

Challenges for Sustainability v3.0 in businesses:

Applying Solution Focus for a creating Sustainable businesses

How do we solve the forthcoming challenges for sustainability initiatives in businesses using solution focus change techniques?

My latest paper on Sustainability v3.0 attempts to define the forthcoming Sustainability initiatives in businesses organizations, Sustainability 3.0. The paper also identifies the three anticipated key challenges for Sustainability 3.0 and initiates discussion on how can we collectively solve them using Solution Focused change techniques.

Sustainability 1.0 marks the end of green washing and the start of measuring impacts of sustainable business practices. Managing reputation by fulfilling societal commitments with credibility was essentially the focus in Sustainability 1.0. I would call the increasing corporate focus on reporting sustainability performance data as Sustainability 2.0

Sustainability v3.0:

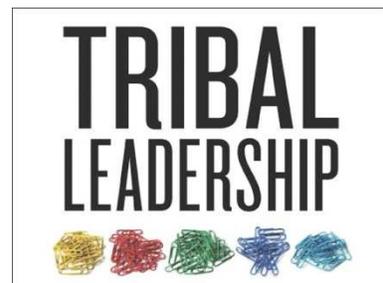
So, how does Sustainability 3.0 look like? It is a state in which all employees in the organization realize the importance of sustainable business practices and make decisions while coordinating with all relevant stakeholders.

The key challenge for Sustainability 3.0 is **Engagement**. Realization of the top level strategies comes only when every employee is engaged in the journey. Also, the policies and regulations will be successful (in terms of accelerating good growth), only when all the stakeholders are engaged.

After analyzing global reports and white papers on Challenges for Sustainability in Businesses” released by the major consulting firms during 2011, the three key challenges for sustainability 3.0 were identified:

1. Creating Change Leaders(tribal leaders) for total engagement:

How do we create change leaders (tribal leaders)who will enable such a transformation within their organizations? Building an enduring corporate culture of sustainability in the business organization, where all employees are totally engaged in the formulation and implementation of sustainability



initiatives, is the greatest challenge for sustainability in businesses. How can we create change leaders or influencers at all levels of the organization to promote sustainability?

2. Communicating the Value Proposition to businesses

Despite strong business cases, the C-suite still hesitates in accepting sustainability as a business value proposition. Probably, the same kind of resistance existed while introducing new concepts such as “Quality” or “Innovation” in organizations. How did companies end up embracing “Quality” as an organization wide norm “Total Quality Management (TQM)”? How can the value proposition of “sustainability” be communicated so that it becomes a cultural norm or policy within businesses?



3. Co-creating policies that promote Good Growth:

Any provincial or federal election adds lots of uncertainty towards sustainability initiatives in businesses. Public consultations to formulate policies to mitigate recession and climate change risks can be more effective by having a shared agenda across the public, private and NGO sectors. How can the businesses, governments and all related stakeholders co-create policies that promote good growth (financially, socially and environmentally sustainable)?



Stakeholder Consulted Solutions:

The importance to stakeholders’ perspectives has grown in business corporations and other organizations

than ever before. Collaboration and Partnership are the key words for Sustainability 3.0 mainly because engagement is the means to the sustainability journey. Expression of the different perspectives and agendas early on is the key to form an integrated platform in which each stakeholder has some wins despite certain compromises.

Need for Solutions Focus:

It's high time we stop speaking about problems faced by companies, environmentalists, consumers, and governments in the field of sustainability. The repeated recession strikes on the economy should accelerate our actions in making the world more sustainable and arrive at comprehensive solutions quickly.

Solution Focus (SF) is a smart, agile model for change unique only in its simplicity. What makes it different and more effective is the framework, in which it is practiced, namely: a) what already works? b) How will the world look once the problem goes away? c) What small steps might get us moving in that direction? The potential outcomes would be simple, actionable steps for tackling the challenges and also solving the problems from the world of optimism.

- **What are those innovative solutions (for the challenges posed by Sustainability v3.0) acceptable by all stakeholders?**
- **What are the immediate small steps that can accelerate the progress of sustainability in businesses?**

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