BEYOND SMART CITIES

Advanced Sustainable Retailing Training





KRISHNAJI PAWAR,LEED AP BD+C,GSAS CGP,ISO 14001:2015,GCP

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LECTURE 3:

3.Sustainable Retailing for a Sustainable Planet

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Since responsibility is such a basic concept of sustainable development, corporations must be fully dedicated to doing the right thing for their sector, whether it requires direct investment, as in food retail refrigeration, or the allocation of finances and resources to particular initiatives.
Company vision and objective must drive commitment from the top.
Pick 'n Pay's 38-year-old environmental policy is based on the International Chamber of Commerce and the Business Charter for Sustainable Development.
Retailers must protect the environment due to their risk.
Pick 'n Pay's Environmental Code of Practice embeds this obligation into its business strategy.

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Sustainable Retailing for a Sustainable Planet

Circularity and smart spaces help retailers save waste, natural resources, cost, and the planet.

For the retailing business, 2020-21 was a period of extreme outcomes. Even as lockdown spelt shutdown for countless stores, ecommerce giant Amazon saw visits to its site soar to 2.7 billion last June.

Sustainable Retailing for a Sustainable Planet +

- The epidemic also swayed consumers towards ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) values, which was a positive development. A market intelligence agency found that 39% of U.S. customers now choose local, independent companies.
- At a November 2020 virtual conference on global economic concerns, two-thirds of German, UK, and Chinese customers considered buying more sustainable items, such as those that lasted longer or were ecologically friendly. Sustainable customers say "excellent for me and good for the earth."
- Good intentions won't make the retail business more sustainable, since fashion generates 4% of greenhouse gases and textiles dump 35% of microplastics.
- Businesses must act urgently, meaningfully, and practically on sustainability as customers do. This article discusses transforming sustainable intent into action, embracing the circular economy, and creating retail outlets smart spaces:

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Change sustainable intent into action

Change sustainable intent into action +

- Not everyone buys eco-friendly items. Unwillingness to pay more for an ethical or eco-friendly product hinders development. Lack of knowledge or enthusiasm in a sustainable living is partly to blame.
- Retailers may enhance ESG participation more readily than pricing by addressing this. Using the correct message to reach the right ESG-minded consumers is crucial.
- By offering green and ordinary items, customers may feel empowered to choose the sustainable alternative.
- An American retailer's eco-friendly, less attractive packaging is attracting consumers. Customers will choose more responsibly if they know the whole environmental effect of several product and delivery combinations.
- Retailers may be able to offset the increased cost of sustainability by cutting other expenditures. Consider waste. Discarded apparel costs businesses $500 billion annually. They may increase production and distribution efficiency and eliminate waste by employing digital technologies like analytics and AI to estimate demand. Circular trade prioritises reducing waste.

Join the circular economy

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Each year, the industrial textiles sector generates about 9 million tons of waste. While estimates of industrial waste are hard to find, one suggests that some years ago, the U.S. alone created about 7.6 billion tons annually.

Covid-19 has made a bad problem worse by boosting plastic and packaging usage and producing mountains of masks and gloves that are being dumped rather being recycled because to safety concerns.
The retail business may start the long road to "zero waste" by implementing a circular supply chain.

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- Circularity reduces waste and environmental effect by developing goods that can be reused, converted into (reusable) components and materials, repaired, refurbished, repurposed, or recycled. Circular principles boost operational and logistical efficiency and minimise resource consumption in large firms with extensive operations and supply networks.
- It is encouraging enterprises to use wood, metal, or glass instead of inexpensive plastic to convey products.
- The technology sector is leading by recovering resources from abandoned items, reducing packaging, and recycling materials to become more sustainable and efficient. Apple plans to eliminate plastic packaging by 2025.

- The company's Independent Repair Provider programme gives repair shops access to original Apple parts, tools, diagnostics, and instructions in over 200 countries, prolonging device life. Poshmark reduces textile waste by selling worn clothing.

- Circular supply networks promote ethical and legal behaviour in sourcing, manufacture, transit, storage, distribution, and consumption. Circular supply networks will not leverage their size to unfairly use natural resources at the cost of other supply chains in their marketplaces.

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Make retail stores smart spaces

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Change sustainable intent into action +

- Data, hardware, and technology in buildings account for 40% of greenhouse gas emissions. Creating sustainable, connected, accessible, safe, and low-polluting environments is a big step towards reducing carbon emissions.
- Smart places are created by combining digital technologies like IoT, cloud, AI, ML, data, and processing capacity to aggregate incoming data. This data, which includes machinery and equipment signals, ambient conditions, and people-related information, informs important choices to optimise the facility, its assets, and its employees.
- Retailing must address climate change and pollution as one of the main polluters. Influencing customer decisions, adopting circular supply chains, and building smart retail environments are three sustainable initiatives worth considering. These strategies must be implemented throughout the retail value chain, from sourcing and procurement to distribution and after-sales support, to make substantial progress.

Shopping for a Better World

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As a key link between producers and consumers, the retail sector is a major driver of production and consumption patterns. Retailers have a great influence on producers, suppliers and consumers and therefore can help contribute to the promotion of sustainability issues within various groups of stakeholders.

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United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) assists the retail sector in these endeavours by:

- Providing relevant information and training to help the sector control its own environmental and social impacts
- Highlighting key measures to green the supply chain and to favour the development of sustainable products/services
- Prompting the sector to facilitate the purchase of eco-friendly products by its customers and to promote responsible behaviour through the development of facilities such as take-back systems, reusable bags, etc

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) assists the retail sector in these endeavours by:

- As the global middle class grows, particularly in developing nations, current spending habits, introduced by retailing during the 1990s, have a major influence on the environment. This is straining finite resources and increasing environmental waste.

- The 2002 World Conference on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg prioritised sustainable consumption and production (SCP).

- The retail sector drives the global economy and connects suppliers and customers, making it critical to this global change.
  Although a change to SCP would benefit society, it might also benefit the retail industry.

- Retailers may leverage a tiny but fast-growing niche market and assure client loyalty by marketing innovative, safer, value-added environment-friendly goods. Some intangible business benefits include reduced liability, improved corporate image, and increased retailer brand value.

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THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABLE RETAILING IS TWO-FOLD:

- To ensure that internal operations are sustainable; and
- To influence suppliers to produce and customers to consume sustainably.
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As such, the retail sector can contribute to SCP activities, in the following three main areas:



01

Cleaner Production and Environmental Management Systems

The retail sector can first control and manage its own environmental and social impacts through implementing environmental management systems for energy/water conservation, waste management, logistics, recycling programs, etc.



03

Supply Chain Management

Retailers can co-operate with their suppliers and favour the development of products featuring enhanced environmental and/or social attributes. Efforts such as greening the supply chain and implementing green purchasing can encourage suppliers to develop eco-friendly products, and to provide information on the sustainability aspects of their products notably through ecolabels.



04

Education and Information of Customers

Retailers can encourage consumers to purchase eco-friendly products as well as provide advice on the use and disposal of the products and offer facilities and services such as take-back systems for batteries, reusable bags, etc.

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