its Institute for Sustainable Enterprise. During his 24-year academic career, he has served in numerous leadership positions for the university and for professional associations. Dr. Harmon earned his doctorate from the State University of New York at Albany and specializes in organizational strategy and transformation, focusing on linkages among people, learning practices and business performance. He has published in a variety of leading academic and practitioner journals, receiving awards for his papers and case studies.

William G. Russell is president of SKN Worldwide-USA, Inc., which provides sustainability consulting and technology services to corporate, government, NGO and university clients globally. He founded the Sustainability Knowledge Network, a collaborative workspace portal, to advance sustainability. Mr. Russell is a research associate within Fairleigh Dickinson University’s Institute for Sustainable Enterprise and serves on advisory boards including the University of Michigan’s Erb Institute for Sustainable Enterprise and Innovest Strategic Value Advisors. He is the former president of Ecos Technologies and U.S. leader of environmental services at PricewaterhouseCoopers. He received his B.S. in chemical engineering from the University of Maryland and his MBA from Rutgers University.

Kent D. Fairfield, Ph.D., is assistant professor of management in the Silberman College of Business at Fairleigh Dickinson University. He teaches organizational behavior, and interpersonal skills in organizations. He emphasizes connecting students to the world of work through the use of business mentors and community service projects. His research concerns interdependence among individuals, groups, and organizations, including factors contributing to sustainable business practices. Dr. Fairfield was a vice president of the Chase Manhattan Bank and did management consulting. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in organizational psychology from Columbia University and his MBA from the Harvard Business School.

TO DISCUSS PARTICIPATION IN SHRRC

To learn more about participation in SHRRC, or to receive additional information, please contact Jeana Wirtenberg or Joel Harmon:

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