

# Being Green and Social Responsibility: Basic Concepts and Multiple Case Studies in Business Excellence

Alan D. Smith

smitha@rmu.edu

Steven R. Clinton

clinton@rmu.edu

William T. Rupp

ruppw@apsu.edu

## Abstract

Through a qualitative business case approach, three major manufacturing firms in Pittsburgh, PA were reviewed for their eco-friendly sustainability strategic initiatives and products/services. Undoubtedly, use of green best practices are value adding steps for a company may be initially difficult to justify to spend the time and resources developing such a process. This is especially true when other core business needs are present, such as driving revenue, product development and meeting governmental or consumer expectations. However, green and sustainability initiatives may not be currently dictated needs, but many companies feel strongly that charting such a course would be to their stakeholders' mutual advantage. As resources are being consumed more rapidly, it is logical to enact steps to ensure the sustainability of such scarce resources. The added benefit of lower input needs greatly improves the companies' stance in their market while also adding to the firms' overall profitability.

Besides the many intangible advantages, green initiatives in CSR frequently provide direct financial benefits as well. Not all green initiatives are fully profitable in the short-term. However, many sustainable projects not only pay for themselves, but return a profit. Green construction often costs no more than standard construction, yet it provides long-term returns in the form of reduced energy costs. Improving transportation efficiencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can reduce transportation expenditures. Developing agriculture processes to increase crop yields while using less water, chemicals, and fertilizer can contribute to reducing product costs. And embracing alternative sources of energy can reduce energy expenses, especially in the long-term, by reducing dependence on finite sources of energy.

Alcoa, Heinz, and PPG have all demonstrated that green-based CSR initiatives not only have a positive impact on the environment, but positively influence the internal

organization. As a whole, these three companies are true leaders not only in their respective industries, but in environmental protection, sustainability, and responsibility. As technological advancements occur within each industry, we are confident that green-based initiatives will continue to play an important role in the growth of each of these organizations.

**KEY WORDS:** *business strategy, Corporate Social Responsibility, eco-friendly, green strategies, green supply chains, sustainability.*

**Relevance to Marketing Practitioners:** This case study is relevant to marketers and researchers in dealing with qualitative performance incentives for crowding funding initiatives.

**TRACK: Green Marketing/Sustainability**