

**How to successfully implement sustainability in an  
organization:  
*a review of the literature***

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## Abstract

The business world, and especially the hospitality industry, is starting to take responsibility for environmental sustainability, however does not imbed the concept of sustainable development in their business strategy (Van Rheede and Blomme, 2012). This article reviews how the hospitality industry can open the doors to sustainable development, achieving better results with a greater impact.

Both the utilitarian theory (Secchi, 2007; Ismail, 2009) , relational or stakeholder theory (Secchi 2007, Crane and Matten 2010) do not provide an answer. Arnolds (2010) states that the implementation of CSR and sustainability is not only a technical innovation, but also a cultural change. We stress that the implementation of CSR is only successful if organizational behavior actually changes. A better understanding of the underlying processes of how organizational behavior develops, can lead to an improved implementation of CSR, using the right intervention tools.

We will review the implementation of sustainable practices from the perspective of organization studies; we argue that this implementation can be best studied using a variance and process approach (Van de Ven & Scott Poole, 1995 and 2005).

Earlier work by Van de Ven and Poole (1995) provides a theoretical framework explaining innovation and change in organizations. They introduce four motors of change: Life Cycle; Teleology, Dialectical, and Evolutionary. Studying this topic from a change management viewpoint helps us to understand why the implementation of sustainable development, although initiated with the best of intentions, has only had limited success from a sustainability perspective. The paper first reviews the literature on change management and the implementation of sustainable practices in companies in general. Next the review continues with the same focus, but then specifically looking at the hospitality industry.

This paper discusses how the theory on drivers of change can help researchers and practitioners better understand the current state of sustainability in general business studies and specifically in the hotel and tourism industry. We suggest how businesses can use these drivers to better implement sustainability strategies and how, in turn, this may lead to new business models for integrating sustainable practices in business strategies.

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