



1st
INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
ADVANCES IN CLEANER PRODUCTION

IV SEMANA PAULISTA DE P+L
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Are Sustainability Management Systems (SMS) really promising?



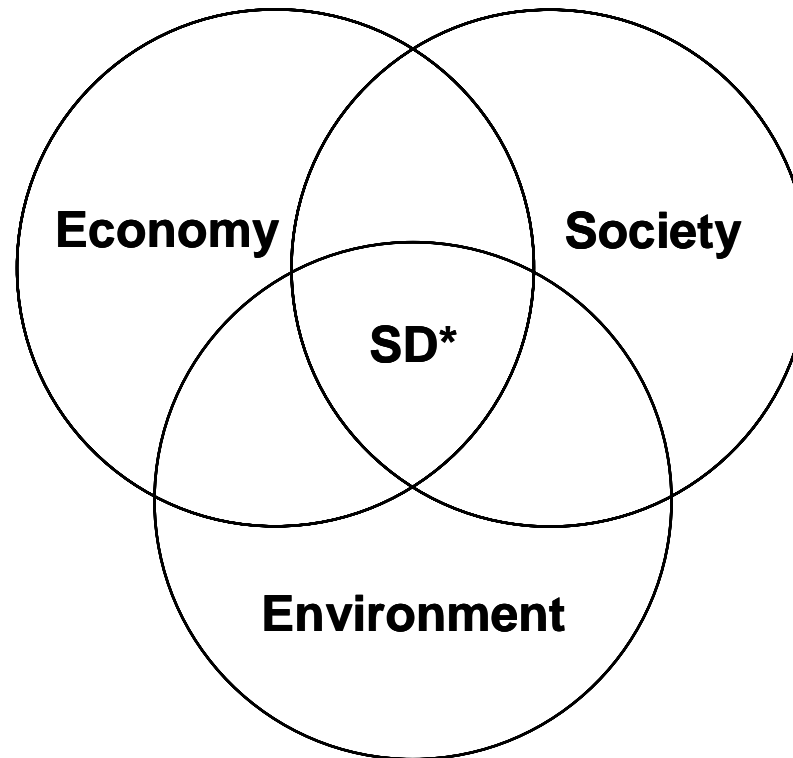
EL SABER DE MIS HIJOS
HARÁ MI GRANDEZA

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What is going on?

- Sustainable Development (SD) / Sustainability → → → big debate

The general idea of a sense of equilibrium for environmental, social and economic dimensions.

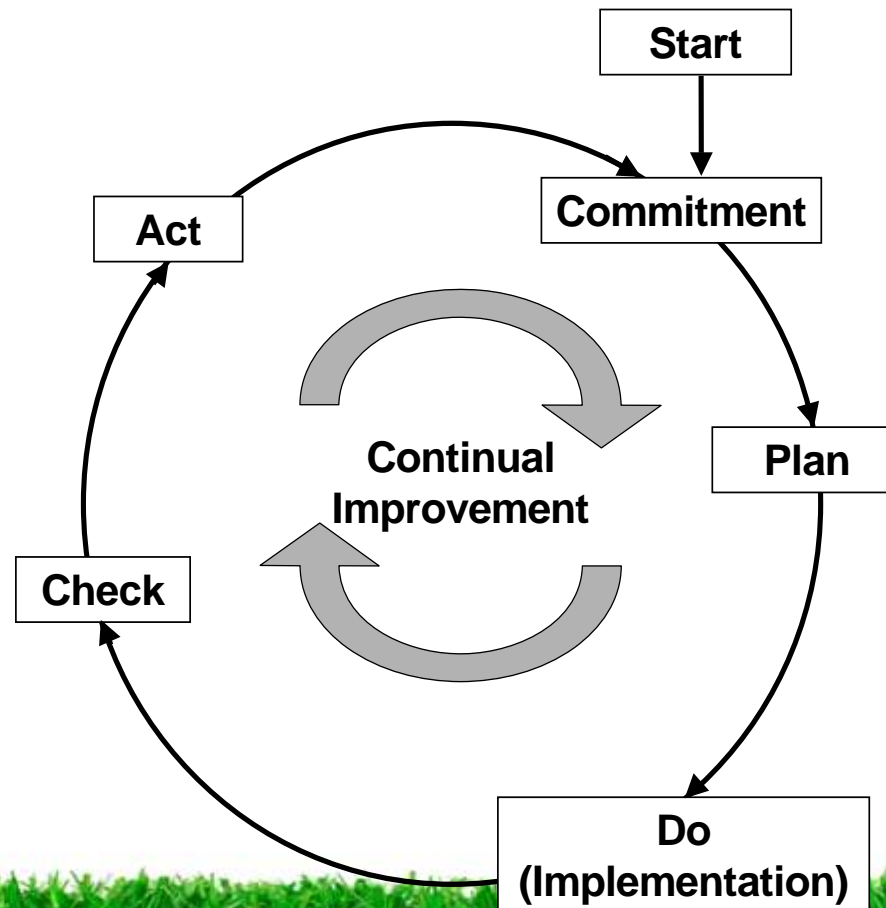



* SD: Sustainable Development

What is going on?

