

# High level CSO Roundtable for Mainstreaming Sustainability in Corporate Strategy

30<sup>th</sup> October, 2013

Hotel Trident, Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai

The high-level CSO roundtable had country's 17 leading CSOs and thought leaders from across industries addressing how they are working towards inculcating the ethos of sustainability in their organization.

The session commenced with Mr. Dipankar Sanyal, CEO TERI-BCSD, moderated by Mr. Shashwat DC, Editor in Chief, Sustainability and were chaired by **Mr. Chris Cook**, Global Sustainability Director for Decorative Paints, AkzoNobel.

Mr. Chris Cook highlighted the following challenges faced by him as a CSO (Chief Sustainability Officer) of AkzoNobel -

1. Changing the outlook from short term to a more long term perspective
2. How to make it easy for people to understand in everyday business
3. Find ways to make it simpler and interesting for people, to implement

Mr. Chris Cook shared examples from AkzoNobel's Operational Eco Efficiency Program to show how they have mainstreamed sustainability in their organizational strategy by addressing sustainability issues right from the design phase. In his address he elaborated on how an active employee engagement plan is quintessential for inculcating sustainability in behavior across the organization. With regards to managing Scope 3 emissions, he suggested influencing the suppliers and working with them would be an effective means to make change.

**Mr. Rohan Parikh** from Infosys highlighted the sustainability strategies that are being followed at Infosys. He stated that the economic advantages of practicing these were huge. For instance, electricity savings of more than 300 crores were accrued by incorporating energy efficiency measures. He also stressed that at Infosys, the focus is on changing behaviors and attitudes towards sustainability

**Mr. P S Narayan** from WIPRO stated that there are two kinds of issues that get the attention of the higher management - the one with a Smile Factors and the ones with a Scare Factors. Smile factors are those issues, which have an economic benefit for an organization and are relatively easier to drive in an organization. Scare factors are the ones which dealt with compliance to regulations and could have grave consequences for the continuity of an organization. The role of the sustainability manager, he said, however must go beyond the above mentioned factors, and drive innovations in the organization.

**Dr. Avinash Patkar** from Tata Quality Management Systems highlighted that there is a compelling need for someone to undertake the role and responsibilities of a sustainability officer in every organization to help put the organization's sustainability priority in place and ensure that the sustainability strategies identified are adhered to in all the functions of the organization.

**Ms. Beroz Gazdar** from Mahindra & Mahindra laid emphasis on how sustainability can be sold to the top management by sharing how other industry peers are adopting the paradigm of sustainability and leveraging the advantages of it. She said, "What also helps is putting in place a roadmap in a public domain as it increases the pressure for an organization to achieve it."

**Ms. Niyati Sareen** stated that HCC being an engineering services organization ensures that sustainability is practiced in what they do and how they do it. Sustainability for HCC is a functional priority not just compliance.

**Ms. Alka Talwar** from TATA Chemicals said that it is about the ethos and culture of the organization that has learnt the concept of sustainability. They lay importance on inculcating sustainability in the products that are produced.

**Ms. Namita Vikas** from YES Bank spoke about the nature of sustainability strategy in their organization which is closely linked to the organizational structure. YES Bank has a responsible banking arm which is instrumental in incorporating sustainability in the entire organization.

**Mr. Paresh Tewary** from JSW stated that sustainability is their way of doing business. He elaborated that the National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economical Responsibilities of Business show a clear roadmap for business to implement sustainability in their strategy. He feels this is where the role of a CSO flows from.

**Mr. Suresh Tanwar** from TATA Motors stated that the Economic downturn has been viewed as an opportunity to implement sustainability measures thereby cutting down costs at TATA Motors, which establishes the business case of sustainability for organizations.

**Mr. Krunal Negandhi** from LAVASA said that the guidelines that are defined by MOEF are merely taken to be hygiene factors in the area of sustainability at LAVASA. However, innovation was the most critical aspect of their sustainability strategy.

**Mr. Rakesh Bhargava** from Shree Cements stated the importance of giving ownership to people. At Shree Cements, they implement the bottom up approach to make sure that everyone is equally involved in the process of implementing sustainability. He said at Shree Cements the involvement of employees in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is immense.

**Mr. Ulhas Parlikar** from ACC spoke about the need for co-operation between different cement producing organizations to innovate new raw materials. He suggested that organizations should look out for opportunities to harness new raw materials which can be obtained from waste material. ACC he exemplified has been working on utilizing industrial waste, damaged, expired medical products for cement production.

**Ms. Sonal Kohli** from ESSAR Energy said that the organization has focused its energy on consolidating the sustainability efforts in all of the businesses. The top management played a huge role in developing the will for driving the efforts in sustainability. She also laid stress on the fact that the business and sustainability strategies should not be separate but interwoven into each other for successful implementation.

**Ms. Meenakshi Sharma** from SAB Miller shared that climate change was affecting their organization in form of water stress and water shortage. SAB Miller does a 10 - 15 year of a projection for the status of water resources in their area of operations. In their organization the business case does not have to be established. It is already very clear at all levels of the organization and there is a concerted effort across all levels to work on it.

**Dr. Satish Kumar** from Schneider Electric talked about challenges that the organization face in convincing companies to adopt sustainability as the key agenda. Amongst many other challenges, the most pertinent one is to be them to be seen as a green organization. The bigger opportunity is not to work with the big companies but the small and medium sector companies. The organization has been able to meet this challenge in a very encouraging way and intends to move forward with the same drive and passion.

These intensive round of discussions were the highlight of the CSO Conclave - II.

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