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Conversation for Understanding and Action

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Conversation for Understanding and Action

This workshop discusses a conversation held at Hewlett-Packard on how to generate new business opportunities for HP through sustainable development. The workshop will examine HP's experience in communicating and applying the principles of sustainability and engage the audience in a discussion focused on:

1. Learnings from the HP experience that can be applied elsewhere.
2. Moving the conversation from understanding to action.

The Conversation

The two-day HP conversation included 150 people from a 'diagonal slice' of HP, key HP global accounts, leaders in sustainable development, and academic experts. It was organised through the 'grass roots' efforts of six HP employees who promised attendees:

1. A dialogue with leading experts about business opportunities and strategies for sustainability.
2. A world-class benchmarking framework to assess sustainability progress and its relationship to value-creating growth.
3. First-hand examples from world-class companies, including HP Global Accounts, about their business strategies for creating growth through sustainability.
4. An opportunity to be heard, with questions and other contributions used to develop value-creating sustainability strategies for your division or company.
5. Information, resources and future.

Immediate results of the conversation...Formation of a Choir.

The people who attended HP's conference were transformed from 150 soloists to a tribe with common goals and a desire to support each other. Some of the ways in which this group now acts include:

1. The sustainable development network, complete with a web site, email alias, and a 'how-to' guide with communication tools for further education in HP, is in action.
2. Several HP senior managers became advocates and are standing by to advise and support this group in further sustainability work in HP.
3. Meeting attendees from outside HP provide a wealth of fresh and creative ideas for possible ways to apply sustainability to HP's business.

One year later

Many of those who attended the conversation felt like lonely soloists. They are now tribe members and on their way to forming a choir. The following results have occurred in the few months since the conference was held.

1. HP's Corporate Environment team has revised its charter to include environmental sustainability.
2. A full time position was created in HP Labs to explore applications for technology in environmental sustainability.
3. The corporate public relations, marketing, and communications groups have requested further education on sustainability.
4. Several business cases are being developed for sustainable business opportunities.