



THE SUSTAINABILITY ENTREPRENEUR IN THE AGE OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY – A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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Introduction

The contemporary world forces entrepreneurs to face challenges of various natures (Kates et al., 2005, pp. 8–21). Besides undeniable chances, revolutionary opportunities, dynamic development of social life, progress in the development of IT, it also brings about serious threats which more and more urgently require to formulate radical solutions. In many dimensions of the twenty-first century civilization's functioning, people come dangerously close to the borderline, whose crossing threatens to destabilise the whole system, (Bakari, 2017). Today the world is in the information age, which has led to the development of knowledge-based society utilising ingenious solutions to accumulate, process, use, disseminate and communicate knowledge (Webster, 2002). Information technologies provide us with completely new opportunities for perceiving, examining, analysing, controlling, shaping or regulating numerous experienced phenomena or occurring processes. However, there appears a problem of imperfection as to the degree to which human activities are organised, lack of optimisation in decision-making processes as well as in their coordination and harmonisation at a level higher than that of individual subjects. This is the cause of many different forms of wastage, overexploitation of natural resources, destruction and degradation of the natural environment, a state of imbalance, a privileged position of some groups of stakeholders with respect to access to information or the fruit of technological development (Carroll, Buchholtz, 2009).

In this study, the notion of an entrepreneur will include all (also collective) decision makers who, putting at risk the safety of their own property, determine the direction of development for entities remaining under their dominant influence (even if they do not own such entities in a formal sense). The aim of this article is to create a model combining the evolving concept of sustainable development (which is manifested by the growing popularity of an increasing number of standards, recommendations, policies shaping the company's environment) with a scheme defining the behaviour of entrepreneurs adequate to this situation. The conditions occurring at present redefine this role considerably. A conscious and professional entrepreneur who aims to lay stable foundations for their long-term business activities has to take into consideration challenges generated by the age of the information society

and to pursue the fulfilment of the key standards of sustainable development. Arranging the content significant from this point of view will be facilitated by a conceptual model of the sustainability entrepreneur.

The role of sustainability in entrepreneurial activities

Analysing the influence of the idea of sustainable development on the manifestations of entrepreneurial behaviour, we face the necessity to take into consideration the following two orders: the bottom-up order and the top-down order. The former refers to the bottom-up movement present in the realities of the information society whose essence consists in awaking people's awareness of potential threats resulting from civilizational development. This is accompanied by the establishment of various influential non-governmental organisations. The rich diversity of the forms of this phenomenon produces situations in which, after a certain critical mass is exceeded, a reaction occurs in the form of relevant institutional activities at the international level or levels of particular countries' central administrations (which, in turn, is an expression of top-down logic).

The concept of sustainable development was promulgated in the report prepared by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (known also as the Brundtland Commission), established in 1983. The commission is most famous for developing a broad political concept of sustainable development and publishing the report entitled „Our Common Future” in April 1987. Its activities contributed to convening the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The authors of the report emphasised the necessity of perceiving and analysing the notion of „development” jointly, taking into consideration its economic, social, and ecological aspects (Johnston, 2002). Currently under implementation, the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 – Sustainable Development Goals concerns such issues as poverty, hunger, education, climate change, gender equality, health and social justice for the time horizon until the year 2030 (Dodds et al., 2016). Among such initiatives, the Global Compact is worth mentioning as the one which connects enterprises sensitive to the most important problems related to the issue of sustainable

development (Lawrence, Bearnish, 2012). The necessity for coordinating various activities results in the imperative that certain issues need to be settled at the global level or at least at the level of whole political and economic blocks. The European Union is a case in point. Its initiatives have on numerous occasions shown its willingness to take into consideration the requirements of sustainable development (Huber et al., 2015).

The EU's long-term Sustainable Development Strategy is the main tool determining the detailed objectives and actions leading to the achievement of fully sustainable development. The EU's development priorities and objectives have been also included in many other strategic documents: Lisbon Strategy, The Europe 2020 Strategy etc. (Borys, 2010). The main challenges identified in the strategy are as follows: climate change and clean energy, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production, natural resources protection and management, public health – social integration, demography and migrations, challenges related to global poverty and sustainable development. Within each of the challenges, concrete operational objectives and actions have been determined with a view to achieving the foregoing aims.

