Purpose & sustainability into competitive advantage – free seminar from Trinity Business School

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Trinity Business School has partnered with Ibec, Ireland's top business confederation in launching a free series of workshops and seminars for businesses to rebuild in the Covid economy.

The Reboot & Reignite series brings together top academics, business leaders and industry experts over a series of eight online workshops.

This session, which will investigate how we align purpose with a sustainable competitive advantage, meeting the seismic demand for climate action and wider stakeholder definition from customers, employees, government and suppliers, will take place on Tuesday 3rd November, from 1pm to 2.15pm.

Chaired by Professor Andrew Burke, Dean of Trinity Business School, the seminar will also feature business leaders Simon McKeever (CEO at Irish Exporters Association), Tara McCarthy (CEO of Bord Bia), Niall McCormack (CEO of Aillemore Ltd) and Mary Lawlor, Adjunct Professor of Business and Human Rights in the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), Trinity Business School.

Professor Andrew Burke, Dean of Trinity Business School, says:

"Businesses managers have heard endless preaching and stating of the problems that need to be solved when it comes to the climate emergency and the societal impact of business. What they really want is guidance on how to transform their businesses so that they can help solve these problems. This is the into-action practical focus of this workshop.

"In terms of the climate emergency businesses need to get their own house in order in terms of operating in a sustainable manner and selling products that can be consumed and disposed of without damaging the environment. These usually requires greater cost in production and may even compromise key product features which appeal to customers. So ethical leadership is key where businesses will have to convince consumers to alter their preferences to place a much greater importance on, and hence willingness to pay for, goods and services that are eco-sustainable".

Simon McKeever, CEO at Irish Exporters Association, says:

"Raising awareness around sustainability and promoting sustainable practices among the business community is important, and that's where Associations like the Irish Exporters Association comes in. Continually engaging in public discourse, in the media, with Government and with our members is where this raising of awareness takes place. It is our place to foresee changes coming down the line, explain how changes will impact our member's businesses and encourage businesses to embrace these changes. As a small and effective organisation, we have been vocal in doing just that with regards to Brexit. Our sense is that in terms of sustainability, the same approach is required because it is a significant shift that will require changes at both customer and business level".

Tara McCarthy, CEO of Bord Bia, says:

“Bord Bia’s Origin Green, a national food and drink sustainability programme, has been in operation for over eight years. This pioneering programme remains the world’s only national food and drink sustainability programme that drives sustainability improvements across the entire supply chain. Through our long established and ongoing engagement with the agri-food and farming sectors, sustainability has been firmly embedded across the Irish food and drink industry. From a manufacturing perspective, Origin Green provides participating companies with the knowledge and know how to develop a third-party verified sustainability plan, which in turn companies use to provide trade customers and stakeholders with proof of their commitment to sustainability. Our research has shown that Ireland’s proven sustainability credentials give us a real competitive advantage, and for our industry, it is a key reason why so many of our international customers source from Ireland.”

Niall McCormack, CEO of Aillemore Ltd, says:

“Companies are moving from a conversation about total shareholder return to one about total stakeholder return. This has only been accelerated by the current pandemic. The question for the board and executives today is: how do you manage your margin while looking after your mission? The real question should be how does the mission drive better margins, and the topic that will dominate the next transformation of industry is climate.”

Mary Lawlor, Adjunct Professor of Business and Human Rights in the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), Trinity Business School, says:

“It’s going to be very important for business to put it in place proper human rights and environmental due diligence in to make sure that all of their activities don’t impact negatively on the communities and the areas that they’re working in. Human rights reporting is a requirement under the EU non-financial reporting directive and next year the EU is bringing in legislation on mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence”

You can register for the session here:
https://www.tcd.ie/business/executive-education/reboot-reignite/Building-purpose-sustainability.php

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For more information, or to speak with Professor Andrew Burke, contact Jonny Stone at jonny@bluesky-pr.com.

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