

## Session C – Product

Market-facing Corporate Social Responsibility

Plenary Session Summary

Thursday, November 5, 2009 – 11:15am - 12:45pm

### Speakers

- >> **Henry Sauvagnat**, Vice President of Sustainable Development, Cascades, Inc.
- >> **David Smith**, National Vice President of Retail Strategy and Sustainability, Sobeys Inc.
- >> **Barbara Turley-McIntyre**, Director of Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship, The Co-operators Group Ltd.

### Key Messages

- >> Developing innovative approaches to take corporate social responsibility to the next level is possible across a wide range of industries.
- >> Some of the innovative approaches companies are taking are targeted towards reducing the environmental impacts at all levels of their supply chain, forming strong collaborations inside and outside of their industries to work towards a common agenda, and influencing the choices consumers make in the marketplace.
- >> Getting your staff on board with your CSR initiative is essential to moving a social responsibility agenda forward.

### Worth Repeating

*“You have to first figure out what a truly sustainable company looks like, and then figure out where you want to be. This makes it easier to step back and plan towards the goal.”*

- Barbara Turley-McIntyre, Director of Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship, The Co-operators Group Ltd.

*“Companies should work within their industries and vertically with their suppliers, to align on issues and have a collaborative action plan.”*

- David Smith, National Vice President of Retail Strategy and Sustainability, Sobeys Inc.

### Summary

Henry Sauvagnat, David Smith and Barbara Turley-McIntyre represented three different industries and exemplified how innovative approaches to social responsibility can add business value by strengthening supply chain, lowering costs, and allowing businesses to cater to shifting customer and market demands.

According to Henry Sauvagnat, a common perception in a competitive marketplace is that doing something good is nice; however, it is nicer if doing good actually pays off for a company. Cascades, which operates in the pulp and paper production industry, has set a precedent for other companies by using innovative management to decrease the environmental impacts of their business. Sauvagnat’s company takes into consideration every impact of the production life cycle and has partnered with scholars in academia to conduct a detailed life cycle

## Transformational Corporate Social Responsibility

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analysis, which will be used to develop a new water use index for their industry. In addition, they have launched the production of 100% recycled fine paper.

In the food industry, Sobeys is involved in leading innovative approaches to social responsibility. David Smith highlighted the importance of working collaboratively within one's industry as well as vertically within the supply chain to align on the company's social responsibility approaches and goals. This type of radical collaboration requires that each product is followed through the supply chain and evaluated for sustainability both by a company and its suppliers. Rather than improving their ability to pass audits, companies must focus on how incremental changes can be made both internally and externally. In order for companies to succeed, clear criteria setting, collaborative auditing and data sharing are crucial components.

Barbara Turley McIntyre's unique example of social responsible product/service initiatives being driven by The Co-operators Group in the insurance industry provides a lesson on how to set clear criteria and goals. The Natural Step's "backcasting" approach was used by her company to look at the end goal of where they would like to be as it relates to the principles of sustainability, and works backward to create the steps to get to that point. For example, when a home has been damaged and needs to be rebuilt, The Co-operators provides their customers with sustainable rebuilding options that make their homes more durable and better able to withstand climate risks than some traditional home structures. This practice has given the company the ability to influence some of the choices consumers make in the marketplace.

A reoccurring theme spanning all three presentations was the importance of getting key leaders and staff on board with innovative approaches. Gaining buy-in will ensure that employees are more likely to take independent initiative to move the agenda forward and help in the development of innovative solutions.