The significance of the idea of sustainable development was proved by the scale of its implementation in the legal systems of the EU Member States. In case of Poland, concrete manifestations of practical implementation of the concept under discussion include the Environmental Protection Act of 27 April 2001. Participating in the UN Conference on Environment and Development and signing the three declarative documents, i.e. the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Agenda 21 Action Program, the Declaration on the Principles of Sustainable Forest Management as well as the two global agreements, i.e. the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, Poland assumed the obligation to implement the principles of sustainable development. However, much earlier, in 1991, the Polish Parliament had adopted the National Ecological Policy determining the directions and objectives of actions aimed at improving the conditions of the natural environment (Bukowski, 2009).

The strategic documents prepared by the Polish central administration refer to the definition of sustainable development included in the Environmental Protection Act and to the constitutional principle (Janikowski, 2014). According to them, all activities of a social and economic character and conducted on the basis of objectives specified in strategies, policies and sector programs as well as other documents related to social and economic development, protection of the environment and its resources should be mutually connected and carried out in accordance with the principle of sustainable development (Poskrobko, 2010). The main strategic documents constituting a foundation for Poland's development policy include the following (Markowski, 2016): „The Country's Long-term Development Strategy. Poland 2030. The Third Wave of Modernity” and „The Country's Development Strategy 2020”.

„The Country's Development Strategy 2020” is developed further in more detail in the following integrated strategies (Klasik, 2011):

- „The Strategy for the Innovative and Efficient Economy. Dynamic Poland 2020” is fully compatible with the priority of intelligent and sustainable development facilitating social inclusion.
- „The Strategy for the Development of Human Capital 2020” is a response to the necessity of improving the quality of life in Poland. It constitutes a starting point for the building of human capital and the improvement of its quality.
- „The Strategy for Energy Security and the Environment” – an Outlook for the Period until 2020” constitutes a response to the challenges Poland will have to face in the areas of energy security and environmental protection.
- „The Strategy for the Efficient State 2020” is oriented towards the shaping of an open, helpful, effective and efficient state characterised by a strong international position and a high degree of its citizens' participation in the social and political life.
- „The Strategy for the Development of Social Capital 2020” is oriented toward social capital constituting a factor important for the country's development and the one that needs strengthening. The strategy assumes that actions to be undertaken should contribute to an increase in mutual trust among people and facilitate improvement in the level of trust in the state institutions and authorities.

In addition, in this context, the following documents could also be mentioned:

- „The National Strategy for Regional Development 2010–2020: Regions, Cities, Rural Areas” determines the goals for the regional development policy with respect to both rural and urban areas and defines their relationships with other public policies with a clearly territorial orientation (Makiela, 2009). The strategy applies also to the issue of reconciling the country's different development-related interests connected with the regions' competitiveness and its strengthening at the national and international levels, as well as preventing excessive and socially or politically unacceptable differences between the regions and within particular regions (Marszał, Makiela, 2005).
- „The Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Rural Areas, Agriculture and Fishing for the Years 2012–2020” provides for the preservation of the unique character of rural areas thanks to the sustainable development of competitive agriculture and fishing. Thanks to the fulfilment of this condition, rural areas will become attractive places for working, living, resting and conducting agricultural or non-agricultural business activities, and their inhabitants will have a broad access to high quality public services (Kamińska, 2016).

The concept of sustainable development has been reflected in many strategies, policies, sector programs and other strategic documents prepared in all the EU Member States as well as other leading economies all over the world. Besides the foregoing examples, the issue under

discussion has been illustrated interestingly by universal sets of norms collected in the form of such standards as SA 8000, AA 1000 or ISO 26000 (Herriott, 2016). Therefore, if we treat the described standards, policies, recommendations (regardless of whether they are created in bottom-up or top-down logic) as an expression of expectations of an ever-higher awareness of the information society, then we face the question of entrepreneur's behaviour adequate to such challenges. Finding the answer to this question can be achieved by imposing a type of activity on the described circumstances. The entrepreneur should make an attempt to define his own behaviour in the light of violations of space determined by socially sensitive problems that he will be able to see through such a procedure. Achieving this awareness will allow him to rationally decide with whom (in the social environment) and in what area, establish a relationship to build a social consensus around the developed enterprise. The sustainability entrepreneur is precisely facing such a challenge.

