

Humanistic Management Center

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Myths and Misunderstandings in the CR Debate

Research Project with Subsequent Publication as a Self- Authored Book

Strategic rationale:

The corporate responsibility (CR) debate continues to be influenced strongly by terminological and conceptual ambiguity. This research project aims at clarifying three major myths and misunderstandings. Clarifying these will help move the CR debate towards a more factual discourse lifting some of the status quo conserving smokescreens.

Content briefing:

This research project describes and analyses three main misunderstandings in the CR debate. Together these three factors account for a large part of misguided CR activities as well as for confusion around terminological questions and the normative validity of arguments presented. These are:

1. The raison d'être of businesses is to maximize profits vs. it is to offer relevant goods and services to the benefit of wider society.
2. Responsible corporate conduct stands in conflict with profitability vs. it lays the foundation for earning and sustaining long term healthy profits.
3. Corporate responsibility can be assumed by philanthropic expenditure vs. it is about how profits are earned not only about how they are spent.

By unearthing the flaws inherent to misguided arguments in the CR debate management practitioners, policy makers and scholars receive the intellectual ammunition to respond to proponents of the status quo.

Time line:

This project will commence as soon as funding is secured and will run over 12 months followed by the editorial and production process of six months.

Funding requirement:

The funding required for this project stands at 10 months of one FTE* spread over 18 months as well as copy editing costs for the publication and the production cost of marketing materials.

* FTE = Full Time Equivalent = Equivalent of one person working full time

Case Study Repository

Delivering Proof of Concept

Strategic rationale:

Members of our leadership team and our wider community hear at times that what we wish for neither exists nor works in competitive business environments. We can not share that view and the best way to communicate this is to demonstrate by example that what we suggest indeed exists and works well even in competitive market environments.

Content briefing:

The starting point for this project is our publication *Humanistic Management in Practice* as the first publication in our *Humanism in Business Series* at Palgrave Macmillan. In it we have collected 19 case examples of companies we believe are leading the way in responsible corporate conduct. However, we had found many more companies that offer valuable lessons in humanistic management than we were able to include in one book. Given the substantial amount of untold stories offering great learning nuggets we will create an online case repository for humanistic management in practice. By providing examples of successful enterprises that follow principles of humanistic management we provide impetus for scholarly work as well as inspiration to management practitioners. As the case collection will grow we will explore the option to publish further printed volumes to make the featured cases accessible in print, complementing the online publications.

Time line:

Building up our case study repository represents an ongoing effort by the Humanistic Management Center. Books presenting these case studies may be published periodically

Funding requirement:

The funding requirements for one case study stands at approximately 14 days of one FTE. In addition travel expenses to conduct on site interviews strongly enhance the richness of the case.

The Makings of Humanistic Management

Research Project with Subsequent Publication as a Self-Authored Book

Strategic rationale:

Critique of the economistic business paradigm has limited value without drawing up viable alternatives. This research project develops our approach to humanistic management and will provide a reflective anchor to management practitioners and policy makers. It also offers an innovative, normative view on management to academia.

Content briefing:

The Humanistic Management Network advocates a paradigm shift away from economistic views on market activities towards a humanistic approach. To move from criticism of the status quo towards a fruitful discourse on alternatives we are developing a three stepped approach defining what humanistic management is. This three stepped approach consists of:

1. Non-instrumentalization of people in economic processes
 2. Integration of ethical reflection into managerial decision making
 3. Dialogical extension of ethical reflection through stakeholder dialogues
- Together these steps lead to views on managerial tasks that are aligned to human nature and cater to a live conducive economy. It (re)establishes a role of business grounded in the need for market activities to serve people rather than vice versa, thus laying the foundation for a sustainable economy.

Time line:

This project will commence as soon as funding is secured and will run over 18 months followed by the editorial and production process of six months.

Funding requirement:

The funding required for this project stands at 10 months of one FTE spread over 18 months as well as copy editing costs for the publication and the production cost of marketing materials.

Sustainability Performance Assessment

A Check-Up on Corporate Sustainability Claims

Strategic rationale:

Humanistic Management posits the need for a values-driven ethical framework for enterprises. The sustainability paradigm represents such a framework and is widely accepted in business. By assessing their sustainability performance we contribute to transparency and public knowledge on the efforts undertaken by individual firms.

Content briefing:

Assessing self-reported performance claims companies make in their sustainability reports enables us to evaluate their integrity. Reviewing actual performance in context with stakeholder requirements and expectations allows for establishing the ethical gravity of a company. In addition the comparison of companies within the same industry can help identify best practices in making future-oriented contributions. Our research will increase the magnitude of sustainable management practices by discussing

1. the fundamental approaches to defining a firm's identity and its responsibility for sustainable development,
2. the various ways to align core business activities with sustainability benchmarks and
3. the business strategies for making a positive contribution to civil society beyond the firm's direct operational activities.

Time line:

The results of this work stream will be published electronically on an ongoing basis. Possibly the significant insights that emerge from our assessments will be published in a book in 2013.

Funding requirement:

The funding requirements depend on the amount of individual company assessments conducted. An individual assessment requires 10 days of one FTE.

Overcoming the Growth Obsession

Research Project with Subsequent Publication as an Edited Volume with Own Contributions

Strategic rationale:

The desire to generate economic growth is the biggest driver for economic policies worldwide. Empirical data in rich countries reveals little evidence though, that growth translates into solutions for the problems it is supposed to tackle. We thus want to provide stimulus to strategies that do not depend on growth generation to address societal problems

Content briefing:

This publication will collect cutting edge research on the role of economic growth in prosperous societies based on the view that for wealthy nations growth is secondary, if not irrelevant for tackling social problems. The logical argument supporting this view is that the combined wealth in highly developed economies could easily address the existing problems. We hence do not have a volume based problem but a distributional one. Secondly there is no convincing empirical evidence that growth on its own leads to solving social problems. In the OECD countries we have seen about 30% growth in real terms since the early 1980s without seeing the broad based progress one would expect from nearly one third of added income. This publication will present insights on zero growth and possibly even negative growth strategies that will become pivotal for reorienting wealthy countries towards a future in sustainable, broad based prosperity.

Time line:

This project will commence as soon as funding is secured and will run over 18 months followed by the editorial and production process of six months.

Funding requirement:

The funding required for this project stands at 4 months of one FTE spread over 24 months as well as copy editing costs for the publication and the production cost of marketing materials.

Economic Policy for a Humanistic Market Economy

Research Project with Subsequent Publication as an Edited Volume with Own Contributions

Strategic rationale:

This book aims at providing support to policy makers by depicting best practice examples from around the globe. In combination with theoretical insight on policy prescriptions we wish to help governments develop a legislative and regulatory environment conducive to cultivating a humanistic market economy.

Content briefing:

In this book we will collect experiences and case studies of humanistic economic policy aiming to provide governmental, institutional support for humanistic management.

There are several examples of humanistic economic/business policy in the making, such as new organizational forms, social business support structures, sustainable enterprise funds or incentive schemes that integrate social, environmental and economic evaluation criteria.

We will select the most cutting edge models aligned to our work on humanistic management and present feasible, proven to work policy options that wisely deploy targeted interventions in market activities. Such interventions are an opportunity to provide for a business environment that equally caters to entrepreneurial spirits as well as to the advancement of the common good.

Time line:

This project will commence as soon as funding is secured and will run over 18 months followed by the editorial and production process of six months.

Funding requirement:

The funding required for this project stands at 4 months of one FTE spread over 24 months as well as copy editing costs for the publication and the production cost of marketing materials.

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