

Leaders for Nature Inspirational Session

Embedding sustainability in the core business – 21 September 2011

The power of a challenging vision

Geanne van Arkel - Sustainable Development Northern Europe InterfaceFLOR

In 1994, Interface Founder Ray Anderson challenged the company to pursue a bold new vision "Be the first company that, by its deeds, shows the entire world what sustainability is in all its dimensions: people, process, product, place and profits - and in doing so, become restorative through the power of influence"

Mission Zero underlies each operation the company undertakes: to be a 100% sustainable company by 2020. "When you hold up a vision that is so ambitious it unleashes your creativity and takes you to places you never dreamed of", Geanne explained.

How do they do it? By using an integrated approach:

1. Eliminate waste
2. Benign emissions
3. Renewable energy
4. Closing the loop
5. Resource efficient transportation
6. Sensitizing stakeholders
7. Redesign commerce



1. Efficiency
The \$438 million question



4. People
Would you like to work for a carpet tile company?



2. Innovation
Expanding to adjacent markets



5. Future
Competitive advantage in a circular economy



3. Reputation
Used as an example by sustainability experts worldwide

Waste

When Interface first began their journey, they started by focusing on waste, adopting aggressive zero waste goals. For Interface waste is "any cost that does not produce value to customers". This includes everything from scrap materials and defective product to misdirected shipments or incorrect invoices. And as these efforts evolved, this definition was extended to consider the entire supply chain.

Their sustainability vision has actually transformed the culture at Interface, but building an engaged culture is an ongoing process, in which you can face skeptics. So, how to convince them? By finding the trigger to get them involved; not all P's are equally attractive to each employee, so by understanding the key factors that are most important to someone and explaining how they are linked to sustainability, it is easier to engage them.

Finally, as great as these efforts can be, each individual entity cannot do it on their own: we all need to play a part on this journey! So, what can you do?

1. *Become a courageous customer:* Use your purchasing power to make change. Your influence can create demand for sustainable products and increase their prevalence in the marketplace. Ask powerful questions of companies when you make purchasing decisions – ask about recycling programs, their commitment to sustainability, whether they are using Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), and where they are investing to become more sustainable. Choose to do business with companies that are making a difference.
2. *Become an engaged educator:* Sustainability needs more advocates in the world. We hear from educators about the power of sustainability to excite students and tap into their passions. Become part of this movement and introduce your students or colleagues to sustainability. Read, learn and link into your community.
3. *Become an enlightened sustainable business:* Establish your own mission for your company. Many companies understand the business case for sustainability and its benefits. Lead by example – set bold goals and report your progress and challenges.

The vision adopted

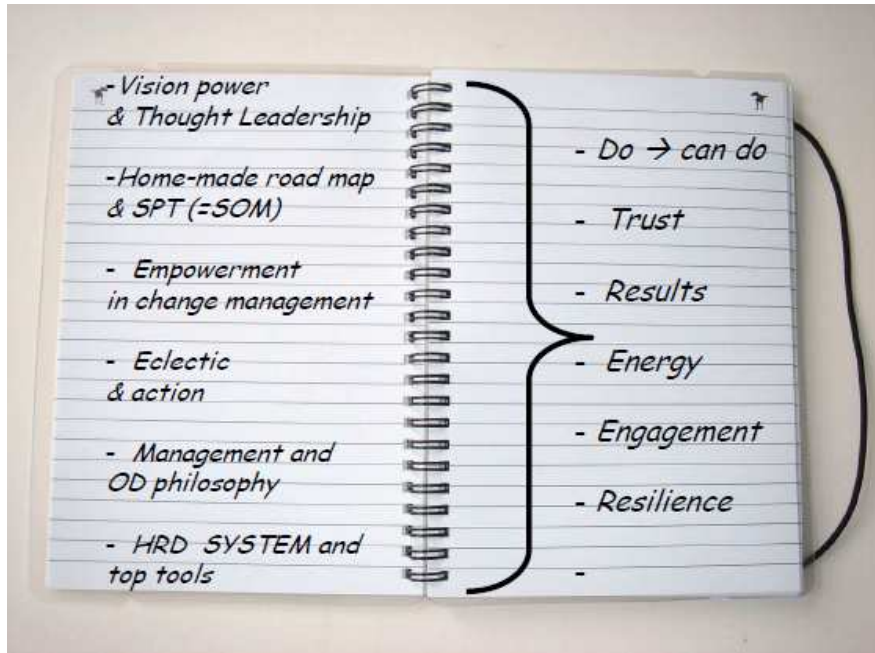
Luuk de Jong - Director Organizational Development EMEA InterfaceFLOR

Luuk de Jong explains how sustainability became a part of the InterfaceFlor brand. Ray Anderson (former CEO of the company) was shocked and at the same time inspired by a book he read, called the Economy of Commerce. This book made him change from a “purely business” strategy to an integrated strategy that contained a roadmap of 7 topics on sustainable operations, targeted against process, product, people, place and profit. Luuk believes that the reasons for the success of this integrated strategy are:

- I. Reinforcement and example through leadership,
- II. Empowerment in change management and
- III. Buy-in of all layers in the company.

