

**UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA**

**MASTER OF COMMERCE DISSERTATION
STRATEGISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY: A MEASUREMENT TOOL**

by

Mrs. C.A. LE ROUX	27025757	0843333468 catherineleroux24@gmail.com
Home department:	Department of Business Management, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, U.P	
Supervisor:	Dr. Marius Pretorius	
Supervisor's e-mail address:	marius.pretorius@up.ac.za.	
Strategy of inquiry:	Qualitative Research, Measurement instrument and Case Study Research	



FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

University of Pretoria

Declaration Regarding Plagiarism

The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences emphasises integrity and ethical behaviour with regard to the preparation of all written assignments.

Although the lecturer will provide you with information regarding reference techniques, as well as ways to avoid plagiarism (see the 'Guidelines on Referencing' document), you also have a responsibility to fulfil in this regard. Should you at any time feel unsure about the requirements, you must consult the lecturer concerned before submitting an assignment.

You are guilty of plagiarism when you extract information from a book, article, web page or any other information source without acknowledging the source and pretend that it is your own work. This does not only apply to cases where you quote the source directly, but also when you present someone else's work in a somewhat amended (paraphrased) format or when you use someone else's arguments or ideas without the necessary acknowledgement. You are also guilty of plagiarism if you copy and paste information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web site, e-mail message, electronic journal article, or CD-ROM) without paraphrasing it or placing it in quotation marks, even if you acknowledge the source.

You are not allowed to submit another student's previous work as your own. You are furthermore not allowed to let anyone copy or use your work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own.

Students who are guilty of plagiarism will forfeit all credits for the work concerned. In addition, the matter will be referred to the Committee for Discipline (Students) for a ruling. Plagiarism is considered a serious violation of the University's regulations and may lead to your suspension from the University. The University's policy regarding plagiarism is available on the Internet at <http://www.library.up.ac.za/plagiarism/index.htm>. Also see the notes for Theme 2.

For the period that you are a student in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, the following declaration must accompany all written work that is submitted for evaluation. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and is included in the particular assignment.

I (full names & surname):	Catherine Anne le Roux
Student number:	27025757

Declare the following:

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this assignment is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the Internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.
3. I did not copy and paste any information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web page, electronic journal article or CD ROM) into this document.
4. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
5. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own work.

C le Roux

 Signature

31 August 2012

 Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS:

This dissertation is a result of the contributions and support by others.

1. Dr. Marius Pretorius.

My Honours strategy lecturer who suggested (and didn't give up) on the idea of me doing a Masters degree. After agreeing to do the Masters he was a pillar of constant support, offering practical guidance and encouragement. Prof. ventured with me towards the field of sustainability – a topic relatively new to the field of strategy. He was always prepared to be stretched by my ideas and he guided me into turning a passion into a measurable tool contributing towards both practitioners and the academic field alike. Prof. always made time to review my work (including weekends!) and co-authored three research papers forming the core of this dissertation. He also acted as facilitator in my data gathering session which I count as value consultation time. I am so thankful to have had him as a mentor and supervisor and the results of this dissertation (CUM LAUDE and published papers) reflect the level of attention given by Prof. Marius Pretorius in the department of Business Management. Thank you Prof – I could not have done it without you!

2. University of Pretoria, Department of Business Management and Centre of Responsible Leadership.

The University of Pretoria made this Masters possible by providing me with excellent Honours level lecturers who cultivated a love and passion for strategy and sustainability and research in these fields. The foundation was more than sufficient to embark on a master's degree. The Masters was made possible by an academic bursary which allowed me to continue to study directly after my Honours year. The department of Business Management also made provisions for me to present the research papers at the Responsible Leadership Conference in Stellenbosch in 2012. This conference was organised by the Albert Luthuli Centre for Responsible Leadership. The centre was a source of encouragement for my research topic – for which I am grateful.

3. Dr. Geoff Goldman

I would also like to extend a thank you to Dr. Geoff Goldman at the University of Johannesburg. He reviewed my dissertation in the role of an external examiner and also reviewed and accepted the SSI measurement tool research article for the Acta Commercii Journal of Management sciences where it has been published in 2012. Thank you for your time and feedback.

4. Growthpoint Properties.

Growthpoint Properties welcomed the idea of my research on their organisation. They provided me with unrestricted access to staff and information. This greatly facilitated the data gathering process. Management encouraged me to present the research findings back to the company and have since requested further research. Their openness to learning and development in the fields of strategising and sustainability are commendable and I believe their attitude towards transparency and responsible leadership will ensure the company's long term success. Once again, thank you to Growthpoint for the opportunity to learn with you and for providing a platform for the majority of research done for this dissertation.

5. God and Family.

My opportunities and the subsequent results are because I have been blessed and provided for by the Lord. Proverbs 16:3 says 'Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.' Indeed my plans have been established and I acknowledge the source.

My husband Hannes and family. Thank you to my husband who gave me the opportunity to focus on this dissertation. He supported me and always encouraged me to see the end in mind. He also took the time to understand the topic which I admire and respect him for. Thank you to supportive family members who never ceased to see the potential in me to complete a Master's degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	8
1.1	BACKGROUND	8
1.2	PROBLEM STATEMENT	11
1.3	PURPOSE STATEMENT	11
1.4	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	11
1.5	ACADEMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH.....	12
1.6	DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS	13
1.6.1	DELIMITATIONS.....	13
1.6.2	ASSUMPTIONS.....	14
1.7	DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	14
2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING	17
2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	17
2.2	THE SHIFT TO MICRO LEVEL STRATEGY	17
2.3	FIELDS OF STRATEGY RESEARCH	19
2.3.1	Design School, Planning School and Positioning School.....	19
2.3.2	The Resource Based View (RBV) on Strategy	20
2.3.3	The Learning School.....	20
2.3.4	Strategy Process	21
2.4	STRATEGY AS A PRACTICE: MICRO STRATEGY	21
2.4.1	Strategising Practitioners, Praxis and Practices	22
2.5	MICRO STRATEGY DOMAINS	24
2.5.1	Comments on Micro Strategy	25
2.5.2	Criticism on Micro Strategy:.....	26
2.5.3	Conclusion on Strategising	26
3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY	28
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	28
3.2	SUSTAINABILITY	28
3.2.1	Definitions of Sustainability	28

3.3	THE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE	29
3.4	THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY	30
3.4.1	The Drivers for Sustainability	31
3.5	REPORTING AND CORPORATE WEBSITES	33
3.5.1	From Compliance to Integration	34
3.6	EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY INTO STRATEGISING	35
3.6.1	Strategising for Sustainability	35
3.6.2	Tools, models and strategies for embedding sustainability in strategising	36
3.7	THE GAP	39
3.7.1	Proposed explanations for the Gap	40
3.7.2	Research approaches to addressing sustainability	41
3.8	S-A-P THEORY AND SUSTAINABILITY	44
3.8.1	Sustainability and strategising conclusion	45
3.9	RESEARCH CONNECTION AND DESIGN LAYOUT	46
4	ARTICLE 1	51
4.1	DETERMINING THE EMBEDDEDNESS OF SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS IN STRATEGISING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ALSI 40 COMPANIES	
5	ARTICLE 2	79
5.1	STRATEGISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY: MEASUREMENT AND VALIDATION THROUGH APPLIED CASE RESEARCH	
6	ARTICLE 3	100
6.1	PRAXIS AND PRACTICES FOR EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE	
7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	129
8	REFERENCES	140
8.1	REFERENCES FOR INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	140
8.2	REFERENCES FOR LITERATURE REVIEWS	143
8.3	REFERENCES FOR ARTICLE 1	149
8.4	REFERENCES FOR ARTICLE 2	152

8.5	REFERENCES FOR ARTICLE 3.....	156
9	ANNEXURES	162
9.1	ANNEXURE A: STRATEGISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY MEASUREMENT CRITERIA.....	162
9.2	ANNEXURE B: STRATEGISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP PLAN.....	175
9.3	ANNEXURE C: BIOGRAPHIC FORM.....	176
9.4	ANNEXURE D: CASE COMPANY'S SCORE ON SSI TOOL	177
9.5	ANNEXURE E: DATA COLLECTED FOR CASE STUDY	178
9.6	ANNEXURE F: LETTER OF PERMISSION.....	179

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	A conceptual framework for analysing Micro Strategy	22
Figure 2:	The business case for sustainability.....	31
Figure 3:	Sustainability an integral part of strategy.....	37
Figure 4:	Research connection and design layout.....	46
Figure 5:	Overall research design.....	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Abbreviations used in this document.....	15
----------	--	----

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

STRATEGISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY: A MEASUREMENT TOOL

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

'For the first time, there's a global understanding, if not a feeling of *urgency* that sustainability, in every possible meaning of the word, is the only way forward' (Trendwatching, 2010).

Sustainability has been referred to as a 'megatrend' for business (Lubin & Esty, 2010) and it is said to be at its tipping point. Sustainability is the creation of long-term shareholder value by taking up opportunities and managing associated risks that derive from Triple Bottom Line (economic, environmental and social) developments (Crews, 2010:15; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:59).

Companies have been encouraged to 'move with the culture' on this megatrend of sustainability (Trendwatching, 2010). A recent study found that nine out of ten consumers around the world say they are ready to switch to companies offering products and services that help to reduce carbon emissions and two out of three are willing to pay (on average) eleven percent more for them (Lacy, Arnott & Lowitt, 2009:485). Stakeholders are lobbying for businesses to change their view on sustainability topics. In fact, in a single month in 2010, South Africa passed 47 amendments and extensions to its sustainability legislation and regulation, ranging from chemical management to atmospheric emissions to fertilizers and everything in between. Compliance may be a means of response by businesses however, in terms of sustainability; they have to do more than just 'embrace the notion of being a good corporate citizen' (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:18).

Business leaders have realised sustainability's current and potential impact on their businesses - and they are responding. Seventy percent of executives surveyed in a recent study said that their companies have made sustainability a 'permanent fixture on the management agenda'. The Boston Consulting Group and MIT Sloan Management Review surveyed data from more than three thousand corporate leaders in one hundred and thirteen countries held twenty nine in-depth interviews with industry experts and academic scholars. It was found that, two thirds of respondents said management attention to, and investment in, sustainability has increased in the last year (2010-2011). Additionally, two-thirds of companies said that sustainability is 'necessary to being competitive in today's marketplace' (Haanaes, Reeves, Von Streng Velken, Audretsch, Kiron, & Kruschwitz, 2012:1). On this point, some authors have suggested that sustainability is vital for companies to 'survive' and 'thrive' (Adams & Frost, 2008:289; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5)

The assertion is that sustainability needs to feature on the management agenda and particularly, part of business's strategising. Bonn and Fisher (2011:5-14) suggest that sustainability is the 'missing ingredient in strategy', stressing that a proper understanding of the relationship between strategy and sustainability is crucial in

gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the twenty first century. The notion that there is a complementary relationship between strategising and sustainability is supported by several authors (Collins, Lawrence, Pavlovich & Ryan, 2007:729; Hallstedt, 2010:704).

The view is that sustainability needs to be *embedded* in strategising. Embedded sustainability is a company's response (strategy) to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2).

The business case for sustainability boasts *various* drivers and benefits for the adoption of sustainable business practices (Adams & Frost, 2008:299; Hillestad, Xie & Haugland, 2010:441; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5; Cowan, Dopart, Ferracini, Sahmel, Merryman, Gaffney & Paustenbach, 2010:525), these are:

- The building of a strong positive corporate brand;
- Reputation;
- Cost savings;
- Enhanced innovation, and
- Improved competitive position

Besides these benefits contributing to the business case for embedding sustainability in strategising, literature asserts that strategising for sustainability leads to new organisational competencies. It is said that companies can get good at managing environmental and social performance in such a way as to bring about competitive advantage. In fact, sustainability embedded strategies contribute to the development of competencies that configure organisational capabilities - leading to profit and a strategic position that competitors find difficult to imitate (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:69).

The question surrounding sustainability is no longer a matter of 'should we accommodate it?' Instead, given its connection to the financial bottom line and its role of governance, the question has become: how to do so?

Those advocating for the integration of sustainability in strategising propose various models, suggestions and tools for leadership in their role of strategising (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:489; Reilly, 2009:33; Quinn & Dalton, 2009:21; Searcy, 2009:50; Holton, Xie & Haugland, 2010:152; Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim, Shockley, Valle, Ludlowb, Shah, 2010:58; Leon-Soriana, Munoz-Tirress & Chalmeta-Rosalen, 2010:249; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

Despite the powerful forces for corporate sustainability - including global pressure, informed leadership, available tools and frameworks, and its connection to business performance – the embeddedness of sustainability may be impeded by equally strong forces against its implementation (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:33; Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:440). Strategising for sustainability is not a trivial task (Holton *et al.*, 2010:152). There is consensus amongst leadership that whilst the 'case for change is made,' the goal is both 'complex' and 'elusive' (Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

This could be on account of many companies 'still struggling to define sustainability in a way that is relevant to their business' and managers feeling overwhelmed and distracted by the 'daily grind of business' (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:74; Velazquez, Esquer & Munguia, 2011:36). This could explain why sustainability was ranked only eighth in importance on management agenda among other agenda items (Smith & Sharicz, 2011:74; Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1).

Simultaneously, research indicates a significant rise in the use of corporate websites for reporting sustainability activities amongst companies attempting to acknowledge and respond to changing local/national and global societal expectations concerning business practices (Lee, Fairhurst & Wesley, 2009:141). It was found that sixty eight percent of the Top 250 Global Fortune 500 Companies embraced sustainability reporting (Gill, Dickinson & Scharl, 2008:244). It is also not a surprise that transparency was chosen as the cover topic of the April 2010 issue of the Harvard Business Review (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2).

The increase in expectation and monitoring of websites by stakeholders necessitates a consistent transparent communication strategy (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009:249; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:14). Companies desiring to harness the benefits of sustainability, secure and assure stakeholders and protect their reputation have turned to their most public and global form of communication: their websites (Coupland, 2005:256; Bowers, 2010:250).

The external communication strategies of companies have been identified as an area of concern. It appears that sustainability claims are not integrated into strategising and are only surface level. Hillestad *et al.*, (2010:441) determine that eighty percent of the Fortune 100 flaunt their values publically – values that too often stand for nothing but wanting to be, 'politically correct'. These authors propose that reporting has become an 'exercise in compliance' which does not contribute much towards learning or the innovation in companies on sustainability. In fact, sustainability reports have been said to provide little evidence exhibiting how businesses attend to environmental and social issues and their direct enhancement/impact on the economic performance of business (Bowers, 2010:250).

Whilst a transparent and bold move, corporate websites and external communication have been criticised both inside and outside corporate walls (Coupland, 2005:256, Bowers, 2010:250). Most companies regard the forms of sustainability reporting as 'public relations stunts' or 'empty talk' (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2010:301).

Concerns have developed around the seemingly 'missing link' or gap between what is said and what is done (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520; Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:704). This is amplified when considered in context of the legitimacy theory. It advocates that an organisation's relationship with society can be built through communication and disclosure between that organisation, government and individuals (Coupland, 2005:356; Cowan *et al.*, 2010:525).

In spite of academic support for the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising (White, 2009:386 ; Lacy *et al.*, 2009:484 ; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6) - to the business that needs to act upon publicised sustainability efforts; strategising for sustainability remains a daunting task (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There appears to be a gap between the official declarations of companies (the talk) and actual organisational behaviour through execution (the walk) - that is lagging behind (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130; Idemudia, 2011:1). Sustainability claims are made on corporate websites and in reports but are believed to not necessarily be part of company strategising. Strategists are struggling to embed sustainability in strategising which questions the external communication and reporting. The problem to be investigated is this implementation gap in strategising for sustainability.

1.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The research addresses the gap identified in the problem statement. The research was guided by the following purpose statement:

The purpose of this research is to investigate and describe the level of sustainability embeddedness in the elements of strategy formulation and implementation (and not merely surface level statements and claims) in company public and external communication (the talk) of the JSE ALSI Top 40 and in actual organisational behaviour in practice (the walk).

For this, a measurement tool (SSI tool) was developed with the support literature on the topic. The SSI tool was challenged to find empirical research that supports its validity and application in practice as a tool to measure the extent to which sustainability is embedded in strategising. The purpose for this part of the study was to investigate if the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) tool can be applied in practice and use practitioner validated measures.

The application to practice measured the actual organisational level of sustainability embeddedness and execution (the walk). Finally, the actual organisational behaviour of strategising for sustainability was examined to identify strategising components and their importance and utilisation in practice. The purpose was to determine what practices and praxis practitioners apply when strategising for sustainability. By determining the discrepancy between importance and utilisation of strategising components, the research explains the reasons for the implementation gap identified as a problem in strategising for sustainability.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research questions that guide this research are as follows:

- A) What is the status of strategising for sustainability? Is there evidence that sustainability is embedded into strategising?
- B) Is the proposed SSI tool valid (accurate and relevant as measurements) for application in practice?
- C) What practices and praxis are applied when strategising for sustainability?

These are underpinned by the following research questions:

- 1) Is there evidence that companies are strategising for sustainability in their external communication? (thus companies' sustainable reporting and claims can direct strategising measurement)
- 2) Can the proposed measurement tool judge 'strategising for sustainability' meaningfully? (thus a measurement tool can be designed to determine the level of sustainability 'embeddedness' in strategising and measurement can reveal gaps).
- 3) Are claims about sustainability embedded into strategy or is it just empty talk (companies' sustainability claims are not embedded into their strategising)
- 4) Can the SSI tool discriminate and reveal strategising gaps?

- 5) Can the elements contained in the SSI tool be rated by practitioners?
- 6) Do the practitioners support the SSI tool as a means of measurement of sustainability embeddedness?
- 7) Are the elements incorporated into strategising?
- 8) Can practitioners obtain direction from results?

- 9) Can practices and praxis be identified by practitioners?
- 10) Can practitioners rate practices and praxis importance?
- 11) Can practitioners rate practice and praxis utilisation?
- 12) Is there is a discrepancy between importance and utilisation?

1.5 ACADEMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

The scope and context of reviewed corporate websites for sustainability elements has been limited and have not been strategically focused investigations (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221; Bowers, 2010:253;; Cowan *et al.*, 2010:524).

This research set apart companies on their embeddedness of sustainability in strategising, thereby taking a more strategic approach to the research. This research built on existing literature studies to form a new measure (the SSI tool) based on identified elements. The research specifically addresses the South African context as most corporate studies have been done on the Global Fortune Companies or the Indices of Foreign Countries. The developed and proposed SSI tool addresses the concerns in literature regarding the 'superfluous' claims surrounding sustainability on corporate websites thereby contributing to the body of literature on the topic of strategising for sustainability. In fact, this research discriminates those companies who have successfully demonstrated that sustainability is not just for reputation purposes from those who make sustainability part of their operations (the walk) as a listed company.

This research expands the scope of research to include all available strategic documents, communication messages and reports on the websites of the Top JSE ALSI Top 40 Companies. It investigates how leading South African companies are reflecting their internal sustainability actions through their external communication.

This research proceeds to validate the SSI tool's effectiveness in measuring the embeddedness of sustainability in company strategising through application of the

SSI tool to practice. This second part of the research encompasses an interactive workshop offering pragmatic understanding on the degree to which a case study company is strategising for sustainability. The SSI tool's elements have been validated and supported and thereby contribute a new measurement tool that has been 'tried and tested' and ready for application by both the academic and practice fields of strategy.

Practitioners have been criticised for not embedding sustainability in strategising. However, little research has investigated the strategising practices applicable to embedding sustainability. Furthermore, there has been an urgent pull from both strategy practitioners and academics for a deeper connection between strategy theory and the practice of strategy. This research addresses the connection by identifying strategising components (practitioners, practice and praxis) that are supported and rated by practitioners on their importance, frequency and utilisation in practice when strategising for sustainability.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

1.6.1 DELIMITATIONS

The research has several delimitations related to the context, constructs and theoretical perspectives of the research. The research is delimited to examine companies that are ranked top 40 on the JSE ALSI as of March 2011. The sample does not exclude companies on the basis that their product may be inherently unsustainable but rather seeks for the embeddedness of sustainability in strategy formulation and implementation elements. The research is conducted from a micro strategy perspective and not as much from a meso and macro perspective and therefore focuses on the individual or group level of embeddedness of sustainability and not as much at a company or industry level. The research is delimited to only consider the public communication of the companies including all available strategic documents, messages and reports on the websites. This is with the exception of company ranked 39, a case study company. This company has been internally investigated as well. The employees of the case company chosen were from middle to upper management irrespective of division or line function and include the sustainability coordinator. Employees were not tested on their understanding of sustainability but rather provided with the definition prior to the research. The research is concerned with the degree to which sustainability is embedded in the process strategising of the company and is delimited from investigating the specific strategy of the company. The literature review is limited to the field of strategy and focus on the recent literature on sustainability and not the corporate social responsibility argument. The literature is delimited from the theory building side of sustainability. The research is built on the premise that the business case for sustainability has been made, and as such, focuses on the embedding of sustainability into strategising. This is on account of this research viewing sustainability in the business context which has only been addressed in more recent literature. The strategising process of embedding sustainability is considered a process that is primarily prescriptive but will not exclude strategising by emergent means either. Process theory has been criticised for not showing much interest in explaining the minute and trivial practices in strategising (Whittington, 2007:1575).

On the contrary, this research investigates the detailed components of strategising but in light of viewing strategising for sustainability as a process (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:131; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

Strategising for sustainability and the embedding of sustainability are used interchangeably as with micro strategy and practice theory. Practitioners in the research were employed staff at the case company.

1.6.2 ASSUMPTIONS

The most pivotal assumption used in this research is that relating to transparency and disclosure. Based on the legitimacy theory; the information communicated externally by a company is in fact, a reflection of actions and goals of the company under scrutiny. Another assumption is that the employees of the case company are familiar with the concepts of strategising and sustainability, also that they are aware of the messages conveyed in company's corporate communication.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- Business sustainability: when companies meet the needs of direct and indirect stakeholders without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future stakeholders. Achieved by growing the TBL capital (Klaine & Van Hauff, 2009:520)
- Embedded sustainability: is a company's response (strategy) to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2).
- Integrated Report (noun): A product of a process or system of processes that seeks to inform stakeholders of an organisations ability to heed stakeholder and or societal concerns and to provide meaningful performance information to support assertions suggesting effective management. To demonstrate how well an organisation has embedded a comprehensive view of sustainability into the strategic fabric of the organisation that leads the reader to understand whether the organisation is well placed to adapt to economic, social and environmental factors.
- Praxis: involves the flow of activity and the interconnection between the actions of, and utilisation of resources by, practitioners, the organisation's actors and the organisation within which these individuals and groups act (Jarzarbkowski & Spee, 2009:69).
- Practitioner: the people (human actors) that do the work of strategy (Jarzarbkowski & Spee, 2009:69-95).
- Practice: The social, symbolic and material tools that practitioners use during the 'doing of strategy' (Jarzarbkowski & Spee, 2009:69-95).
- Strategising: the process of formulating and implementing a strategy (Hodgekinson & Clarke, 2007:243).
- Strategy: the coordinated means by which an organisation pursues its goals and objectives (Carpenter & Sanders 2009:35).

- Sustainability: entails the creation of long term shareholder value by taking up opportunities and managing associated risks that derive from Triple Bottom Line (economic, environmental and social) developments (Crews, 2010:15)
- Sustainable development: involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity (WBCSD, 2012).
- Sustainability claims: distinctive remarks, marketing labels and brands, developed by public and private sector institutions (UNCTAD, 2011) about sustainability achievements and projects. They are generally communicated through websites, public documents and with products and services. They attest that the company itself, its products and supply chains incorporate the pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental).
- Sustainable competitive advantage: A long-term competitive advantage that is not easily duplicable or surpassable by the competitors (Business Dictionary, 2012).
- Sustainability report (noun): frequently referred to as the Triple Bottom Line Report or an accounting of the social, environmental and economic performance of a company. A mixture of disclosure on matters ranging from health and safety to environmental impacts. Often a marketing material.
- Sustainable value: is a dynamic state that occurs when a company creates ongoing value for its shareholders and stakeholders.

Table 1 that follows introduces the abbreviations used in this document.

Table 1: Abbreviations used in this document

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABV	Activity Based View
ALSI	All Share Index
BSC	Balanced Score Card
CDP	Carbon Disclosure Project
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal
RBV	Resource Based View
S-A-P	Strategy as a Practice
SBSC	Sustainability Balance Score Card
SPMS	Sustainability Performance Management System
SRI	Social Responsibility Index
SSI tool	Strategising for Sustainability Index Tool
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TBL	Triple Bottom Line

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

2 LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the course of 10 years, research into the field of strategy has shifted from that of strategy being considered an essentially economic discipline, towards a contemporary view of strategy. Studies have also shifted the focus point from a macro level view of companies to a closer look at the internal practices and make-up of them. More recent studies investigate organisational adaption and change in order to survive and grow in fast changing and dynamic macro environments (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:75; Holton, Glass & Price, 2010:153; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:5; Velazquez, Esquer & Munguia, 2011:41).

These more recent perspectives on strategy research are supported and encouraged by strategy practitioners and academics alike. Both parties have called for clarity of understanding between the strategy theory and the practice of strategy. This has culminated in the development of a new approach to strategy research called: strategy as a practice (s-a-p) (Haugstad, 1999:5; Whittington, 2002:C5; Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003:5; Whittington, 2007:1575).

This chapter begins with an introduction to, and the examination of, contemporary theory on strategising. It communicates the shift to micro level strategy, the evolution of strategy theory and further insight into practice theory and introduces a conceptual framework. Definitions for the elements of practice theory are explained and this review ends with arguments for and against this strategising theory.

2.2 THE SHIFT TO MICRO LEVEL STRATEGY

Strategy is the coordinated means by which an organisation pursues its goals and objectives. Leaders identify risks and opportunities from internal and external sources. This includes an analysis of industry and macro environment (Carpenter & Sanders 2009:35). It differs from strategic planning which is a corporate managerial practice by means of which a set of processes are undertaken in order to define a range of strategies that will contribute to the achieving of the organisation's mission statement (Leon-Soriana *et al.*, 2010:252).

The 'coordinated means' by which companies pursue their goals and objectives - is through the process of strategising. Strategising is the process of formulating and implementing a strategy (Hodgekinson & Clarke, 2007:243). The two part process begins with strategy formulation which is the process of deciding what to do and involves the establishing of a vision and mission, setting of goals and objectives and determining of sources of competitive advantage from internal competencies. During the process of formulation, strategists assess the macroeconomic environment to identify opportunities and risks and devise plans to address them.

Strategy implementation is the process of performing all the activities necessary which has been planned. Leadership play crucial role in implementation by creating action plans, aligning organisational structure, setting systems, programmes and initiatives and their associated measures in place and then determining rewards to achieve the firm's goals and objectives (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:35; Lynch, 2009:490).

Strategy can be determined through a descriptive or an emergent approach (Mintzberg 1979:934). The prescriptive approach to strategy involves deliberate planning by the company leaders who are expected to devise thoughtful, informed and deliberate decisions that will lead to organisational success. The leader is expected to 'know the way and show the way and go the way' (Crews, 2010:18). The emergent strategy strives towards an objective which is unclear whose elements are developed during the course of the strategy process. It suits fast developing markets as it considers the dynamic changes in the environment and adjusts to accommodate them, offering flexibility. Leaders are guided by *strategic intent* and the outcome is unknown (Lynch, 2009:225; Leon-Soriana *et al.*, 2010:251).

Johnson *et al.*, (2003:14) argue, that it is now time to shift the strategy research agenda 'towards the micro' (Carter, Clegg & Kornberger, 2008:83). The shift towards a closer look at the internal practices of companies has resulted in the use of different analogies and descriptive mechanisms in literature. Scholars have compared companies and their environments to 'living organisms' with organisational 'DNA' that have many integral components and experience evolutionary and organisational changes (Grandy & Mills, 2004:1164; Neilson, Martin & Powers, 2008:63).

Micro strategy, the Activity Based View (ABV) on strategy and strategy as practice (s-a-p) can all be used interchangeably when describing the actions and interactions of the practitioners or actors in strategising (Balogun, Huff & Johnson, 2003:199; Chia & MacKay, 2007:218). This approach focuses on examining the detailed processes and practices that contribute to sustained competitive advantage and their impact on strategic performance (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:71).

Micro strategy seeks to explain the 'doing of strategy.' Exploration into micro strategy raises questions such as; 'who does it, what do they do, how do they do it and what do they use.' Research into the 'doing' of strategy attributes to the 'shaping strategy' and supports investigations into the impact on organisational performance and its environment (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:76).

The practice-based approach investigates the finest details of strategy. These include everyday actions such as budgeting, meetings, reports and presentations. This approach focuses on the 'praxis, practitioners and practices' of strategising (Whittington, 2002:C2).

S-a-p theory is a result of an evolutionary process in the field of strategy research. Debates amongst scholars and the insights from studies have resulted in a working definition of micro strategy. Before analysing the components of this definition and its perspective on strategising, it is important to consider the journey from classical strategy theory through to current views on strategising.

2.3 FIELDS OF STRATEGY RESEARCH

Strategy theory has developed from the inputs of various researchers. The development of the ideas, differences in view and working definitions will be discussed.

Beginning with the contributions of Porter (1980; 1985) with the classical approach to strategy and ending with the recent understanding of micro strategy (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:71).

