

Period: Fall 2024

Topic: Sustainability and Business: Concepts, Practices, Perspectives

Summary

'Sustainability' is already a quite popular buzzword among the big business organizations everywhere in the world. Sustainability-orientation is gaining ground also in small-to-medium businesses which constitute almost 90% of all business organizations in Italy and western Europe. From the business point of view 'sustainability' means adding value to the existing assets and resources (including human resources) while avoiding disruption, cost, burden, conflict, and liability for the business organization.

Resource depletion, environmental degradation, climate uncertainties, economic inequality and deterioration of social cohesion have serious implications for people's lives and livelihoods. Public institutions and business organizations can't ensure their continuity if the integrity of their community and territory, where they operate and where their stakeholders are based, are not well maintained. Furthermore, by taking care of community and territory an organization obtains moral legitimacy and social consensus from the society at large.

For business organizations 'sustainability' means, essentially, to stay in business (profitable continuity), not necessarily growth in the volume of trade or expansion in the marketplace. Business continuity is ensured by avoiding disruptions and degradation and by adding value to the existing human, material and immaterial assets (know-how, brand prestige). To ensure continuity enterprises need to improve not only the quality of their products/services but also the quality of their own business system (collaborators and stakeholders and value-chain participants) and operational context (community, territory and market). This seminar intends to present some professional experiences (and reflections), in advising entrepreneurs and business managers about 'sustainability' practice in Italy and elsewhere.

Essential References

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