LEADING BUSINESS
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Today, the largest and most well-known corporations in the world – Walmart, Interface, Nike, Starbucks, Cummins Engine, Toro, Home Depot, IKEA, Ford, Toyota, Nissan, Electrolux, and General Electric – are aggressively integrating sustainability action plans into their operations. They have discovered a comprehensive and integrated approach, using sustainability as a platform, can provide for prosperity through innovation and efficiency. In order to do this, they are also looking upstream and asking their many local and regional suppliers to do the same.

During the last decade, sustainability has gone from buzzword to business requirement. Commonly defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” fundamental to sustainability is the triple-bottom line. Unlike more narrowly defined environmental or green initiatives, sustainable actions must be environmentally friendly, economically sound, and socially responsible. While admirable, and a powerful guiding value, the challenge is to translate this admittedly abstract notion into concrete, measurable, and hard-headed business practices.

Fortunately, this has already been done for us through the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development, a systematic and scientifically based approach developed and refined over the last 20 years. It was first utilized with many of the companies listed above, beginning with IKEA, Electrolux and Nike, to name just a few.

While rooted in fairly sophisticated science, integrating the FSSD into the company culture and strategic plan is no more difficult than learning to ride a bike. It is based on four simple guiding principles providing a flexible, custom plan for steps toward sustainability. Each step is actionable, measurable, and can be evaluated on the basis of each step’s return on investment.

Unlike multinationals with large budgets, small- and medium-sized businesses in our region typically cannot afford to hire a separate sustainability officer to develop and evaluate sustainability action plans. They can find themselves at a distinct disadvantage, scrambling to catch up in a changing environment. They do not have the expertise, personnel or resources to set up the kind of robust sustainability education, research and development, marketing, and training programs their corporate clients demand and consumers expect.

**In response to this challenge,** the IU South Bend Center for a Sustainable Future has developed an array of new degrees in sustainability studies to help meet this need. Students are trained in the foundations and best practices of sustainability, and can help the businesses they work for develop sustainability action plans. In addition, the Center also offers regular workshops and affordable and customized on-site consulting services to help local and regional businesses.

The Center will help you rise to the challenge and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the newly emerging green economy.

For more information about degree programs, visit iusb.edu/csfuture/study.php. To learn more about sustainability consulting, contact the Center at csfuture@iusb.edu or (574) 520-4429.