

**Businesses
responsibilities with
respect to the
environment
commerce essay**



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Nowadays, businesses are very competitive. They are not afraid to put their businesses ethics at risk to make sure that they have the best products and services. Most businesses are only thinking about the money. They think that, as long as they make a lot of profit, other does not matter. They do not realize that they harm the environment and environment sustainability is at risk because of businesses. Businesses should not responsible only to their investors, employers, employees, and customer; they should put environment into account too. I agree with John Mackey who said that social responsibility of businesses is to their stakeholders: “ customers, employees, investors, vendors, communities and the environments”.[i]Businesses should find a balance regarding their responsibility to their stakeholders. I believe that business have a responsibility with respect to the environment. They should conserve the environment, not just using the environment as a tool to help them make a lot of profit. They should conserve the environment in the sake for our future generations given that human cannot live without environment. I will explain my perspective regarding businesses responsibility in environment, why businesses need to preserve the environment, strong leadership style and value that businesses needed, and my reflection from past experience. I will build my argument based on several articles: If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation by Benedict XVI, The Parable of the Sadhu article from Business Ethics, The Greatest Happiness Principle/ Utilitarianism from Justice, and other article from website to make my argument stronger.

Environmental sustainability is very important. However, it will be difficult to achieve. Most people do not care about the environment. They only care

about themselves. They only think of environment as a tool to help them to live and fulfill their needs; and I agree with that view. I believe in Anthropocentrism point-a-view which is a human centered. I believe that only human are entitled to direct moral consideration. Other life and entities are there to help human to grow. Yet, it does not mean that we can do as we please. We should preserve the environment. In If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation article, it said that we should see the environment “ as God’s gift to all people, and the use we make of it entails a shared responsibility for all humanity.”[ii]From Book of Genesis, it points out that God made man based from His image and let him have a dominion over the all things that God created and fill the earth.[iii]However, nowadays the meaning of God’s word has been misunderstood. People took God’s word literally. They became greedy and use God’s creation as they please. People think they have a power because God entrusted His creation for human to dominate it. However, the true meaning of God’s word is to be responsible regarding His creation, not has complete control over it. Men should take care of God’s creation and cultivate it.[iv]

Nowadays, environment sustainability is at risk. People use natural resources as they wish. Businesses use natural resources to operate their businesses without differentiate the non-renewable and renewable natural resources. They do not care about the impact to the future. They do not care about their waste, pollution, and how it will affect the environment. They do not care that one day natural resources will be gone because of them. Business should limit their use of natural resources; otherwise our future generation can no longer meet their needs for natural resources. We have a

responsibility to our future generations. We have inherited our environmental resources from past generations and benefited from their work.[v]We should do the same to our future generations. We have responsibility to our future generations to make sure that they can live happily. We should limit the use of natural resources so that our future generations can still use them and have the benefit of it.

Businesses have obligation with respect of environment, especially for a large businesses industry. They should not just prioritize to maximize profit, they should put environment into account. Without environment, there will be no place for humankind to live. However, not only businesses that need to have obligation with respect of environment. All people who live in the earth need to have a responsibility, as well as government. “ Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) is one of five Army installations in the United States that currently store chemical weapons.”[vi]Umatilla Chemical Depot was fined for the second time in November 30, 2010 due to hazardous waste violations. [vii]From the article, it written that, when UMCD dispose their chemical weapon, they failed to monitor the air quality properly because the filter system was not completely operational for almost a month. There is also a leak of hazardous waste and they failed to do a daily inspection of the metal parts furnace and its pollution reduction system.[viii]It is true that many businesses do not care about environment. However, I could not believe that even government did not care about environment either. Yet, they always say to “ protect the environment”. Their words and actions are contradicted. This article proves that private businesses as well as government businesses do not care about the pollution and environmental problems. They choose to

pay fines because the fines are cheaper than the cost of reducing their waste. This perspective need to be changed. They should preserve the environment and not always thinking about making profit. It is useless to have a lot of money while in the end there is no environment that can keep businesses to operate.

Businesses play important role to the society and environment plays important role to businesses. Businesses and technologies make human life easier. However, businesses cannot operate without environment. For example: Shell Oil Company needs oil to make sure that their businesses continue to operate. Without oil, their business will fall apart. Yet, we know that oil is a non-renewable resource and one day it will be gone if we use it as we please. Most of our natural resources were used in businesses, either they use it or sell it as their product. Businesses should use natural resources wisely and take care of environment. If they do not use natural resources and take care of their waste wisely, environment will be in danger. They should take care of their waste properly and they should enforce close-loop manufacturing. Close-loop manufacturing is a manufacturing system that makes every waste “ either be composed into natural nutrients and returned to the ecosystem or be manufactured into new products.”^[ix]With close-loop manufacturing, businesses could minimize their waste and pollution, as well as make more profit for selling a new product. Technologies are become much more innovative. Businesses should use technologies to find a way to improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption from natural resources. ^[x]Businesses should find a way to conserve energy, limit the usage of resources and reduce pollution made by businesses.^[xi]