Model of the sustainability entrepreneur

From the point of view of enterprises and entrepreneurs managing them, sustainable development means acceptance of restrictions in pursuit of one's own needs and plans because of the welfare of the environment: the economic, social and ecological systems (Thomas, 2016). The point is to ensure that these external functional systems maintain their possibilities of continuous recreation and regeneration without a damage to their potential, nature, characteristic features and

parameters (Saling, 2015, pp. 117–127). Simultaneously, every organisation should take care of the foregoing elements of reality in view of its own best interest because this could potentially provide it with favourable conditions for unlimited expansion and duration. Thus, the goal is to become aware of the feedback loop or interdependence occurring between a particular entity and the environment in which it exists for a long period of time (Geissdoerfer et al., 2016, pp. 757–768). In this context, it becomes obvious that every organisation is responsible for all the actions it undertakes. This applies also to situations in which an organisation has even an indirect impact on other entities' actions, generating consequences significant for the whole community. Fulfilling their duties, the sustainability entrepreneur representing the organisation will first of all spare no efforts to follow the win-win strategy in contacts with the environment, to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the whole community, to conduct dialogues with the environment and to solve arising problems, to limit the negative consequences of their activities for the environment – also in the long term perspective (Saling, 2017, pp. 169–176).

The sustainability entrepreneur model (Figure 1) constitutes a tool for conducting structured analyses of pro-development decision-making options available to an organisation in an environment exposed to permanent degradation in consequence of undertaken actions. It contains a series of mutually related elements taking into account different aspects of the issue under discussion. The basic element is the division of the analysed reality into its internal dimension and external

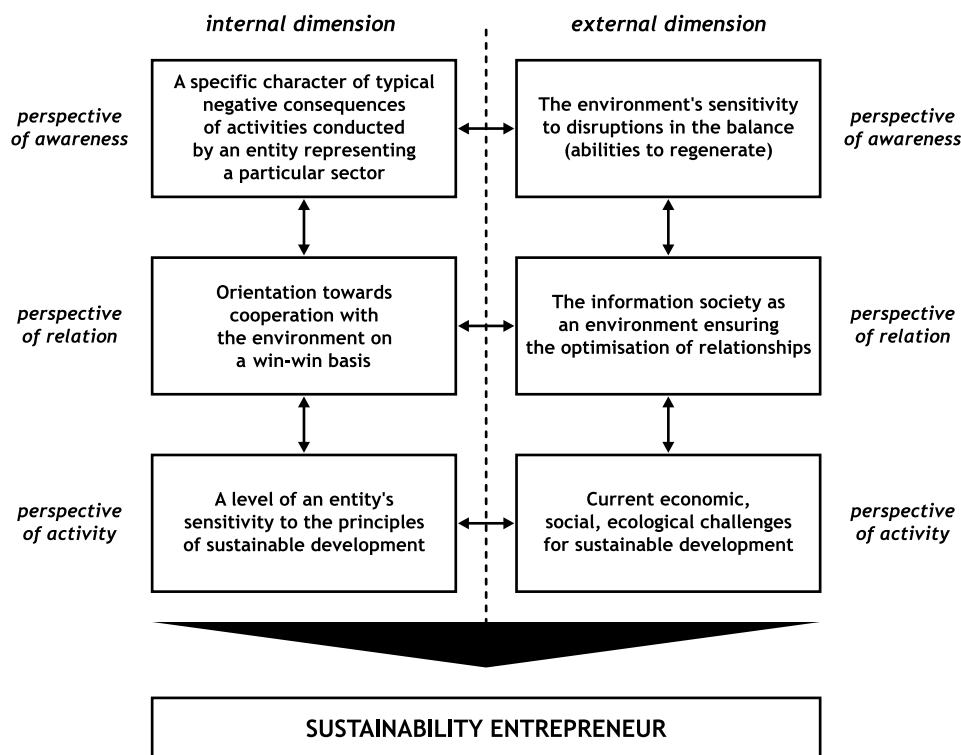


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the sustainability entrepreneur
Source: own research

