

The 'hardware' and the 'software' of the sustainability concept in business  
– *strategic and product development issues*

Balázs Kószeghy

None the less several firms deal with environmental and social issues, there are only few attempts to integrate the three pillars of sustainability concept in one framework at corporate strategic and even at product development level. Among the reasons the most relevant one may be the inherent difference between the social and the environmental demands – that can be referred by viewing the former as the 'hardware' and the latter as the 'software' of sustainability. Handling the two aspects in one integrated system could enhance effectiveness, by considering the existing interconnections between them.

The main aim of my former research period was to define, through an exploratory research, the recommendations and tools available in the literature regarding how to adapt the concept of sustainability on corporate strategic, as well as on product development level. Based on these experiences the main factors that should be handled in order to run a business in a 'sustainable' way were defined. On the basis of the results a 'model' may be formed, which is rooted in the value chain model, as it has the potential to integrate the two inherently different types of demands. Nevertheless, hardly any attempts are regarding the adaptation of social demands for a product or service, while wide range of tools are available helping environmental design.

The research is performed from a marketing management point of view. The aim is to reveal the features of a 'sustainable' product / service and the processes creating it. Through, in the following stage of my research I plan to outline the frameworks of an empirical study, by which the actual practices of corporate(s) and the model based on the recommendations of the literature can be compared.