Businesses should enforce in going green. By going green, businesses can reduce the usage of natural resources, pollution, and waste. Even though going green will cause businesses to spend a lot of money, in the long run it will be worth it. These days, people are concerned about the environment and global warming. They are afraid that their future generation cannot live as well as they do. Subconsciously, they want to protect the environment. However, they do not want to be the pioneer. One will have a lot of responsibility to be the pioneer and no one wants to take the responsibility. Someone in the businesses needs to step up and take the responsibility. People usually do not care about others, they only thinking about themselves. The same goes with businesses. As long as they make profit, businesses do not care about others. Businesses do not care about the harm that they did to the environment. From the article Parable of Shadu, it conveys that no one is willing to take full responsibility of the shadu; they only willing to help a little.[xii]The environment is like the shadu. People know that environment is in danger, yet they do not want to step up and take responsibility to save the environment. Businesses should start to save the environment. Someone should step up and be the leader to make a change. Businesses without a leader cannot operate properly. Leader is needed in businesses to create a culture of trust and enforce ethical behavior.[xiii]Businesses should not act as individual, but as a group. Individual alone cannot make a change. All people in businesses need to be involved to make a change. Furthermore, they need a leader for their support system.[xiv]They need some support system so that they know that they are doing the right thing and someone will have their back.

Applying green productivity in businesses is hard. Yet, it needs to be done to save the environments. A change in businesses needs to be done from the top.[xv]Employees will look after their employers for their role models. In this case, top leader should step up to do the change. Top leader should act ethically and enforce ethical leadership in business, and the lower level manager will follow their act. Top leader should enforce their businesses in going green, reducing waste, use fewer natural resources and preserve the environment. All people in businesses need to be involved to make the change. By going green, it will also boost company's reputation. People will respect companies that foster the environment. Everybody knows that our environment is in danger. By promoting green productivity and saving the environment, it will build up companies' good reputation. More people are willing to be their customer because by using their products and services, each customers help to save the environments. In the long run, it will bring advantages to the company. Company should take a responsibility to save the environment. However, it is useless if businesses are the only one that is willing to save the environment. Everyone who lives needs to participate to save the environment.

From utilitarian point-a-view regarding businesses responsibility with respect of environment, they would feel that businesses have the obligation in environment sustainability. Jeremy Bentham who founded the doctrine of utilitarianism stated that “ The highest principle morality is to maximize happiness, the overall balance of pleasure over pain.”[xvi]Utilitarian approach teaches us to consider who will be affected by the action and what advantage or disadvantage will be obtained from this action.[xvii]We should

choose the action that will produce happiness and prevents suffering.

[xviii]Another utilitarian, John Stuart Mill, believe that people should do whatever they want as long as they do not harm others.[xix]However, if the happiness of the majority groups exceeds the suffering the minority groups will face, then we should sacrifice the happiness of the minority.[xx]This applies to all businesses. Businesses should be responsible with respect of environment. Businesses need to sacrifice something in order to protect the environment. For example: business should increase their cost to reduce waste. By reducing their waste, pollution from businesses will be decrease. Even though, they spend more money, they will bring greater benefits in the long run. By protecting the environment, businesses have the certainty to continue to operate in the long run. Otherwise, if the environment is destroyed, businesses no longer could operate.

Before I took this class and learn about environment sustainability, I believed that businesses should only thinking about maximizing profit. Without profit, they could not take care of their stakeholders. Businesses sole responsibility is to their investors. Investors are the one who own the businesses and they have responsibility to their employers, employees, and customers. Investors are the most important stakeholders. Without investor the businesses could not growth as fast as businesses with investors. Investors invested their money in business because they trust the company. In return, business should do it best to increase its profit for investors. However after I learn about environment sustainability, my belief was changed. Businesses not only have obligation to investors, but also other stakeholders. I agree with John Mackey who said that social responsibility of businesses is to their

stakeholders: “ customers, employees, investors, vendors, communities and the environments”.[xxi]Businesses do have responsibility regarding environment, especially large businesses. Large businesses use more natural resources, and make more waste and pollution than smaller businesses. They use all natural resources as they desire to keep businesses operate. Businesses do enough harm to the environment whether they realize it or not. They do not care about their waste and pollution which put environment in danger. Businesses need to start to think about their negative impact to the environment. Just because businesses can satisfy their customer, employees, employers, and investor from their products, services, and profit they made; it does not mean that they can ignore the environment. Environment is the place where businesses live and growth. Without environment there will be no human and without human there will be no businesses to operate. Businesses should enforce environment sustainability because businesses need environment to operate.

In conclusion, businesses do have an obligation with respect of environment. By protecting creation, we cultivate peace in this earth.[xxii]However, businesses not only the one who have direct obligation regarding environment. Every people who live in this earth have the same amount of responsibility to preserve the environment. We should not depend solely on businesses to protect the environment. Even though businesses have done all the things they could do to preserve the environment: use fewer natural resources, reduce pollution and waste; it stills not enough. If people still do not care about environment, then it will be useless for businesses to do their best to save the environment. Protecting the environment is a responsibility

for all people whose life depends on it. People should start to realize that environment is in danger because of their lack of responsibility. People cannot live without environment and we should take care of it. We can started by reduce, reuse, and recycle. We should reduce waste, use reusable product and recycle the waste.[xxiii]By doing these simple steps, we can preserve our environment. By protecting the environment, we allowed our future generations to live. Businesses cannot protect environment all alone. All people should be involved in conserving the environment. There are still many things need to be done to protect our environments. If we are not the person who started to save the environment, who would?

End Notes: