



CORPORATIONS & SOCIETY COURSE

Business 4522

MANAGING THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

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1. MODULE OVERVIEW

Sustainable Development (SD) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are two very important topics that have gained much traction recently. In the past, businesses have looked at their environmental or social performance as another cost center, more regulation that they need to adhere to, or public relations. The majority of businesses thought that their only objective is to maximize the “bottom line” (financial performance). However, many businesses that were established to maximize environmental or social performance have performed very well on the financial dimension. Furthermore, established businesses are discovering the financial benefit of maximizing their environmental and social performance. CSR provides competitive advantages that can make businesses more sustainable and profitable in the long term.



Currently, the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is a way by which to examine SD and CSR performance. The TBL combines environmental, social, and financial performance together and examines the relationships and trade-offs between these three dimensions. By going beyond the single “financial bottom line” and examining businesses and business processes through the TBL, firms can be better prepared to handle changes in the competitive environment. These firms also tend to be more profitable and well regarded in the long term.

2. MODULE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- understand the TBL, and its three dimensions: environmental, social, and financial;
- understand the tradeoffs between different dimensions of the TBL, and trying to find a balance between them within the context of the business environment;
- examine and review current sustainable practices being adopted by various businesses;
- understand future technologies and business process innovations that will impact the sustainability of firms;
- and be able to form effective business strategies that will help firms improve their performance across all dimensions of TBL.

Module 2: Managing The Triple Bottom Line

Class and Topic Schedule

Environmental Bottom Line	
Case / guest / exercise	Topic
5. Indian Oil Company	Issues regarding pollution and public perception
6. Hydro: From Utsira to Future Energy Solutions	Development of alternative energy
Social Bottom Line	
Case / guest / exercise	Topic
7. Nestle Nescafe's Partners	The role that customers play in setting expectations
8. Inditex: Outsourcing in Tanger	Developing sustainable suppliers
9. Guest speaker on what companies are doing to address TBL issues	How companies deal with environmental and social issues
10. Banco Solidario: Microfinance	Microfinance and its impact on local communities
11. RBC Financial Group	Applying the TBL to investment decisions
12. Unitus: Microfinance 2.0	The future of microfinance
Course Wrap-up	
Case / guest / exercise	Topic
19, 20. Group presentations and course wrap-up	Evaluating the future of corporations