BOOK REVIEW

Services and Sustainability. A Travellers' Guide.

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Services and Sustainability presents a classical combination of clearly expressed theoretical aspects and their relevant practical issues in real life cases. As its title suggests this book not only explains the principles of sustainability paradigm and some of its main outcomes today, but also sows the seeds of new way of thinking that could be viable for the successful stewardship of future generations. For that reason the authors try to present the idea of mutual existence between economic development and environmental preservation. And in order to support their platform the authors provide concrete evidences which give the impression that everything which stems out from this idea could be successfully implemented in real world.

Considering the number of pages the authors structured and organized the book well in terms of its explanatory character. The book is divided into three main parts, but includes plenty of information that deserves the reader's attention.

The first chapter starts with an outline the main concepts of services and the development of services management and marketing. The main question posed is how to create value for the customer. Authors' task in this part of the chapter is to define the true service logic and to determine the system of its functioning. In explaining the foundation of services the authors continue with the concept of relationship marketing which is even opposed to the classical marketing theory. The key objectives of relationship marketing are presumed to be: the creation of value for the customer, customization, fulfilling promises and providing memorable experiences. It could be also interesting for the reader to compare the "Old top-down approach" to the "New bottom-up approach" of service oriented organizational structure. Following this set of thoughts we may find out as unique contribution the way the authors bring out the link between customer relationship management and relationship marketing as its theoretical foundation. For that reason the future development of companies is customer-centred in which he or she becomes a co-creator of value within a complex network of relationships. The importance here stems out of the experiences from customer centric view and in this relation the customer centric approach is duly opposed to the product centric approach.

The second part of the book focuses on the triple bottom line foundation of sustainable societies – environmental value, social value and economic value. Based

on this principle the authors bring out in a very detailed way the triple bottom foundation of sustainable organizations – planet, people and company profits. The necessity of caring for others could be regarded as a key stone in the authors' approach of sustainable services. In this way the authors explain the interdependent leadership in services on a three dimensional level – care for me, care for me and you and care for all. Leadership here is not only a formal position of power but it is also referred to peoples' character and a mature mental attitude. Leadership is also explained as peoples' responsibilities to listen to and care for others. The role of interdependence of services and the matter of trust between different stakeholders are further discussed in this part. Finally, certain questions are posed to the reader as whether an interdependent service is a sustainable service and what the challenges to become a sustainable service manager are.

The third part of the book is based on the authors' idea to demonstrate excellence in services and sustainability. For that reason the authors have selected nine cases featuring real problems and the relevant solutions taken.

One of the most memorable cases is that about Shell and its struggle with the problems of corporate social responsibility. It demonstrates the extremely high price of being socially responsible for one's environmentally deteriorating activities. At the same time it shows the way the multinational corporations can change themselves (even their internal policies and structures) along with their efforts to overcome difficulties with the adoption of new ways of thinking.

The readers will learn much from the case of green financing and sustainable banking. They will also understand the main idea behind the concept of "climate mortgage" and why it is very important for implementation in the bank sector.

Corporate social responsibility and sustainability are also discussed in the hotel sector. Not only small hotels but hotel chains are involved in environmentally oriented service programs. The case demonstrates that the customer should also be involved in the corporate social responsibility programs and further actions to be taken.

Is it possible to stay sustainable when you are running a big supermarket chain? The answer of this question is explicitly detailed in case 4.

Case 5 treats fair-trade problems in organically produced wine. The main question here is to determine the fair price for the cost of organic wine production compared with mass production of wines traded in supermarkets. The concept of fair-trade states the necessity of a social responsible enterprise.

Case 7 is also related to fair-trade problems concerned with fashionable clothes that are produced in companies which treat their employees with respect. The emphasis is on fair working conditions for the producer without the use of child labour in factories.

Concluding, this book could be recommended not only to Stenden University students (as they are the intended audience) but to every type of manager or

entrepreneur who is concerned with the problems of building a sustainable organization. The concept of sustainability will continue to be a dominant feature for the achievement of successful business activities in the future.

This book is very useful reference for teachers, researchers and students in the field of sustainable development of organizations and societies.

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