2.3.1 Design School, Planning School and Positioning School

Porter, (1980; 1985) and Mintzberg (1990:106; 1998) contributed towards these schools of thinking that together are known as the 'classical approach' in strategy theory (Haugstad, 1999).

The design school describes the process of conception of strategy. Formulation takes a clear approach where unique strategies are created. The internal situation of the company is used to match the external environment to bring about order and support visionary leadership (Mintzberg, 1990:106; 1998; Brews & Hunt, 1999:890).

The planning school proposes that a rigorous set of steps are taken, from the analysis situation to the execution of the strategy. It contributes in giving clear direction and enables resource allocation and control (Mintzberg, 1990:106; 1998; Brews & Hunt, 1999:890).

The positioning school places the business within the context of its industry and looks at how the company can improve its strategic positioning within that industry. The school contributes to strategic management being viewed as a science and provides content in a systematic way to the existing way of looking at strategy. It is particularly useful in early stages of strategy development, when date is analysed (Mintzberg, 1990:106; 1998)

These schools on strategy are known for embodying rational thinking and for studies on corporate enterprises as fundamentally economic disciplines (Whittington, 2007:1576).

Key points on this theory:

- The design school has been criticised as a strategy unsuitable for a fast changing environment.
- The planning school has been criticised for becoming too static and being prone to the risk of groupthink.
- The positioning school tends to neglect power, politics, culture, and social elements.
- These schools (classical theories) have been criticised for side-lining the role and significance of human actors on the strategic performances of companies (Haugstad, 1999).

- Critics also identified that these approaches focus solely on macro-level organisational companies (Grandy & Mills, 2004:1154).
- The classical view sees companies as value-appropriators whereby they acquire greater performances and sustainable competitive advantage as a result of their choice of industry and market power (Johnson *et al*, 2003:3).
- Supporters of the classic's economic discipline perspective are of the opinion that micro strategy is degrading to strategy research as it has been likened it to a social practice (Hughes, 1971).

2.3.2 The Resource Based View (RBV) on Strategy

The RBV, whilst situated firmly in the economic paradigm, focuses upon competitive advantage as it arises from heterogeneous firm-level resources and capabilities (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:100). This contemporary theory combines strategic insights on competitive advantage and organisational insights on firm existence (Truijens, 2003:4). The RBV on strategy proposes that companies are value-creators and that each firm has a unique value-creating ability and it is this value-creating ability that results in sustainable competitive advantage (Wernerfelt, 1984:175).

Key Points on this theory:

- The RBV research has been credited with restoring the balance between internal and external analysis in strategic management theory (Collis, 1991).
- Arguments about RBV include Porter, (1991, 1996) who critiqued that the RBV fails to appropriately address the processes by which advantage was created, and that activities were a more appropriate focus of analysis than resources.
- The inclusive definition of resources results in an inability to separate between resources which managers can practically influence in an effort to create economic outcomes from those beyond managerial control (Priem & Butler, 2001:29).
- The sustainability of resources as a source of value is a concern. This RBV view of strategy may not be a viable perspective to continue to apply in light of globalisation (Bromiley & Papenhausen, 2003). As a result of the rapidly changing landscape from which and in which companies operate – resources have become an unstable foundation for businesses to remain competitive (Barney, 1991:46).
- Critics of the RBV point out that there is a lack of strategic outcomes from studies that applied the RBV (McGahan & Porter, 1997:20; Bowman & Helfat, 2001:19).

2.3.3 The Learning School

The learning school emphasises strategy formulation as a process of emergent nature or as an incremental process of strategic learning (Haugstad, 1999). The development of strategy is considered a chaotic, unpredictable process - rather than result-oriented (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

In a significant academic trial, The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) were challenged on the identified source of the success of Hondo into the American market (Pascale,

1984; Haugstad, 1999). Pascale (1984:49) determined through an interview with the Japanese management team that their success had not been through careful planning. It had been as a result of a practice of learning from mistakes and continuous problem solving. These findings were contrary to classical theory on strategy (Haugstad, 1999).

The challenge resulted in a new school of strategy; the learning school. The classical theory suggested that the strategic outcome of a strategy is the result of a sequential and deliberate process consisting of five distinct phases: analysis, choice, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and review. The Hondo case study did not support this deliberate process but exposed the learning process carried out by the Japanese businessmen (Haugstad, 1999).

The learning school embodies a motto of 'if at first you don't succeed try, try again.' This was evident in the Honda case study whereby persistence and learning resulted in success. The Honda case study supports an emergent approach to strategising (Lynch, 2009:35).

2.3.4 Strategy Process

Process theory seeks to explain the impact of systems and processes of companies as a whole. It exhibits an interest in activities of human actors and its ability to drive or counteract change (Pettigrew, Thomas & Whittington, 2002:6). The theory doesn't show much interest in explaining the minute and trivial practices in strategising (Haugstad, 1999; Whittington, 2007:1577).

Process theory on strategy proposes the question of how and why things evolve over time. Strategy process research 'is concerned with understanding how organisational strategies are formulated and implemented and the processes of strategic change' (Burgelman, 1994; Whittington, 2007:1575).

Key Points of Process Theory:

- Process research highlights the relationship between the internal organisational processes and the strategic outcomes of the organisation (Whittington, 2007:1581).
- Critics point out that process theory only investigates how a strategy emerges and evolves over time and not the strategic fit between the organisation to its competitive environment (Whittington, 2007:1575).

2.4 STRATEGY AS A PRACTICE: MICRO STRATEGY

Strategy as practice, as briefly introduced earlier, forms part of a broader practice turn in contemporary social theory and the management sciences. It has been imported into diverse management fields including technology, knowledge management, organisational learning and accounting (Whittington, 2007:1576)

The practice turn, (Whittington, 2002:C1) has entered the strategy field, recommending that research focus on the actual work of strategists and strategising.

This perspective seeks to explain the origins of sustainable competitive advantage by examining the detailed processes and practices which constitute the day to day activities of strategists that have an impact on strategic outcomes (Balogun *et al.*, 2003:197; Chia & MacKay, 2007:218; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:283).

The next section will examine the intricate components in this practice theory. Following this, there will a brief review of the nine micro strategy domains in practice and a review of the comments on micro strategy.

2.4.1 Strategising Practitioners, Praxis and Practices

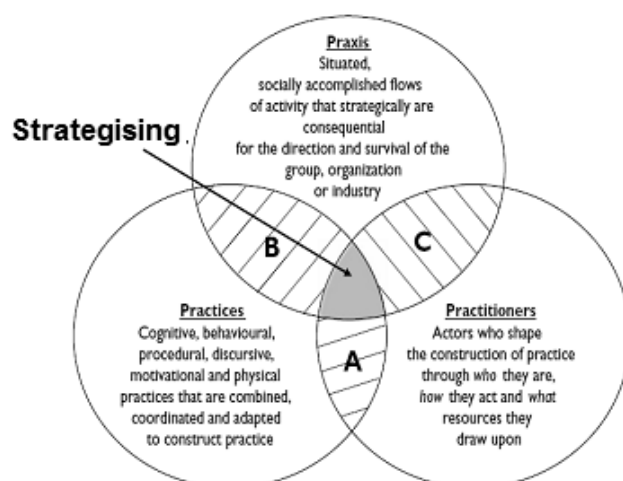
Practice research aims to understand the ‘messy’ realities of doing strategy as lived experience; to go inside the world of strategy practitioners as they struggle with competing priorities, multiple stakeholders and excessive but incomplete information in an attempt to shape a strategy acceptable by markets, financial institutions and consumers (Jarzabkowski, Belogun & Seidl, 2007:15).

