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The Next Practice of Sustainability Innovation for Business Leaders in the VUCA Era: A Community Enhancement Program

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability innovation has become critical for businesses to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in a world full of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). Thus, businesses need to develop strategic plans by looking beyond the best practices to the next practice of sustainability innovation and inspire human resources through coaching. The community enhancement program aims to inspire the participants to explore creative ways to integrate sustainable innovation strategies, such as cutting-edge green technologies, innovative green business models, and strong leadership, that can build resilience, drive long-term growth, and empower the role of leaders as coaches. By engaging in active discussions, participants can gain valuable insights into implementing effective and scalable sustainable innovation practices and leading with a coaching approach, that will ultimately contribute to a more resilient and sustainable future.

Keywords: Sustainability innovation, next practices, green technology, business models, leadership

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing environment, characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), leadership roles and strategic sustainability innovation have emerged as a critical focus for businesses and organizations worldwide. This session aims to explore how coaching and mentoring styles of leadership and innovative sustainability practices can help organizations not only survive but also thrive in such a dynamic landscape. By integrating these two concepts wisely, companies can build resilience, drive long-term growth, and contribute positively to the environment and society.

In a volatile and ever-changing environment, business leaders face challenges in navigating their organizations. Such challenges require leaders to equip their leadership capability with mentoring and coaching skills (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019). Mentoring nurtures continuous learning and resilience by sharing experiences, while coaching enhances individual performance and creativity. Together, they promote cooperation, teamwork, open communication, and trust, creating a supportive environment. This approach drives long-term success, growth, and organizational agility (Bashir, 2023).

In addition to enhancing leadership skills, business leaders should also see beyond the future to secure their company's competitive advantage by seeing beyond the current practices of innovation and moving into sustainability innovations. Various aspects of sustainability innovation, including cutting-edge technologies, and sustainable business models (Geradts &

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Bocken, 2018). Going beyond the best practices to the next practices on how to successfully navigate the challenges of the VUCA world through agility and innovation is needed (McKinsey.com, 2022).

The target participants, who are mostly at the senior level in various organizations will be encouraged to share their thoughts and engage in discussions. It is hoped that the insights from the sharing session will provide valuable lessons on how business leaders can prepare their organizations to implement sustainable practices that are both effective and scalable. Finally, this community enhancement program on the next practices of sustainability innovation can inspire all attendees to start envisioning a future where sustainability is at the core of business strategies. The insights from the sharing session are also expected to inspire attendees, who are also business leaders to pave the way for a more sustainable and resilient world, equipped to handle the uncertainties and complexities of the VUCA era.

TARGET AUDIENCE AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The target audience of this program consists of corporate leaders in various industries in Indonesia, who are alumni of a notable business school in Southeast Asia. As senior-level executives in their respective organizations, these leaders face several challenges when conducting sustainability innovation for the future. One of the primary obstacles is the complexity and integration of sustainability innovations. Implementing these initiatives often involves complex changes across multiple business units and functions. This complexity can make it difficult to quantify the impact and manage the transformation effectively. Additionally, navigating the evolving landscape of environmental regulations and standards can be challenging. Another challenge faced by business leaders today is developing the leadership qualities that can inspire and move people toward implementing sustainable innovation to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the era of VUCA

Therefore, the sharing session will address two important pillars of strategic changes in pursuing sustainability innovation in the era of VUCA. First is the need to explore future practices of sustainability innovation and the importance of equipping business leaders to adopt mentoring and coaching skills to move all elements in their organizations towards sustainability.

SOLUTION

Based on the problem identified in the previous chapter, and the profile of the target audience who are senior-level business leaders, this community enhancement program presented a solution to answer two major issues: Leadership skills and strategic business insights to survive in the VUCA era. The solution was presented in the form of an interactive discussion session over a casual dinner. The discussion session was preceded by the presentations of two speakers who shared their insights into leadership and sustainability innovation.

METHOD OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

This community enhancement method was delivered by implementing the ADDIE model (instructionaldesign.org, 2024).