dimension. The former is connected directly with a concrete entity's activity, adopted standards, rules, norms of conduct. The latter describes objective conditions, an environmental context, laws and rules determining the environment's experience of all permanent and material consequences of actions taken by a given organisation. Thus, the specification of the negative consequences (nuisance) of activities conducted by an entity belonging to a particular sector, which is emphasised in the model, corresponds to a profile of the environment's sensitivity to disruptions of its balance or abilities to regenerate. The important thing is both the possibility to repair a potential damage, using the environment's own resources (without additional intervention from the outside) and a situation when this takes place thanks to mechanisms which are the subject of active support provided by the organisation generating disruptions. The model makes it possible to analyse a situation in the context of the three key perspectives: awareness, relation and activity. In practice, this model can be reproduced in the form of a set of the following leading questions to which answers need to be provided:

- To what extent does an organisation's activity stand in opposition to the idea of sustainable development?
- Who is worried about the negative consequences of the organisation's activities?
- What do an organisation's efforts taking into consideration the idea of sustainable development consist in?

In the presented model, it has been assumed that an entity undertaking pro-development actions may, to a varying degree, manifest an orientation towards cooperation with the environment on a win-win basis. It is important that this relationship takes place within the information society, where efficient circulation of information ensures dissemination of knowledge on optimum solutions, manner of conduct and objectives worth pursuing. It means that we deal with conditions favourable for creation of various effective communication and information relationships which foster cooperation, but also with requirements concerning complete transparency of undertaken actions as they are easy to monitor openly and publicly (Kahle, Gurel-Atay, 2014). In this case, a mechanism of social control based on efficient circulation of information constitutes a supplement to the feedback loop disciplining the entrepreneur's actions. Advanced solutions in the field of distribution and information analyses based on information IT technologies, the dynamically progressing virtualization of all spheres of life (Bauer, Baran, 2015, pp. 128–134) force organisations to pay close attention to indirect consequences of their own initiatives or established relationships, even when they do not contribute to the destruction of the environment. This also proves the importance of the process dimension of the whole phenomenon as a sequence of dynamic actions undertaken by various entities joined by a network of relationships and sharing responsibility for the final effect of functioning of such a complex whole. Information technologies constitute here a specific catalyst of

observable changes. The outlined conditions contribute to the optimisation of a number of complex undertakings that require cooperation with a view to reduce consumption of resources and labour input. Thus, we deal with a situation where the traditional boundaries of organisations gradually disappear due to a growing utilisation of IT solutions which allow a deeper coordination, combination and harmonization of the activities of entities that previously constituted separate units. What becomes more and more important is a new category of responsibility connected with selecting a network within which efforts oriented towards integration are made. From this perspective, what is clearly visible is the necessity to analyse all the relationships and their consequences which, even indirectly, are related to selecting an organisation's development path in the information society. Hence the sustainability entrepreneur can be regarded as both a material concept (a set of features characteristic of a particular attitude manifested by concrete people) and a universal, non-material idea which is important to function in the information society.

A separate issue analysed within the scope of the presented model is the crystallisation of an entity's sensitivity level to the requirements of sustainable development because it is a result of decisions, priorities of the entrepreneur responsible for implementing a development strategy in the world of the information society (Freeman, Moutchnik, 2013, pp. 5–9). This level can be presented by means of a conventional scale whose proposed form has been expressed in the following list:

1. reluctance (conducting activities evidently contrary to the Sustainable Development Goals);
2. indifference (activities neutral towards the Sustainable Development Goals);
3. kindness (in conducted activities, it is possible to perceive intentional, not accidental, individual actions taking into consideration the Sustainable Development Goals);
4. support (the Sustainable Development Goals are, as it were, ingrained in the concept of conducted activities, but they are not the leading motive);
5. propagation (conducting activities oriented strictly towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The whole concept of conducted activities, the business model is built around the Sustainable Development Goals).

Used in this context, the phrase Sustainable Development Goals constitutes a reality requiring greater precision or adopting a particular convention. In the contemporary world, we certainly move around problems from the economic, social or ecological spheres. However, in order to introduce an element of precision, to reduce the subjective character of qualitative assessments, it is proposed to refer, for example, to the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (UN SDG 2030) as a point of reference in case of implementing the model. Having such an objectivised list of challenges valid at a given time allows the sustainability entrepreneur to start necessary work quickly and efficiently.



