

The business case for sustainability

Sponsored by



A meeting of the Climate Change and Sustainability Forum on 10 September explored the key drivers and benefits of sustainability in businesses and organisations

The Forum welcomed guest speakers **James Robey**, Vice President – Global Head of Environmental Sustainability, **Capgemini**, **Amell Amantino**, Founder, **Maintenant**, and **Lauren Onthank**, Associate UK Office – International Affairs, **HEC Paris**. The session was co-chaired by **Jean-Philippe Verdier**, Founding Partner, **Verdier & Co. Corporate Advisory**, and **Nidhi Baiswar**, Head of Sustainable Design and Construction, **Bouygues UK**, and was kindly hosted at Bouygues UK's London headquarters.

Robey, who conducted research with Henley business school toward a doctorate in business case for sustainability, delivered a presentation on the drivers of corporate responsibility. He noted that currently, businesses are driving most of the change globally, as they are able to act fastest, however there is huge potential to do more.

His research found that companies were investing in sustainability for several reasons: it was important to employees; it was relevant to clients and customer expectation; it followed the desires of the owners of the business (and the ability to get working capital to operate); it was relevant to how they acquired natural capital (the ability to get raw materials; natural resources, or eco-system services); and for general efficiency, such as reducing input costs.

Amantino, Founder of Maintenant, who works with companies and organisations of all shapes and sizes in an advisory role, highlighted the importance of sustainability incorporated at the

heart of your business. And while the scale of the problem is clear – as outlined in the UN's report Our Common Future – our negative impact on the planet was growing at unprecedented levels.

She pointed to solutions in the circular economy, which uses less resources, reuses, recycles, and seeks out sustainable design – as opposed to the linear economy, which takes resources and creates waste and pollution. Frameworks for businesses and organisations include ISO2600, and the UN Sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Lauren Onthank, spoke about sustainability in higher education. She noted that HEC is ranked third in the Alma Mater Index for global executives as alumni – in essence training the leaders of the future – and therefore said that they have a duty towards promoting and education on sustainability.

Sustainability is now at the centre of their mission, and they ensure that their training is in line with global environmental priorities. This is mirrored by an increased interest from students. Applications to their Masters programmes in Sustainability and Social Innovation has tripled since they was launched in 2016.

The school is now placing sustainability at the core of all their teaching – not just on specialist courses – and their researchers continue to produce papers that are relevant to businesses. They also we work with corporate partners on different initiatives and the funding of new research chairs. ■

Site visit: CP Electronics

On 5 September, the CC&S Forum held a site visit at **CP Electronics**, which specialises in lighting, heating and ventilation control solutions, organised by French industrial group **Legrand**. The visit included presentations by **Tony Greig**, CEO of **Legrand UK** CEO and **Mark Lester**, Managing Director of **CP Electronics**. **Mitra Goodger**, **Legrand Energy Efficiency & Sustainability Manager**, provided a presentation on trends in lighting and energy efficiency in buildings, followed by a factory tour and networking session. The Chamber would like to thank CP Electronics for their hospitality.