The working definition of strategising highlights that strategy is something that people do (an activity) in society. The activities include the actions that people take and the practices they use in accomplishing the activity of strategy (Whittington, 2002:C1; Chia & MacKay 2007:217).

Broadly, this research agenda has three focal points, each of which provides a different angle from which to examine s-a-p namely: practice, practitioners and praxis (Whittington, 2002:C1; Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:15).

Figure 1 is a graphical representation of these components and demonstrates the interrelationships between them.

Figure 1: A conceptual framework for analysing micro strategy



Source: Jarzabkowski, Belogun and Seidl, (2007:15)

2.4.1.1 Practitioners: Who are the Strategists?

Practitioners are actors who shape the creation of the practice of strategy through *who they are, how they act and what resources they draw upon*. While all these people might not be chosen formally as ‘strategists’, their actions and interactions contribute to the strategy of an organization (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:7).

S-a-p research aims to reinstate these actors in strategising. The scope of strategy research in the past has focused primarily on top managers – as if only one elite group act strategically. S-a-p acknowledges this ‘curious absence of human actors and their actions’ (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2008:69).

These actors, doing the work of strategy, include ‘internal actors’ such as employees on all levels in the organisation involved in the process of strategising. Practitioners can also be ‘external actors’ such as consultants and analysts. These external actors in fact, exercise influence that shapes the realised strategy of an organisation (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:286; Johnson *et al.*, 2003:15).

2.4.1.2 Practices: What do Strategists do?

Practices are the cognitive, behavioural, procedural, discursive, motivational and physical resources that are combined, coordinated and adapted by the practitioner to construct practices (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:8). Practices refer to the routines and norms of strategy work (Whittington, 2007). They include the use of material tools and models that are used every day (Whittington, 2006:615). Examples include Porter's (1985) SWOT analysis or the PESTEL tool for addressing macroeconomic forces. Technology tools such as PowerPoint presentations and flipcharts also play a role in the practice and action of strategising.

Practices have been broken down into three types namely; administrative, discursive and episodic. Administrative practices in strategising include the organisation and planning mechanisms such as budgets, forecasts and performance. The discursive practice provides the discourse for strategy language academic concepts, tools and techniques that populate strategy classes. Lastly, episodic (periodic) practices refer to those practices that create opportunities for and organise the interaction between practitioners in doing strategy including meetings, workshops and PowerPoint Presentations (Orlikowski, 2000:404; Kaplan, 2006).

Porter (1980, 1985) introduced an activity-based view (ABV) on strategy practices, which is specifically concerned with the empirical study of ‘practice’ as a flow of activity (Johnson *et al.*, 2003:6). It focuses upon the practice of strategy through this activity, as opposed to through practitioners, or practices (Porter, 1980, 1985; Sheehan & Foss, 2009:240)

2.4.1.3 Praxis: How can what they do be explained?

Praxis can be explained as the socially accomplished flows of activities that are strategically consequential to the direction and the survival of the organisation

(Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:7). Grandy and Mills (2004:1154) refer to the praxis as comprising of the interconnections between, the actions of, and utilisation of resources by practitioners.

It has also been referred to as the 'actual activity of what people do in practice' (Whittington, 2006:615). Strategising, is said, to draw much of its 'strength and privileged positioning' from its 'roots in rationalist reference points' (Grandy & Mills, 2004:1157). It is suggested that the logic, objectivity and techniques of practitioners as well as their personal modelling and simplification processes – affect strategising outcomes. Abstractions such as the use of a SWOT analysis depict the key elements of the 'real world' of strategising praxis (Mintzberg, 1990:106).

An example is of a card player who may play the same hand differently according to their skill and the flow of the game; these actors are seen not as 'simple automata', but as artful interpreters of practices. The actors are 'making do' in everyday life. They are negotiating the constraints handed down to them. Practitioners become important because their practical skill (and personal techniques) makes a difference (Grandy & Mills, 2004:1157). Practitioners can be considered as creative agents who balance the actions and resources available – this is what is referred to as 'Praxis' (Whittington, 2006:615).

Praxis can be further described as being positive or negative. The positive praxis enables the evolution of processes. In that, these processes will ensure the adaption of the organisation to its environment. An example is the correction of problems by middle management that were not even known to exist by top management. The negative praxis involves the breaking down of essential processes needed for the organisation's survival in the rapidly changing external environment (Grandy & Mills, 2004:1156).

2.5 MICRO STRATEGY DOMAINS

Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:71) introduced nine domains around the praxis and practitioners. Praxis's have been broken down into 3 levels; micro, meso and macro. Micro includes the research field that aspires to explain strategy praxis at 'individual or group-level.' This differs slightly from meso level praxis that includes research that strives to give explanation to strategy on an 'organisational or sub organisational level.' Macro Level praxis refers to those studies that seek to explain strategy at an 'institutional and industry-level'.

Another element of micro strategy that of practitioners is also introduced by Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009:73). Strategy actors are grouped into three groups. Practitioners are said to operate as 'individuals' within the organisation or as 'aggregates' grouped by position within the organisation. Strategy consultants coming externally into the organisation are also included for their role as external aggregates.

Jarzabkowski and Spee's (2009:74) matrix includes domains that are not 'mutually exclusive' and may overlap in research studies.

Below is a brief summary of the possible research questions for studies that have been classified into domains of micro strategy;

Domain A: 'What are the implications deriving from the way the CEO and the CFO negotiate over a particular strategic target?'

Domain B: 'What are the implications of the interactions between the six members of a project team for implementing the new strategic direction?'

Domain C: 'How have alliances become a legitimate strategy within the airline industry?'

Domain D: 'How do the interactions between top and middle management within a strategy workshop, shape the conduct and outcome of that workshop?'

Domain E: 'How does the praxis of different business units in implementing an organisation-wide change programme, influence their perceptions of the success of that programme?'

Domain F: 'How do executive directors in retail companies take account of an attempt to influence the industry analysis that shape investment in their industry?'

Domain G: 'How do strategy consultants shape praxis of workshops?'

Domain H: 'What practices do environmental groups draw upon in an attempt to influence the inclusion of environmental considerations within an oil company's strategy?'

Domain I: 'Do banks' formal borrowing requirements shape strategic plans and planning procedures of small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) and, if so, in what ways?'

2.5.1 Comments on Micro Strategy

Strategy as practice is distinct from, but responds to, challenges and issues raised in the classical approach, RBV and dynamic capabilities research.

Support for Micro Strategy:

- Micro strategy research facilitates a closer relationship between academic and practical strategy (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:283).
- A practice focus can address the short comings in RBV theory by providing a more micro focus on those activities and actions from which socially complex resources are constituted (Johnson *et al.*, 2003:3).
- Micro strategy is able to dissect and explain the key components of strategising, namely; practices, praxis and practitioners. This serves to offer studies a platform from which to study the means by which companies achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Johnson *et al.*, 2003:15; Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:7).
- Micro strategy expands on the emergent nature of strategising, by not only examining the ability of an organisation and its actors to adapt a strategy but also by making the practice of strategy the explicit subject of its research (Whittington, 2007:1578).
- The ability to link the micro with the macro phenomena leads to the second benefit of micro strategy research, the ability to study both content and process simultaneously (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:74).

- A practice agenda addresses the issue of multiple actors as skilled and knowledgeable practitioners of strategy, examining how their skill is constituted in doing different aspects of the work of strategy (Whittington, 2003)

2.5.2 Criticism on Micro Strategy:

Critics of practice theory highlight that micro strategy poses the challenge of accumulating knowledge beyond the specific context of a particular study. It has been suggested that this generates danger that studies may become so extreme and specific that the results cannot be generalised and thus not contribute to the strategy agenda in a substantial or significant way (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:5-27; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:282; Johnson *et al.*, 2003:7).

2.5.3 Conclusion on Strategising

The evolution of theory on strategising has journeyed from a macro perspective to a micro perspective whereby interest lies in the detailed aspects of strategising. Many research fields have begun to apply a practice approach when analysing the means of competitive advantage for companies (Johnson *et al.*, 2003:15; Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:7). In fact, Owen (2008:248) argued in favour of fieldwork studies (detailed studies) that he proposes to have great potential to better understand organisational processes and managerial motivations underpinning initiatives and evaluating their effectiveness (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130). This is on account of practice theory enabling researchers to dissect and explain the key components of strategising, namely the; practices, praxis and practitioners which contribute to current strategising status' and outcomes.

With this strategising review as a theoretical backdrop, the research will continue to 'paint the picture' of sustainability embeddedness in strategising in the second literature review on sustainability.

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

3 LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The sustainability movement is near its tipping point (Haanaes, Reeves, Von Streng Velken, Audretsch, Kiron, & Kruschwitz, 2012:1). Seventy percent of executives surveyed in a recent study said that their companies have made sustainability a 'permanent fixture on the management agenda'. In fact, authors have suggested that sustainability is vital for companies to 'survive' and 'thrive' (Adams & Frost, 2008:289; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5)

There has been a significant rise in research and discussion on the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development. There has been an emphasis on the connection between sustainability and strategising and its connection to business profit and performance (Holton *et al.*, 2010:153; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:5; Velazquez *et al.*, 2011:41).

This chapter begins with introducing the concept of sustainability and the definitions of it. The business landscape and the business case for sustainability will reveal the context of sustainability in business. This will be followed with a review of sustainability reporting and the use of corporate websites by companies. The review will discuss the strategising process of embedding sustainability and determine what academic support is offered to practitioners. The chapter will end with a description of the gap identified and provide support for links between strategy as a practice theory and the connection to sustainability.

3.2 SUSTAINABILITY

All profit driven companies aspire to achieve a 'sustainable competitive advantage' (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:5)

The important quoted word in the phrase is 'sustainable.' Sustainability and sustainable development have become integral concepts in the field of strategising and are closely associated with corporate goals of sustained performance (Leon-Soriana, Munoz-Tirress & Chalmeta-Rosalen, 2010:249; Cowan, Dopart, Ferracini, Sahmel, Merryman, Gaffney & Paustenbach, 2010:525).

3.2.1 Definitions of Sustainability

There are many definitions of sustainability and sustainable development. All the definitions have to do with (Elmualim, Shockley, Valle, Ludlowb, Shah, 2010:59; Klaine & Van Hauff, 2009:520):

- Living within the limits
- Understanding the interconnections between the economy, society, and environment
- Equitable distribution of resources and opportunities

Business sustainability is often defined as managing the TBL. It is the process by which companies manage their financial, social and environmental risks, obligations and opportunities. These three impacts are sometimes referred to as profits, people and planet (Crews, 2010:15; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:59).

Business sustainability requires companies to adhere to the principles of sustainable development. According to the World Council for Economic Development (WCED), sustainable development is development that 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Klaine & Van Hauff, 2009:520).

Sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. Companies aiming for sustainability need to perform not against a single, financial bottom line but against the triple bottom line (WBCSD, 2012).

Sustainability is often referred to in association with literature on responsible leadership, the use of resources and CSR. There are a number of best practices that foster business sustainability, and help companies. These practices include; life cycle analysis, stakeholder engagement, environmental management systems and reporting and disclosure (Sustainability Dictionary Online, 2012).

3.3 THE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Sustainability is said to be 'shaping the business landscape' (Lacy, Arnott & Lowitt, 2009:492) and has been labelled a 'business imperative.' It has been noted that in a globalising world, corporate involvement in the elements of sustainability is now both necessary and expected (Skinner & Mersham, 2008:239).

The business reality has been reshaped by three big trends associated with sustainability. These three but interconnected trends have become a major market force that is redefining the way businesses compete (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:6).

These three trends are: declining resources, radical transparency and increasing expectations. Together these trends have become a major market force that is at its critical point, changing the rules for profit and growth in almost every sector of the economy (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:6). Lee, Fairhurst and Wesley (2009:2) note; sustainability is neither a 'passing trend' nor an 'optional addition' for companies. Sustainability is in fact a significant topic for climate change conferences, governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) in recent decades but not excluding corporate boardrooms (Crews, 2010:15).

In the case of declining resources, reference can be made to declining tuna populations and various raw material inputs becoming more difficult to source for many businesses. The scarcity of natural resources can be a significant factor affecting organisational growth and it is this resource crunch that is turning well-established mainstream companies into recyclers and re-users of inputs. The new

thinking has entered the business mind and has turned into a new business opportunity – often with positive financial returns (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:9).

Radical transparency has become the dynamic, immediate and substantive force of modern corporate life. Radical transparency has been fuelled by the number of people fighting causes and the increasing number of those willing to listen. The movement is enhanced with mass low cost communication and the connectivity of technology. These factors make it possible for the environmental and social issues of the world to be voiced and spread. Business life in a radically transparent world is said to be a 'new art to master' for business (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:14).

The resource crunch has called into question the security of entire value chains while transparency opens up every corporate move to instant scrutiny, the third trend invites companies to rethink the very essence of market demand. External forces including stakeholders such as governments, customers and communities, place pressure on businesses to adopt sustainable practices (White, 2006:386). Previously shifted to the CSR division by companies, in current times however, the topic is warranting greater consideration and attention (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:484). Stakeholders, including customers, employees and investors, are expecting sound social and environmental performance from the market place. Customer expectations are shifting and companies need to address the trust and perceptions topics of going beyond the final use of their products (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:22).

Ideally companies should feel compelled to act in a socially, environmentally and financially responsible manner at all times as a result of ethical obligations that are either internally or externally motivated (Lee *et al.*, 2009:2). Companies are also encouraged to strive for a balanced goal and by which, enjoy successes in the financial, social and environmental spheres (Skinner & Merham, 2008:239).

The reality is that irrespective of whether business leaders accept or reject the sustainability premise or its implementation, the concept merits business people's attention for its bottom line implications (Lee *et al.*, 2009:2; Idemudia, 2011:1). In fact, the 'case for change' has been successfully made and the need to balance the TBL in business– is apparent (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

3.4 THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The business case for sustainability, rather than ethics and philosophy, proposes that sustainability is an unavoidable reality for businesses. This can be attributed to rising consumer and investor pressure with the knowledge of unsustainable businesses and its implications e.g.: BP oil spill (Hallstedt, Ny, Robert & Broman, 2010:703; Hillestad, Xie & Haugland, 2010:440; The Guardian, 2010).

