

TOPIC

The practical experience of integrating sustainability into strategy: Nedbank and other examples.

SYNOPSIS

It has been said that the economy is 'a wholly-owned subsidiary of the environment', alluding to constraints that are determined by physics and biology rather than financial spreadsheets. Essentially, the economy is an energy flow system, through which every cent of economic activity happens with the conversion of energy from one form into another. Trillions of daily energy conversion processes deliver benefits to human beings, while some portion of that energy is rendered useless. This realisation underscores the sustainability imperative and has profound implications for business strategy. Even among companies considered leaders in this realm, the term 'sustainability' is frequently misconstrued as an evolution of Corporate Responsibility. This is most generously a weak interpretation of sustainability, which may be paraphrased as: 'doing what we've always done, but with less smoke coming out'. Sustainability properly understood – or rather, strong sustainability – is a scientific concept, not a feel-good term. It describes the practical limits within which society can grow and prosper over time, and is therefore central to any useful appraisal of the value that a given enterprise adds to society. By reframing strategy around fulfilment of the 'social purpose' – why society cares to have you around – while respecting environmental boundaries, companies can remain relevant and resilient amid turbulence generated as we approach hard limits.

SPEAKER

DR GARY KENDALL

(Strategy & Sustainability Specialist / NEDBANK)

Dr Gary Kendall works on Nedbank's Fair Share 2030 strategy, through which the bank aims to get money working for the future we want. Previously, he spent 3 years in Cape Town with the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, helping business leaders in South Africa to better understand the mounting system pressures that are changing their operating context.

Gary has been working at the intersection of business strategy and sustainability for some 8 years. During this time he served as Executive Director at SustainAbility in London, advising several leading companies on their strategic sustainability responses, including Ford, Shell, Coca-Cola, Nestlé, Novo Nordisk, A.P. Møller-Mærsk, Anglo American and Sasol.

Gary's commitment to the sustainability agenda began when he joined WWF's Climate & Energy programme in 2006, where his main interests were the causes of – and solutions to – society's dependence on liquid hydrocarbon transport fuels. This followed 9 years in the downstream oil industry with ExxonMobil, spanning diverse roles from Research and Product Development through Sales, Marketing and Business Development. Working across Europe, the US and Asia offered Gary first-hand insight to the sustainability challenges faced by one of the world's most problematic sectors. Gary is the author of the WWF publication on electromobility, titled "Plugged In". He has a PhD in Physical Chemistry from the University of Liverpool and is a season ticket holder for Liverpool FC.



Date: Friday 8 April 2016
TIME: 08:00am for 08:30am
VENUE: Rietvlei Zoo Farm, 101 Swartkoppies Road, Johannesburg
COST: R50 pp payable at the entrance – Includes Coffee, Tea & Muffin
Please note that you will be held liable for the R50.00 when you RSVP and don't attend.
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