

Call for Papers

HRM's Role in Sustainability: Systems, Strategies, & Practices

Manuscript Submission Deadline: December 1, 2010

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In the last decade, a growing number of companies have incorporated a sustainability focus in their strategies and operations. Defined most commonly as “the triple bottom line” of setting environmental, social, and economic goals (Elkington, 1997), sustainability strategies are in response to increasing external pressures for companies to take active roles in solving pressing global issues. These global issues include, but are not limited to, social inequity and poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, climate change, environmental pollution, and resource scarcities.

The emerging challenge of integrating social, environmental, and financial issues into firms' strategies and operations has begun to engage a wide number of scholars and business managers (e.g., Epstein, 2008; Hart and Milstein, 2003; Sharma & Henriques, 2005). While scholars have given increased empirical and theoretical attention to achieving a firm's environmental goals, the role of the HRM system in that achievement has not been widely studied. Moreover, achieving the social bottom line has received less academic attention than the environmental bottom line to date, although some recent research has started to address this gap (e.g., Ehnert, 2009). This Special Issue will help fill these two research gaps: the key role played by HRM in firms that have adopted a sustainability focus and HRM's role in attaining the “social” part of a firm's sustainability goals.

With respect to the organizational challenges firms face in pursuing a sustainability strategy, HRM is both a *means* and an *ends*. As a *means*, HRM helps direct employees' attention and behavior toward the sustainability goals of the firm through its overall approach and the individual policies and practices that embody that approach (e.g., Egri & Hornal, 2002; Ramus & Steger, 2000; Milliman & Clair, 1996). Egri and Hornal (2002), for example, have shown that a strategic environmental HRM approach that includes environmental objectives and criteria in HRM practices enhances perceptions of organizational performance. At the same time, the HRM system can be seen as an *end*. Because it impacts the human beings working within the firm, in related companies and in the wider communities it impacts, the HRM system can affect the attainment of the firm's social, environmental and financial goals. The conceptualization of the HRM system as part of the sustainability goal of the firm, and determining how to measure and evaluate its impact as a sustainability goal, has received only limited attention from scholars, including Osland, Drake and Feldman's (1999) argument that a HRM system should reflect the principles of the Natural Step philosophy and Ehnert's recent work (2009). There is therefore a great need to address how HRM can be both a means and ends within a sustainability strategy.

The aim of this Special Issue is to address two major issues facing the HRM field today: first, the role that HRM strategy and practices can play in *implementing* a sustainability strategy, and second, the role that the HRM system of a firm plays in *measuring specific social sustainability goals*.

The aim of this Special Issue is to address the role that HRM strategy and practices can play in implementing a sustainability strategy and the role that a firm's HRM system plays in achieving and evaluating specific sustainability goals.

In particular, we encourage articles that:

1. Address how the HRM approach or strategy as a system can most effectively support the attainment of an integrated sustainability strategy.
2. Address how, and under what conditions, individual HRM policies and practices can best support the attainment of an integrated sustainability strategy.
3. Conceptualize and investigate the role of the HRM system of a firm in its evaluation of its own social bottom line.
4. Theoretically examine how the fundamental principles of HRM as practiced today may be challenged because of an organization's pursuit of sustainability, such as the very concept of "human resource."
5. Help bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing both practical implications of empirical research on Sustainable HRM and by capturing leading examples of practitioner-initiated sustainable HRM strategies and policies via theoretically grounded case studies.

Manuscript Submission and Review

All papers must be based on original material and must not be under consideration by any other journal. Papers intended for the HR Science Forum will undergo a rigorous, double-blind review process to ensure relevance and quality. Papers suited for the HR Leadership Forum (more practitioner-focused pieces, case studies, interviews, etc.) will be single-blind reviewed by subject matter experts. Please see HRM's Publishing Cues for a complete description of each section. Submitted papers must also follow the HRM Style Guidelines, found at <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/32249/home/ForAuthors.html>

The deadline for submitting papers is **December 1, 2010**. Direct questions about content and ideas to the guest co-editors noted above. Direct all logistical questions about submitting and review to Managing Editor Leslie Wilhelm at lwilhelm@umich.edu.

Manuscripts must be submitted electronically using the Journal's web-based submission and review website called Manuscript Central: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hrm>. **Electronic submission through Manuscript Central is required.** Manuscript Central is configured to be very intuitive; therefore, you should have little difficulty creating an account and submitting your manuscript. The online system will guide you through each step of the process.

When submitting through Manuscript Central, please submit the following documents:

1. Document 1: A "**blind**" copy of your manuscript. Delete all author identification from this primary document. This document may include your tables and figures, or you may include tables and figures in a separate document.
2. Document 2: Submit a separate document with information that would typically appear on the document's title page (author names, addresses, affiliations, contact information, etc.). This document may also include author biographies.

In addition:

- Answer "Yes" to the question regarding special issue submission and clearly label your submission for the "**Special Issue on Sustainability**" in the text box provided.
- Include a paragraph in your cover letter specifically identifying how the paper fits within the special issue theme.
- Direct logistical questions about submitting your manuscript through Manuscript Central to Managing Editor Leslie Wilhelm at lwilhelm@umich.edu or 734-748-9069.

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