- Management System

Is the framework of processes and procedures used to ensure that an organization can fulfill all tasks required to achieve its objectives.





What is going on?

- Many kinds of Management Systems ...

Quality Management Systems (QMS)


Environmental Management Systems (EMS)

Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS)

Financial Management Systems (FMS)

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Sustainability Management Systems (SMS)



What is going on?

The concepts of Sustainable Development (SD) and Management Systems (MS) are finding increasing acceptance in a variety of fields, including academy, politics, and non-governmental organizations. These concepts are also being used by the general population.

This work describes the perception of different experts by discussing about the usefulness of Sustainability Management Systems (SMS) as holistic systems which might integrate environmental, social, and economic elements.

Methodology

- Qualitative interview.
- Twenty four experts were invited to participate in the project, from which only fourteen people agreed to do so.
 - 9 from the U.S.A.
 - 2 from England
 - 1 from Canada
 - 1 from Denmark
 - 1 from Ireland
- Expert backgrounds included professors, researchers, professionals, consultants, and government employees.
- Interviews were conducted between March and May 2006 (Phone calls most of them, one in-person interview, and one e-mail respondent).




RESULTS:

Insights about ...

- Usefulness of current Management Systems, in general, for Sustainable Development (SD)
- Usefulness of a Sustainability Management System (SMS)
- Incentives and Barriers for SMS
- Process for an SMS
- The Role of the Performance-Based Approach for driving changes






Insights about ...

Usefulness of current Management Systems (QMS, EMS, etc.), in general, for Sustainable Development (SD)


- To effectively help companies, it is necessary to give them clear ideas on Sustainability philosophy.
- Once people are clear on defining SD then companies can set SD objectives that are measurable and deliverable in such a way that the MS would be supportive.
- For MS, the next step is to focus, not only on the production processes, but on the life cycle of the company's products and activities.



Insights about ...

Usefulness of a Sustainability Management System (SMS)


- An SMS presents the idea of an organized thought with a single purpose, where the entire organization, whether it is large or small, is involved in the process.
- Terms like EMS, or others, are too narrow, they have specific kinds of issues. An SMS is a lot larger than that, it makes it a lot bigger, makes them focus on meaning more than just meeting regulatory requirements.
- Both internal and external stakeholders are essential. Primarily internal people responsible for using it, but you should get feedback from people that might potentially be affected from outside the company.



Insights about ...

Incentives for implementing an SMS


- It has to be built on knowledge and commitment and not focus on incentives.
- Money.
- Market signals.
- Recognition.



Insights about ...

Barriers for implementing an SMS


- One of the barriers is the attitudinal one.
- There are also some regulatory barriers.
- Many times training is so confuse for employees.
- The Return On Investment with Sustainability is not always obvious in the short-term.



Insights about ...

Overcoming Barriers


- Examples of illustrative real cases may help to motivate.
- It is necessary to train employees from their perspective.
- To get top management to fully understand the risks and opportunities they face by not taking action.



Insights about ...

Process for an SMS

- It is difficult because you have a solid mentality, you have bureaucratic empire, and you have individuals with interests who are not prepared to give up power.
- Integration is possible since many companies have done so. But the biggest challenge to consider is the mental change.
- A business needs a single system or real Sustainability of the business is not possible.
- In current conditions, PDCA cycle is nothing about real policy development, which is related to long-term commitment to community Sustainable Development.



Insights about ...

The Role of the Performance-Based Approach for driving changes

- Senior management commitment is the main way to drive changes.
- The biggest issue is more personal than the systems by themselves because people have to be receptive to the notion of change.
- It needs to be developed top-down and bottom-up and it needs to involve people of all levels, so there is a real commitment; then beyond compliance is automatic.
- Having an external perspective is always helpful.
- The only way you can assess Sustainability Performance is if you get some sort of feedback from your stakeholders.



Conclusions

- Some of the participants may agree with the essence of the terms of Sustainability or Sustainable Development but not necessarily agree with using these words since, for them, they may appear in some cases confusing or irrelevant.

- Although the structure of Management Systems can be considered very mechanistic, what is needed is to take advantage of them to integrate approaches (QMS, EMS, etc.) and incorporate more strategic elements by expanding the scope towards long-term thinking, by including also a more complete life cycle of product and services, and by integrating the participation of stakeholders even more.



Conclusions

- It is possible to integrate different kinds of Management Systems into a single one under a Sustainability framework but it is important to be clear on what the concepts are and their implications for the organizational Sustainability performance in a way that continuous improvement can be measured and demonstrated.

- A constant factor raised from most of the interviewees was the proper identification of stakeholders, internal and external, and their dynamic involvement and engagement into the SMS implemented by a company.



Conclusions

- Most of the experts think that SMS should be implemented voluntarily. However, some of the participants declared that the design of a proper legislation and a strategic government involvement can be very significant and supportive in its promotion and implementation.

- Sustainability Management Systems (SMS) might not be a magical solution but they can really be a promising and potentially useful tool in helping companies in their Sustainability performance once it has been fully understood by senior leaders and properly implemented throughout the whole company or organization.



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Gracias



Obrigado!

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