Practising entrepreneurial, sustainable dialogue with the information society

As it has been emphasised above, the Conceptual Model of Sustainability Entrepreneur has a universal character, which means that it can be applied to either individuals or organisations. This is so because it presents a certain attitude, a set of characteristic qualities in case of behaving in a particular way, which proves sensitivity to the issue of sustainable development in the context of challenges arising in a given period of time. However, what is of primary importance is a particular skill to establish and continue an effective dialogue, to maintain successful communication in the space of the information society with respect to a possibility of reconciling the needs of conducted activities with those of the environment in which such activities are conducted. The aforementioned institutional support constitutes a basis for developing individual solutions adjusted to the specific character of any sector, type or scale of activities. In this respect, the number of practical possibilities is infinite; therefore, the usefulness of the model under discussion can be illustrated best by means of selected empirical examples allowing a comprehensive reference to all principal aspects included within the created theoretical construct.

The United Nations Global Compact based in New York can constitute a foundation in the form of institutional solutions to be used as a specimen element providing the necessary content for the entrepreneur's dialogue conducted with the information society. The UN Global Compact is a leading platform for the development, implementation and propagation of responsible and sustainable corporate policies. It supports the process of disseminating the 10 principles concerning human rights, employee rights, environmental protection, prevention of corruption, and pursuit of the UN's main goals in business communities all over the world. The organisation is also involved in developing international business standards on the basis of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The principles of the Global Compact concern four separate areas of sustainable development: human rights, work standards, the area of environmental protection, prevention of corruption. According to the idea motivating its founders, participation in the Global Compact is to help enterprises to achieve many key benefits consistent with social interests and general tendencies in the development of mankind (within the scope of responsible business practices and inter-sectoral partnership):

- global and local opportunities for establishing dialogue and cooperation in the key areas with other business entities, non-governmental and employee organisations, as well as government authorities,
- sharing experience and good practices constituting inspiration for introducing practical solutions as well as effective strategies for coping with problems and challenges,
- possibility of using the UN's vast resources with respect to issues concerning development,
- using the UN's global reach and organisational potential to establish relationships with governments and other stakeholders,

- social approval for conducting activities, particularly in developing countries, in view of the fact that business practices are based on universal values,
- a better reputation of a brand and its increasing value in the eyes of consumers and investors (particularly in the context of changing social expectations),
- employees' higher morale and productivity; attracting and retaining employees with best qualifications,
- increased operational effectiveness, for example due to better raw material utilisation and waste management,
- a guarantee of accountability and transparency by providing annual reports on progress in implementing the principles of the Global Compact Initiative.

With regard to the case studies, detailed descriptions of two organisations have been used. Both selected enterprises are listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange and conduct activities under the business names of PKN Orlen S.A. and Grupa Lotos S.A., respectively. The companies were selected in view of the scales of their operations going beyond the territory of one country as well as the sector to which they belong, generating potentially serious environmental hazards, being the focus of interest for many social groups (representing a high level of awareness of risks related to the activities of the fuel and power generation sector) and non-governmental organisations. Simultaneously, both companies conduct their business activities in a transparent manner due to the fact that they are listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange and have to fulfil numerous information disclosure obligations. The collected data comes from such documents as stock exchange reports, reports for the management, environmental reports and CSR reports. Each case study constitutes a complete analysis performed on the basis of the adopted tenets of sustainable development.

In the perspective of consciousness and in the internal dimension, both companies similarly recognised that operating in the fuel industry directly and indirectly can be associated with many negative effects on the environment. The external sensitivity of the society is expressed above all in the care for the risk of environmental destruction. In the perspective of the relationship, a set of standards was needed to give an opportunity to build the image of a reliable entrepreneur concerned about the environment. The Global Compact initiative was the best external partner with the right potential to meet this expectation. Both companies decided to start active implementation of the Global Compact recommendations and the effects of these activities have been summarised in Table 1. Finally, the actions taken by both entities were broadly in line with the challenges diagnosed in the environment, although their sensitivity to demands of sustainable development is only on the fourth level (support), mentioned in the described model.