He explained that sustainability should also have a certain ‘power’ status, and that all people should take ownership of the topic and related actions. Especially for the operational staff of the company it was essential to ‘translate’ sustainability into practical actions relating to their work. Furthermore, sustainability is also anchored in succession planning, sustainable learning and sustainable HR processes.

The discussion around the vision, and comments from participants were mainly on ‘what if we don’t have a Ray Anderson who showed such strong leadership?’ Luuk explained that everyone can be or find their own “Ray”, and gather similar minded people to spread this vision. He also commented that there should be awareness of regional differences, so in the case of some countries a different approach might be needed. He concluded by saying that even though it might be a timely effort, through consistent and continued communication companies can reach the status InterfaceFlor now has.



How to become a sustainability ambassador

Charlotte Extercatte - Ambassador

Sustainability ambassadors can be an asset helping within a company to change a mindset toward sustainability/CSR. At InterfaceFLOR for example, ambassadors get special trainings at different levels. This training is needed for achieving appropriate skills and knowledge. What makes someone a perfect sustainability ambassador? The goal of this interactive session was to define this. As a teaser, a video was shown of a half naked man who inspired a whole group of sitting people to dance. How did he do this? The results from the participants of the session: An ambassador...

1. is an inspirator
2. has guts & courage
3. has passion
4. has the ability to relate to an audience or peers
5. is easy to follow concerning steps to do
6. is motivating
7. shows determination
8. has humbleness and equality
9. is open to people
10. has authenticity

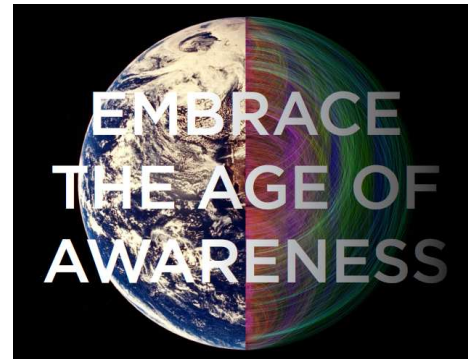


Strategies for sustainability, working together

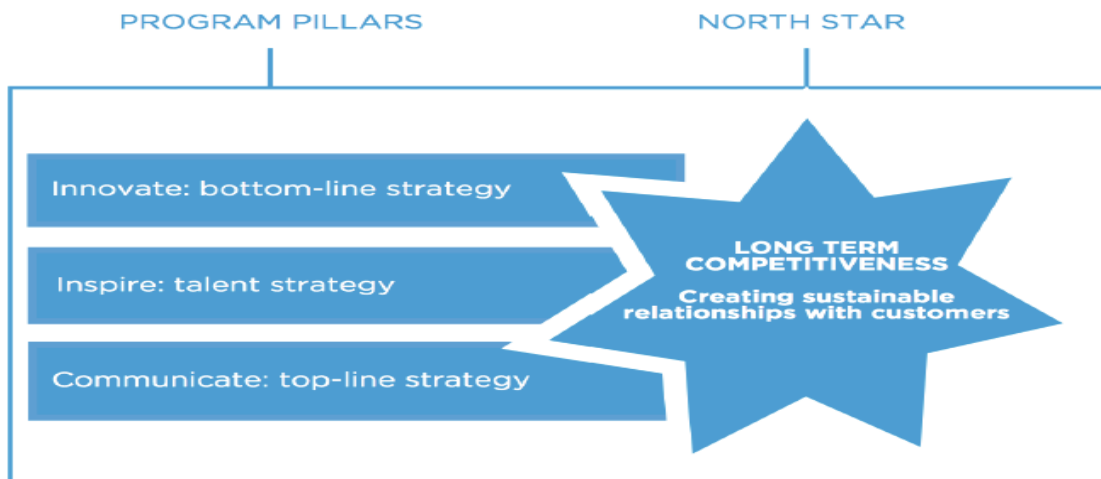
Aart van Veller – Wij zijn koel

Embedding sustainability in the core business:

- At what level is your company now?
- What actions should your company take in order to reach the next level?
- What actions should you take..?
- What is the northern star of your company?
- And... what should it be?



How to integrate sustainability in your core-business?



SET THE RIGHT NORTH STAR

