

McKinsey Global Survey results

The business of sustainability

More companies are managing sustainability to improve processes, pursue growth, and add value to their companies rather than focusing on reputation alone.

Many companies are actively integrating sustainability principles into their businesses, according to a recent McKinsey survey,¹ and they are doing so by pursuing goals that go far beyond earlier concern for reputation management—for example, saving energy, developing green products, and retaining and motivating employees, all of which help companies capture value through growth and return on capital. In our sixth survey of executives on how their companies understand and manage issues related to sustainability,² this year's results show that, since last year, larger shares of executives say sustainability programs make a positive contribution to their companies' short- and long-term value.

¹ The online survey was in the field from July 12 to July 22, 2011, and received responses from 3,203 executives representing the full range of regions, industries, tenures, company sizes, and functional specialties.

² Defined as a combination of environmental, social, and governance issues also known as corporate social responsibility (CSR) or corporate responsibility.

This survey explored why and how companies are addressing sustainability and to what extent executives believe it affects their companies' bottom line, now and over the next five years. In a related opinion piece, "Putting it into practice," at the end of this survey, the authors argue that more businesses will have to take a long-term strategic view of the issue by identifying and pursuing sustainability opportunities that hold the highest value potential.



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