Sustainable Business – An Ethical Approach to Entrepreneurship

Instructor:	Florian Schmitt
Format:	Online Course
Duration:	7 weeks
Language of Instruction:	English

Description

Your local burger shack, Patagonia, Disney and ChatGPT have one thing in common: they all once started with a simple idea. But the impact they leave on our planet today is vastly different. Many of the greatest inventions of our time were brought to us by brilliant entrepreneurs, by people who wanted to give the world a spin into the right direction. But also, many inventions of the past have turned out to have a negative effect on our planet. Entrepreneurship sits right in the center of the capitalist matrix. It creates jobs and wealth. But at what costs? For too many years startups have focused solely on growth and revenue. Economy takes precedence over ethics in practice. With the concept of "Sustainable Entrepreneurship" we are flipping this coin and are extending the entrepreneurial mindset by an ethical dimension.

How should I act? How should a company act? Can a company actually act ethically at all? In this course, participants will answer all these questions, learn about ethical boundaries in an entrepreneurial context and develop a concept of how to apply them to (their) businesses to make sure they have a non-destructive impact on our planet. We will explore which responsibilities entrepreneurs have towards the environment and towards today's (and a future) society. Throughout this seminar, participants will discuss various concepts – from degrowth to utopia!

Learning Objectives

Using real-life case studies as well as their own ideas / business challenges, participants will recalibrate their moral compasses, create a Code of Ethics and will be equipped with the tools to ultimately implement it. After this class you will be well prepared to lead by example – into a better world.

Target Group

Early-career and senior professionals from all fields, experienced or newly-appointed leaders, managers, entrepreneurs, advanced students, graduates, and postgraduates are welcome. This course is of particular relevance to (prospective) start-up / company founders who are looking to extend their entrepreneurial mindset by an ethical dimension.

General Requirements

Participants need to possess English language abilities in speaking and writing on the Upper Intermediate Level (at least B2). Attendance of the live sessions is essential for your successful and meaningful completion of the course. To receive a certificate for this course, you will need to attend at least two of the three live sessions. These live sessions will be combined with additional material and intensive work through the online course platform, both individually and in groups. Please see course requirements for the various assignments.
To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to our Code of Online Conduct.

Technical Requirements

Stable internet connection. Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended) with camera and microphone, headset recommended. Recommended operating systems: Windows 10 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher. Avoid using a VPN. Software: Webex Meetings. Please log in to Webex at least a day before course start in order to avoid any technical delays on the first live session.

Course Requirements
Assignments & Readings.
Project Presentation.

Literature
Provided online.

Modules

Module	Topics, Guiding Questions, Reading, Assignments
1	## LIVE SESSION // Introduction: The Why • The role of Entrepreneurship within the capitalist matrix • The Growth-Mindset • Introduction to Ethics • Ethical Business Models • Course structure and goals **Reading / Assignment:** • I. Kant (tbd) • J. Bentham (tbd)
2	## Asynchronous session // Topic: Business Ethics • Applied Ethics – Business Ethics • Ethical Decision-making – Case study **Reading / Assignment:** • Watch the documentary "Fyre Fraud" (German w/ EN subtitles) on YouTube • Name two persons involved in the Fyre Festival fraud. Explain their roles in it as well as their moral obligations • Create a Code of Ethics (5-10 Points) for the next Fyre Festival
3	## Asynchronous session // Topic: Establishing Ethical Frameworks • Discover your personal ethical boundaries • Create a first draft of your Code of Ethics **Reading / Assignment:** • Choose between your company / idea OR a company of your choice • Write down 3-5 possible ethical conflicts for your chosen company • Derive 3-5 ethical norms from these conflicts

4	## LIVE SESSION // Topic: Implementing Ethical Frameworks
	- Implementing ethical frameworks in a corporate environment
	- Guiding values
	- Corporate Social Responsibility: What do corporations owe their social communities?
	- Guest speaker - tbc
	Reading / Assignment:
	- Research the company "Salesforce" and their 1:1:1 Model
	- Prepare a few questions you would like to ask Salesforce
5	## Asynchronous session // Topic: Managing Stakeholders & Communication
	- Stakeholder-Management
	- Using your values and norms in external communication
	- Greenwashing
	Reading / Assignment:
	- Case study: Adidas
6	## Asynchronous session // Topic: Measuring Sustainability
	- Learn about concepts like "Environmental, Social and Governance" (ESG) and "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDG)
	Reading / Assignment:
	- Answer the question: What do we owe the environment? Write max. 1 page and share it with the group.
7	## LIVE SESSION // Topic: Final Presentations
	- Presentations of your Code of Ethics
	- Discussion
	- Feedback and farewell