Sustainable Development, Business & Society

ISG MBA Seminar. Paris, 9-11 June 2011 (Program draft in process)

HOME   ABOUT   TOOLS   TRANSLATE

Seminar at the Institut Supérieur de Gestion MBA program.
147 Avenue Victor Hugo 75116 Paris. 1 – 11 June 2011

The SDBS Toolkit: Introduction & Invitation

I have the honor of being asked to organize and present a cycle of graduate seminars on Sustainable Development, Business & Society, the first of which be presented to a class of MBA candidates in their last semester in a business school here in Paris, the Institut Supérieur de Gestion. It is an intensive, total emersion course crammed into an demanding three day period, 9-11 June 2011, with the students and myself working together in an interactive plugged-in environment eight hours each day.

To get most mileage out of such a short period, I am presently right in the middle of the process of working to create an easy-to-use internet-mediated " toolkit" in support of the seminar. I have set out in the last days to develop this toolkit with two goals in mind. First, to provide some useful tools and course materials to support the three day seminar as it happens. But also in part – and motivated by a certain sense of incipient frustration due to the impossible challenge of tacking such a complex and important topic in just three days - with the idea of seeing if we can get off to a running start for the seminar. In this way I hope to extend the work program back to 1 June, gaining a valuable week. You will see how it works on the site.

The four main working parts of this hand-made electronic tool kit include:

- Program home page at Http://sustainabiltyseminar.wordpress.com/
- Course Briefcase at http://tinyurl.com/sdbs-doc
- Group contact page – http://tinyurl.com/sdbs-contact
- Combined Search Engine - http://tinyurl.com/sdbs-cse

Detailed descriptions of how each of these are organized and intended to work will be found under the **Tools** section of the program site. At present I would say we are about 70% of the way there.

International coverage: Students in this program come from Argentina, China, France, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Korea, Mexico, Taiwan, the US and Vietnam – which ensures the hands-on global orientation of the seminar.

Invited Auditors: I intend to invite a small number of auditors, people known to me, with the thought that it will be useful to have their reactions and suggestions as far as the virtual aspects of the course are concerned. And also with the hope that these tools and materials may be of help to them in their own work.

Personal note: While I have been working in quite exactly this program area for, in fact, my entire professional life, this is the first time I have given such a course to a class of MBA students. I am pleased to have this challenge and I am quite confident that when all the final reports are corrected and the marks distributed in July, I am going to find that I learned at least as much as they, as a result of what is after all a genuinely collaborative learning process. That at least is my immediate goal.

Your critical comments invited: If you click to http://sustainabiltyseminar.wordpress.com/ you will see how all this works. And one of the reasons I am sharing this with you and several other friends with strong backgrounds in this area, is that I would appreciate to have your reactions, comments and suggestions for dong better for future iterations of this approach, which I have every intention of trying to set into gear

- **Home page:** How does this work for you? Is it generally clear and easy to use, or are there sections which are not clear, not useful or poorly explained? Let me know so I can try to fix it.

- **Links and sources**: These are of course important points to draw to the students attention. We do not want to let this list get too long, otherwise it risks lose focus. But if you have suggestions they would be most welcome. Also your views on the Combined Search Engine?

- The Briefcase: Given the limited time available to organize the course, and the difficulty here in Paris of getting sufficient copies of two or three key texts in English, that normally we would have liked to put before the class, this seems like a good way to ensure a certain base of key documents in support of the course. Comments? Suggestions on additional sources to be added?

Next Steps: Upon completion of this course in June, I will review in detail, modify and hopefully improve the basic tool set, taking advantage of the experience and feedback that will be accumulated over the month ahead. I then intend to make contact with universities and summer schools with programs and interests in these areas. It is a hot topic and just may fill a gap in the course offerings in a certain number of places.

It may be that this three day approach will find its place in some programs. However it is, you have to admit, an awfully tight fit for three days. Thus I would be more interested to see how we can span the 24 hour curriculum and experience over at least a full week, and preferable even two, or more.

In the long run . .. Let me note in closing though that I am not at all interested in focusing on programs an approaches that reach out to a 2030, 2050 focus or beyond. I agree with Lord Keynes that in the long run we all are dead (which he later proved), so my work always concentrates on what we can do, and what we should be trying to do, in the years directly ahead. If you want an outer limit of my personal and professional focus, that would be 2020. Once we get there, we can talk about what happens next.

Thanks for sharing your reactions and thoughts on this.

Eric Britton