Analysis of Needs. This stage involves collecting information about the pain points of business leaders as the target audience of this program in leading their organization in the VUCA era. The

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search for information leads to two critical issues: the need for coaching and mentoring leadership skills and the need to go beyond the current practices of sustainability innovation.

Design. This stage involves decisions to select the best delivery method to deliver the solutions to the target audience. Considering our target audience's background as business leaders and their busy schedules, the committee selected a casual but interactive discussion session over dinner in central Jakarta, a site easily accessible by the target audience.

Development of Content. The next stage is developing the content that covers the two critical issues identified as the problems faced by the target audience. The first content covers leadership issues, and the second one covers sustainability innovation issues.

Implementation of the program. The program was delivered in a two-hour casual interactive discussion session held on September 18, 2024, at a restaurant in South Jakarta. The session was preceded by brief presentations of two speakers, followed by interactive question and answer sessions.

Evaluation. Since this program was designed as a casual discussion session, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program was conducted by observing the active participation of the audience in the Question-and-Answer Session, and the enthusiasm level of the participants during the discussion session. The Question-and-Answer session went interactively with participants either asking questions or sharing their experiences overcoming leadership challenges and strategic decision-making challenges.

OUTCOME: KEY INSIGHTS

The key insights from the presentations and discussions are summarized as follows.

Developing coaching and mentoring skills for business leaders: The first speaker engaged attendees to discuss the need for leaders to develop coaching and mentoring skills. In the era of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity), business leaders face unprecedented challenges that require mentoring and coaching skills to navigate this turbulent environment effectively. Mentoring allows leaders to share their experiences and insights with others, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development. This knowledge exchange helps build organizational resilience, enabling teams to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. On the other hand, coaching focuses on unlocking an individual's potential and enhancing their performance to face future challenges. With coaching skills, leaders can encourage employees to develop their full potential. In addition, coaching and mentoring skills can help foster cooperation and teamwork, which are essential in the present and future volatile environment. Leaders may create an environment where people feel encouraged to take initiatives beyond the current best practices. Equipped with coaching and mentoring skills, leaders can encourage open communication and trust. This cooperative strategy fosters long-term success and growth to enhance organizational agility.

Seeing beyond the current practices of sustainability innovation. The second speaker inspired attendees to adopt sustainability innovation and to see beyond the current practices of sustainability innovation with some key principles. First is the importance for businesses to look beyond current practices of sustainability innovation and embrace a forward-thinking approach. This involves adopting the latest sustainable technologies and practices and anticipating future

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trends and challenges. By doing so, companies can stay ahead of the curve and create long-term value that differentiates them from their competitors. For example, companies can adopt a Circular

For example, companies can adopt a Circular Economy, a business model beyond the current practices. Instead of the traditional linear model (take, make, dispose), businesses can adopt circular economy principles that focus on designing out waste and keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible. Another example is embracing cutting-edge Sustainable Technologies such as blockchain for supply chain transparency, renewable energy solutions, and advanced recycling techniques can significantly enhance sustainability efforts. Companies can also adopt cross-industry collaborative innovations to co-create sustainable solutions that no single entity could achieve alone.

By integrating these principles, businesses can not only meet current sustainability standards but also anticipate and prepare for future demands. This proactive approach will position sustainability-innovation-oriented companies as leaders in sustainability, securing long-term success and resilience in an ever-changing market.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In facing the challenges of the VUCA era, business leaders must coach and mentor their key talents to innovate sustainably to secure a sustainable competitive edge. Strategic plans should extend beyond the current best practices to embrace emerging sustainability innovations, inspiring human resources to see beyond the here and now. Through this community enhancement program, participants were encouraged to explore and integrate green technologies, innovative business models, and strong leadership. The engaging discussions fostered valuable insights for implementing scalable sustainable practices and leading with a mentoring and coaching approach, which was expected to ultimately drive long-term growth, resilience, and a sustainable future.

It is recommended that future similar interactive discussion sessions be organized to provide business leaders with insights into an enhancement of leadership skills and strategic decision-making capabilities to extend beyond the here-and-now best practices. This is done to navigate the business environment in the VUCA era.

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