

Sustainable Development Is Profitable: SPCC Conference

It pays off to be responsible—this is shown by the examples of Nordic companies operating in Poland. Introducing CSR practices into a company's supply chain may be one way to promote sustainable development and strengthen the company's market position.

■ On Nov. 28 the Scandinavian-Polish Chamber of Commerce (SPCC) organized a conference dedicated to sustainable development and CSR in the supply chain. Invited panelists and guests argued that the inclusion of CSR in corporate strategy influences not only the company image, but also its profits. In today's world, supply chain management is becoming increasingly important. Responsible companies want to make sure their suppliers comply with the required standards.

"Fortum is one of the companies that constantly improve their way of working in order to ensure that the supply chain is optimal—in terms of both sustainable development and working conditions", says Marika Korpilaakso, Sustainability Manager at Fortum.

To achieve this, companies use a variety of tools, one of them being the ISO 26000 certificate, which expresses global consensus

regarding social responsibility in organizations today. It consists of principles of responsible organizations, fundamental practices and seven core responsibility areas.

Suppliers and business partners often share the social, environmental and economic challenges and together form the image of an industry. That's why more and more companies lead joint projects that go beyond signed agreements.

Adam Cich, CEO of Electrolux CEE, said, "Including business partners in our initiatives has strengthened not only our relationships but also the image of a company that actively works to solve current problems and thinks about solutions for the future, both by offering solutions in and through their products, as well as engaging in valuable social initiatives."

During the conference the publication *CSR in the Supply Chain and in Business Partnerships – Nordic Companies' Perspective* was presented. The publication showcases CSR practices in the supply chain of 15 Nordic companies active on the Polish market, among them some internationally known brands.

Nordic companies have developed a number of innovative solutions in this area. "We hope that their examples will serve as a source of inspiration for Polish companies, who want to develop their competences in the area but also forge solid relationships with Nordic companies," adds Agnieszka Kowalczke, Director of the Scandinavian-Polish Chamber of Commerce.

The SPCC is an association established by and for businesspeople with links to Scandinavia. It has more than 350 members and is one of the largest bilateral chambers of commerce in Poland.

The Future is Green

Polish companies have to start focusing on sustainability, even if just to keep up with the competition, best-selling Swedish author, columnist and speaker Per Grankvist tells the *Voice* in an interview.

■ Please explain sustainability. Exactly what is it?

What it comes down to is how you use resources. Sustainability is a way of using resources that is smart, not stupid. All it is is common sense.

■ How are sustainable practices good for a business's bottom line?

You have to look at it from the perspective whether we are using resources in the best way. If I have a plastic bottle or a Coke plastic bottle and I can have that bottle do the same function holding liquid but with 30 percent less plastic in it, then why shouldn't I? Not using it is stupid and doing it is smart, that's the bottom line right there.

■ You have said that sustainability will have a greater impact on the future of business in the next 10 years than the internet. Can you elaborate?

I came to that conclusion having met people who sort of speak with that voice. You tend to overestimate what can happen in one year and underestimate what can happen in three years.

CEOs are starting to get it. If you look 10 years back we did not have examples of big companies, big brand names putting an emphasis on sustainability but now we are getting that. Now you have Nestle, you have Unilever and Nike that are actually being run more and more from a sustainability point of view, which means a local company here in Warsaw cannot say that's only for Sweden to think about or that's only for another company to think about.



FACTFILE

Per Grankvist is the author of the best-selling book *The How - Ways That Innovative Companies Thrive Through Sustainability*. Grankvist, 36, of Stockholm, Sweden, is known in the international business community for pushing more efficient use of resources. The vice chairman of Fairtrade in Sweden, he writes about sustainability for www.csrwire.com. He is a married father of two children.

Grankvist addressed academic, student, civic and business leaders in Warsaw on corporate responsibility and sustainability in business. He was the keynote speaker at a recent business conference hosted by the

The competition is here and they are thinking about it and that's why it's going to be so different.

■ When it comes to sustainability, how are we doing globally?

We're not doing that well yet. Politics is inherently local. The problems we're facing are not local at all, they're global. These global companies are perfectly suited to address the global issues because they are global.

■ How is Poland doing?

I'm not that familiar with Poland yet. I had a great discussion with the heads of an university and a business school. I think their understanding is that this change is coming and they're trying to equip the students with the fact that you have to keep unlearning and re-learning in a changing world.

In terms of big Polish companies... I can assure you they will have to face competition from the international companies that are here in Poland. So even if generally Polish companies are not visible on the international stage, in terms of sustainability, they very soon will be because once again it's common sense.