**Sustainable Champions: How international companies are changing the face of business in China**

Can growth and sustainability be combined? The best place to look for an answer is China, because the scale is so large on both counts. Economic growth has slowed but still remains impressive. Equally important is the nature of growth: Chinese consumers are becoming more brand-conscious, alert to values as well as value. It is no longer enough to produce cheaply and consistently: brand positioning is crucial. Multinational companies are now facing stiff competition from both local and national competitors.

At the same time, the impetus for sustainable modes of business is coming from all directions. Once championed only by a few meddlesome NGOs and cautious scientists, now citizens, employees, customers, governments and business leaders see sustainable growth as the way forward, underpinning the social legitimacy of growth. This movement towards sustainable business comes against the backdrop of China’s environmental crisis. China’s phenomenal economic growth has come at the expense of its environmental and public health.

Life expectancy in the north has decreased by 5.5 per cent due to air pollution, and severe water contamination and scarcity have compounded land deterioration problems. Environmental degradation cost the country roughly 9 per cent of its gross national income in 2008, according to the World Bank, and threatens to undermine the country’s growth. Small wonder that in China today, sustainability is the urgent need, and the basic standard for all innovation. It is acutely important for any company, global or domestic, to do business in a sustainable way.

There is a big debate over whether corporate-led globalisation is a positive or negative force in the environment. Many foreign MNCs in China have been targeted by civil society groups for dumping and emitting waste into the air and water, using toxic materials in manufacturing and abusing labour rights. This book shines a light on the conversation about whether foreign direct investment in China promotes a sort of ‘race to the bottom’, or if it can elevate environmental and labour standards.

In [*Sustainable Champions*](http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com/productdetail.kmod?productid=4056), we present nine case studies of large companies that are trying to do better, in different ways. We focus particularly on sustainability-oriented innovations in supply chains. Eight of the companies we cover here are part of the WWF Climate Savers club, multinationals who have pledged to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by significant proportions year on year. The targets they pursue are global, but it is relatively easy to make improvements in China because the base level is low and the scale enormous. Innovations in China can translate into significant step-changes in global outcomes. And of course, carbon is only one part of sustainability. The innovations developed by these companies have far-reaching environmental and social consequences – and are good for the business bottom line.

The innovations described in [*Sustainable Champions*](http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com/productdetail.kmod?productid=4056) are not just innovations for China. The national programmes we describe interrelate with the companies’ global strategies, and in China the scale and dynamism of change are enough to drive change with global significance. The innovations emerging from the front line of production, sourcing, assembly, marketing, consumption and disposal make substantial differences and set new standards for corporate practice.

In [*Sustainable Champions*](http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com/productdetail.kmod?productid=4056), we concentrate not on theory, but on what managers do. Our aim is to inspire and inform action. Not all is positive – there are failures and shortcomings along the way, and we have drawn out some lessons from these too. But overall, the message is that innovation in sustainability can yield positive results far beyond the company’s own operations. One thing that is clear from these case studies is that innovation occurs not just in a company or even a supply chain; it is part of an industrial ecology in which sustainability is becoming an ubiquitous theme.

<http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com/productdetail.kmod?productid=4056>

Strong competitive pressure and a dynamic market mean multinational companies in China must innovate with extraordinary pace. Environmental sustainability is a key driver for the best companies. This book shows how major household names have transformed their practices, and the impact this is having on business in China and beyond.

* Shows how to innovate for sustainability and keep pace in a globalized setting
* Lessons from leading multinationals including Sony, HP, TetraPak and Nestlé
* Essential for anyone doing business in one of the worlds fastest-growing economies

In the face of strong competitive pressure and a dynamic market, multinational companies in China are forced to innovate with extraordinary pace and inventiveness. Environmental sustainability is a vital benchmark, and is a key driver for the best companies in each sector  many of them allied with the WWF Climate Savers programme.Sustainable Champions shows how nine leading multinational companies - including Nestlé, HP, TetraPak and Sony - are dealing with environmental, supply chain and ethical challenges in China. The book illuminates some of their transformative practices, and the impact this is having on business in China and beyond. The concluding cross-case analysis of supply chain and environmental challenges faced by leading international firms presents key lessons for business and for sustainability champions.

*Sustainable Champions: How International Companies are Changing the Face of Business in China*is essential reading for researchers and course leaders seeking on-the-ground examples of local environmental challenges, and any company doing business in one of the worlds fastest-growing economies.With a Foreword by Simon Zadek, Distinguished Fellow, Academy of Business in Society, Visiting Scholar, Tsinghua School of Economics and Management.