

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF SME'S

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The aim of the paper is to analyze the role of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) to contribute to sustainable development. Companies have different approaches to the integration of sustainable development in their business. Some companies integrate sustainable development practices into their business from the beginning of their activities during the strategic planning phase, while others integrate later or choose to reject these practices entirely because they believe that sustainability creates additional costs. By integrating sustainability into their activities, companies can gain a competitive advantage. The concept of eco efficiency indicates the relationship between economic and environmental performance in which maximum value is achieved by reducing the use of resources, waste and pollution. If corporate leaders implement sustainability as a driver for enterprise growth in highly dynamic systems, the integration process must involve altering all of the functions and organisational levels that guide the behaviour and daily work of all involved subjects to suite new values and principles.

If SMEs choose to integrate sustainability into their business improvement strategies, it will have a positive impact on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while also strengthening stakeholder relations. Such moves can gradually transform a company into an integrated organisation capable of generating long-term profitability while simultaneously highlighting their human side and their leaders' personal commitment to contributing to the community and society of which they are a part.

This study developed a conceptual framework for evaluating the use of sustainability practices. The analysis is focused on medium-sized enterprises that have close contact with the territories in which they operate and support of environmental protection campaigns by integrating them into their productive activities. We will analyse the contribution of companies operating in the private lightweight health care industry. In particular, we will study their contribution to some of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030. By comparing of two virtuous cases, this study will highlight their choices made with respect to the sustainable development. The two cases we will examine are the Santagostino Medical Center (SMC) and Nau!. The former offers care in the field of light health, particularly in those areas of specialization where the national health system is lacking. The other one produces and markets fast fashion optical products. They are SMEs and prime movers and have grown their businesses over decades respecting the

sustainable development.

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