The data included in Table 1 characterises the leading content used in dialogues conducted by the surveyed companies in the space determined by the forum of the information society. Both companies focus on messages themselves, irrespective of their forms; however, all examined messages have a digital format and function continuously in the virtual space, within the system of circulation determined by the world of the electronic media. The acquired

Table 1. The Global Compact Initiative in the selected companies

	PKN Orlen S.A.	Grupa Lotos S.A.
Year of accession to the Global Compact	2004	2009
The principles adopted on the basis of the Global Compact manifest themselves primarily in caring about the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent and friendly working conditions • Health and safety of employees • Communication and cooperation • Equal opportunities for employment, promotion and occupational development as well as responsibility for subordinate employees • Behaviour outside the workplace and working hours • Abuse of company's time and property • Accepting and offering material benefits • Conflicts of interest and competitive activities • Protection of information and privacy • Recording of financial data • The company and its environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Customers — Shareholders — The local community — The natural environment — Business partners — Competitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — health and safety of customers — product marking • Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — recruitment — work safety and health protection — training and education — the code of ethics and the Fraud Risk Management Program • Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — environment/ecology — road traffic safety — increasing social cohesion and preventing social exclusion
Other principles adopted within the scope of implementing the concept of sustainable development	<p>adopting the Sustainable Development Goals. The company decided to implement 17 guidelines and 169 particular goals related to poverty elimination, fighting inequality, preventing climate change within the period of the next 15 years.</p> <p>adopting the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Implementing the UN „Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework</p> <p>adopting the international initiative of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development in the six areas (i.e. social capital, human capital, infrastructure, natural resources, energy, quality of state and public institutions). On the basis of this initiative, the company issued its first integrated report in 2015.</p> <p>adopting the CSR strategy and acquiring certification for the ISO 26000 standard concerning social responsibility.</p> <p>adopting the reporting models recommended by the Global Reporting Initiative, adopting the guidelines formulated by the IPIECA (International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association)</p> <p>adopting the guidelines formulated by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) for multinational enterprises</p>	<p>adopting the Sustainable Development Goals; the company particularly pursues the following goals: Goal 4 – Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, Goal 6 – Ensure access to water and sanitation for all, Goal 7 – Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, Goal 8 – Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all, Goal 9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation, Goal 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries, Goal 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, Goal 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, Goal 15 – Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss</p> <p>adopting the social responsibility strategy</p> <p>adopting the reporting models recommended by the International Integrated Reporting Council as well as the sustainable development guidelines formulated by the Global Reporting Initiative</p>
Awards and distinctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect Index • award for „Working Conditions Improvement” • The Gold Card for the Safe Work Leader • TOP Employers Poland and Top Employer for Top Management • The leader in the ranking „The most desirable employer according to specialists and managers” • The Employer for Engineers 2013 according to technical university students and graduates • The certification mark Universum TOP 10 • the titles of the Patron of Ecological Education and the Leader of Ecology • The Trustworthy and the Most Environmentally Friendly Brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect Index • the winner of the Superior HR Quality Competition • the fourth place in the ranking „The most desirable employer according to specialists and managers” • the winner of „The Employee Friendly for Employees” competition • the fourth place in the 2017 Ranking of Responsible Companies • The Golden Leaf of CSR • the title of „The Company of High Repute”

Source: the authors' own work based on company reports



results have a flexible structure emphasising individual data interpretations and show the tools used by the companies within the scope of the Global Compact:

- Both companies have implemented a number of solutions within the scope of their activities related to the Global Compact.
- The experience of PKN Orlen in implementing the guidelines is richer than that of Grupa Lotos, which translates into a larger number of additional initiatives related to the implementation of the strategy of corporate sustainable development.
- In case of both companies, the practical application of the Global Compact principles results in numerous awards and distinctions won in different rankings and competitions.
- Both companies pursue the acquisition and application of tools typical for multinational enterprises, which is to result not only in the implementation of new management standards but also in the building of their respective brands in international markets.
- The implementation of the Global Compact standards allows both companies to join the group of multinational enterprises associated in the world's largest initiative for corporate accountability and sustainable development.

