


Chapter 1

Human Capital

Challenges in


Sustainability Start-Ups

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability start-ups face unique human capital challenges (HCCs) like lack of brand awareness, competition, turnover, burnout, limited growth opportunities, resources, and expertise gaps. This mixed-methods research chapter examines strategies to address these challenges, surveying 200 start-ups and interviewing 20 CEOs and HR managers. Findings advocate for investment in brand awareness, unique benefits, positive work environments, professional development, and transparent career paths. Effectiveness varies based on start-up needs, but HCCs significantly impact performance. Prioritizing talent attraction, retention, and development is crucial for sustainability start-ups.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is one of the most important developmental paradigms. Start-ups with sustainability as a value and mission earn currency in the modern world, where environmental change is a huge concern. Start-ups aiming for quick

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money and fame cannot focus on some vital elements of human resource planning and management. Any firm, including start-ups that do not have a vision for human resource development, cannot focus on sustainability internally and externally.

Sustainability start-ups have to take utmost care in attracting, retaining and developing talents. The problems associated with these three aspects of human resource management are global. Every firm that focuses on human resources and manages it well clears the most important hurdle in its process of laying strong foundations. It moves from survival to establishment once the issues related to human resources are settled. The charisma of the start-up founders has to be percolated to every employee and customer in that order for a successful establishment of the firm.

Despite these challenges, sustainability start-ups play a vital role in transitioning to a more sustainable future. By effectively addressing these human capital hurdles, they can accelerate development and adopt innovative solutions to environmental challenges. By investing in attracting, retaining, and developing talent, they can navigate the talent labyrinth and unlock their full potential to create a more sustainable world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainability start-ups are at the forefront of innovation in the fight against climate change and other environmental challenges. However, these companies must overcome several human capital challenges in attracting, retaining, and developing talented individuals.

Sustainability start-ups are at the forefront of innovation in the fight against climate change and other environmental challenges (Adams & Adams, 2011). However, these companies face several human capital challenges in attracting, retaining, and developing talented individuals (Govindan et al., 2014).

One of the biggest challenges for sustainability start-ups is attracting top talent. These companies are often new and unknown, and they may not have brand recognition and reputations different from established companies (Deloitte, 2022). Additionally, sustainability start-ups often operate in emerging industries with new and evolving technologies, making it difficult to find employees with the necessary skills and experience (Slaus & Jacobs, 2011).

Another challenge sustainability start-ups face is retaining talented individuals (Mukul & Saini, 2021). These companies often need more resources and may need to be able to offer the same salaries and benefits as larger, more established companies. Additionally, sustainability start-ups may have a high turnover rate due to the demanding work environment and the long hours employees are often required to work (Lange, 2017).

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