The analysis of the collected data shows that both companies are fully aware to what extent their activities stand in opposition to the idea of sustainable development. This is accompanied by the knowledge of who potentially bears the negative consequences of these activities, and thus, who is to be contacted first of all, who is to be persuaded, and how to do it within the information society. This is clearly visible in sent communications, undertaken measures aimed at including the idea of sustainable development in the particular areas of the developed business model. Consequently, what can be observed is the harmonious functioning of the following three perspectives (provided in the proposed model of the sustainability entrepreneur):

- the awareness perspective (both companies understand correctly the level of threats they generate and their potential negative consequences),
- the relationship perspective (both enterprises are involved in dialogues with the information society, which is regarded as an equal partner),
- the activity perspective (actions undertaken by the surveyed companies are characterized by a high level of sensitivity to current challenges to sustainable development).

This and other observations allow a conclusion that, as far as the level of sensitivity to the requirements of sustainable development is concerned, both companies represent the stage which, in the model description, is referred to as „support” (the Sustainable Development Goals are, as it were, compatible with the concept of the conducted activities, but they are not the leading motive).

Conclusions

The entrepreneur's perceiving the feedback loop between made decisions and the condition of the environment in which they conduct business activities is of

key importance for ensuring a solid foundation for a stable development of enterprise. This applies to the spheres of economic, social, as well as ecological conditions. Thus, the entrepreneur acknowledges the necessity to make conscious and responsible decisions based on professional knowledge and practical skills. What is particularly important is the requirement to take into consideration different arguments and points of view as well as to give up pursuing unilateral advantages achieved at the cost of others. In this case, short-term profits give way to the requirement to care about the interest of all stakeholders remaining in any type of relationship with the organisation. Irrespective of their factual (material or immaterial) form, the sustainability entrepreneur is an embodiment of the idea connected with responsibility for developing and implementing a business concept which, in all its aspects, will take into consideration standards of conduct included in the scope of the model proposed in the course of these deliberations. Attempts have been made to show that this model corresponds to the provisions of such documents and agreements as: the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Global Compact, the SA 800 and AA 1000 standards, and many others. Within the information society, the flow of knowledge, communication, the dissemination of optimum solutions take place instantaneously and on a mass scale. This means that every entrepreneur is, in real time, an object of comparisons and assessments in terms of fulfilling the needs and expectations of the environment undergoing modernisation. In the world, in which the level of the awareness of previously ignored irregularities is rising dynamically, every organisation faces the challenge to be accepted by broadly understood external stakeholders.

Presented in the conducted analysis, the model of the sustainability entrepreneur proves its special role as a stimulator of changes leading to building a network of entities cooperating on the basis of mutually beneficial principles. According to the assumption, the resultant system of mutually dependent entities as a whole exerts a positive influence on the environment in which it functions. Thus, by the very fact of holding a particular place in the network of such relationships, even an insignificant entrepreneur indirectly contributes to the creation of added value for the whole society. On the general level, the presented model has a universal application. However, in case of large corporations, we are dealing with the implementation of global standards. Observation of this type of activities allows for a more objective use of the model. One should therefore strive to specify the model in the context of these standards. The authors believe that further research based on the proposed model of the sustainability entrepreneur will soon prove its considerable usefulness in everyday practices of business entities and also will help many of them to build strong competitive positions in the world of the information society.

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Menedżer zrównoważonego rozwoju w czasach społeczeństwa informacyjnego – Model konceptualny

Streszczenie

We współczesnym świecie idea zrównoważonego rozwoju jest niezwykle aktualnym zagadnieniem niosącym poważne konsekwencje dla wszystkich przejawów prowadzenia działalności gospodarczej. W tym kontekście należy zauważyć, że tego typu aktywność ma miejsce w przestrzeni kształtowanej przez realia dynamicznie ewoluującego społeczeństwa informacyjnego. Prezentowane w niniejszym opracowaniu rozważania oparte na analizie wiedzy z zakresu nauki organizacji i zarządzania służą ukazaniu charakteru najważniejszych elementów rzeczywistości, wpływających na standardowe postępowanie przedsiębiorcy odpowiedzialnego za zrównoważony rozwój. Koncepcja modelu przedsiębiorcy zrównoważonego rozwoju zaproponowana w niniejszym opracowaniu została zilustrowana rzeczywistymi i praktycznymi przykładami wywodzącymi się ze świata biznesu, co potwierdza jej użyteczność.

Sowa kluczowe

zrównoważony rozwój, przedsiębiorczość, społeczeństwo informacyjne, zarządzanie innowacjami