A recent study found that nine out of ten consumers around the world say they are ready to switch to companies offering products and services that help to reduce carbon emissions and two out of three are willing to pay (on average) eleven percent more for them (Accenture, 2007; Lacy *et al.*, 2009:485). This is an example of the rising investor sentiment and suggests that business should adopt and integrate

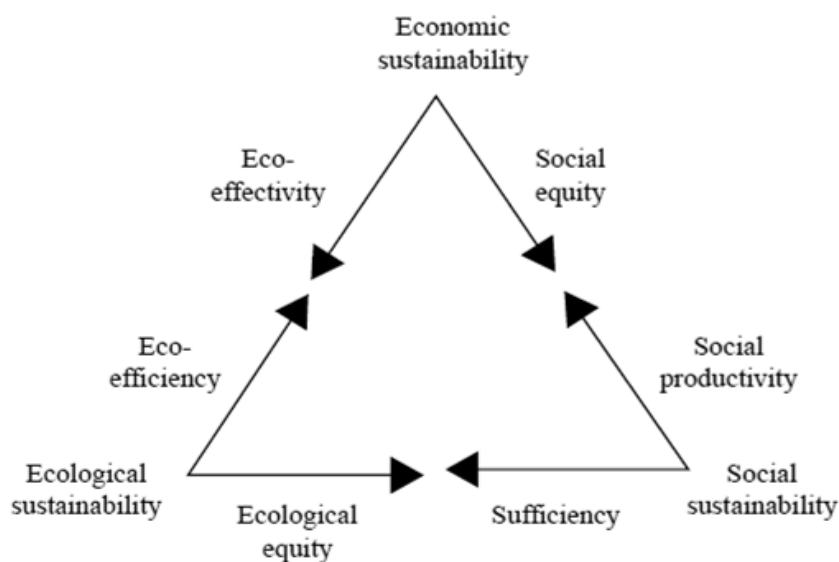
sustainability as it ‘makes good economic sense’ (Collins, Lawrence, Pavlovich, & Ryan, 2007:729).

The ‘shift to sustainability’ is in response to this current market trend and new business dimension (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2009:300; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:73). Business leaders can either approach sustainability proactively or they can be reactive and by which, jeopardise their competitive edge (Cowan *et al.*, 2010:525; Velazquez *et al.*, 2011:37).

Referring to the business case for sustainability, Leon-Soriana *et al.*, (2010:249) propose that the motivation case for sustainability strategy to be acceptable for all stakeholders and not only by shareholders is ‘well justified’. The authors also demonstrate graphically the dimensions of a business case for sustainability.

Figure 1 titled ‘The business case for sustainability’ by Leon-Soriana *et al.*, (2010:251) demonstrate graphically the connection between TBL elements in integrated sustainability.

Figure 2: The business case for sustainability



Source: Leon-Soriana, Munoz-Tirress and Chalmeta-Rosalen (2010:251)

3.4.1 The Drivers for Sustainability

The opportunities for businesses encompass the drivers and benefits that serve as motivators for the adoption and integration of sustainability by companies.

These are the benefits purposed by various authors (Adams & Frost, 2008:299; Cowan *et al.*, 2010:525; Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:441; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5).

- The building of a strong positive corporate brand;
- Reputation;
- Cost savings;

- Enhanced innovation, and
- Improved competitive position

There is support for the connection between sustainability and the building of a strong corporate brand and its effect on attracting talent. Companies serve to gain a positive reputation from disclosing sustainable initiatives. Collins *et al.*, (2007:730) describe that in a survey that seventy percent of CEO's said 'reputation' and 'brand' have considerable or extensive impact on motivation and approach to sustainability, while sixty nine percent named attractiveness to employees and sixty three percent named improved shareholder value as motivators to adopt sustainable practices. Lacy *et al.*, (2009:485) note that job applicants as potential employees now count commitment to sustainability among their closest values when considering companies to work for. A brand that is known for their sustainability outlook can harness existing employee pride and enjoy employee support for firm's vision and values.

Sustainability facilitates innovation such as in the process of designing products and services that are more sustainable and welcomed by the emerging market. Cowan *et al.*, (2010:525) put forward that whilst sustainability is important for ensuring the future quality of the global environment, it can also be viewed as a business opportunity, an investment in the future and a 'pathway to innovation and creative thinking'. Literature asserts that strategising for sustainability leads to new organisational competencies. It is said that companies can get good at managing environmental and social performance in such a way as bring about competitive advantage. In fact, sustainability embedded strategies contribute to the development of competencies that configure organisational capabilities - leading to profit and a strategic position that competitors find difficult to imitate (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:69).

In effect, companies with sustainability goals can benefit from successes in the form of 'capturing growth opportunities' by providing right solutions to the right markets 'reducing costs by using alternative materials' and 'positioning for success tomorrow' (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:485).

Some companies fail to see the connection between sustainability and their ability to continue to experience sustainable competitive advantages (Cowan *et al.*, 2010:525; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:59). These companies fail to understand sustainable value or shared value paradigms where both stakeholder and companies share in value outcome and process. Sustainable value is a dynamic state that occurs when a company creates ongoing value for its shareholders and stakeholders – it is a natural outcome of the new external environment. It is also associated with the response by companies to a diverse set of needs from employees, community, NGO's, customers and others who have a 'stake' in the destiny of the company (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:45). Those companies who fail to understand this value can also be motivated to adopt sustainability practices from a risk management approach. Companies are becoming increasingly aware that these above benefits will be enjoyed by competitors and cause the company to lose market share. For companies hesitant to embark on sustainability, looming legislation and a damaged brand also serve as strong persuades for change (Collins *et al.*, 2007:736).

3.5 REPORTING AND CORPORATE WEBSITES

In an effort to harness the benefits of sustainability, secure and assure stakeholders and protect existing business reputation, companies have turned to their most public and global form of communication; their websites (Bowers, 2010:250; Coupland, 2005:256).

Research indicates a significant rise in the use of corporate WebPages for reporting TBL activities amongst companies attempting to acknowledge and respond to changing local, national and global societal expectations concerning business practices (Lee *et al.*, 2009:141). It was found that sixty eight percent of the top 250 Fortune 500 Companies embraced sustainability reporting (Gill, Dickinson & Scharl, 2008:244). The increase in expectation and monitoring of WebPages by stakeholders necessitates a consistent communication strategy (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009:249).

The legitimacy theory is an example of a systems-orientated view of the organisation in relationship with society which allows some focus on the role of communication in disclosure between organisation, government and individuals (Coupland, 2005:356; Cowan *et al.*, 2010:525). From a business's perspective, TBL sustainability has acquired increasing importance because it is considered to be an activity that legitimises an organisation in the eyes of society (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221).

Lee *et al.*, (2009:141) note that there is little research investigating the degree to which companies detail TBL initiatives publically. Coupland, (2005:356), Capriotti and Moreno, (2007:221), Bowers, (2010:249) as well as Adams and Frost, (2008:288), investigated the websites of companies. Their research focus areas include the frequency and level of sustainability claims, language use, themes and the adoption of sustainability into mission and value statements. Other research evaluated the presence of corporate responsibility and the organisation of it on WebPages, content analyses and comparisons between old and new reports to identify the shift to sustainability (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2010:300).

Research focus areas on corporate websites, however, have not provided much insight into the process of strategy formulation and implementation. This is in spite of the genre of the sustainability report and communication. Both of which have been criticized from both inside and outside corporate walls (Bowers, 2010:250).

An identified concern regarding the external communication strategies of companies is that it appears that claims are not integrated and are only surface level. Hillestad *et al.*, (2010:441) found that eighty percent of the Fortune 100 Companies flaunt their values publically – values that too often stand for nothing but wanting to be, 'politically correct'. An identified warning that reporting will become an 'exercise in compliance', which contributes little to learning or the innovation, with sustainability reports becoming 'bloated data-dumps'. It has been commented that sustainability reports provide little evidence to exhibit how businesses attending to environmental and social issues directly enhance the economic performance of business (Bowers, 2010:250).

3.5.1 From Compliance to Integration

A new genre is foreseen. From one of 'compliance to one of value generation' (Bowers, 2010:250). It has been said that adopting a 'compliance' orientation has led companies naturally towards an 'efficiency phase' of corporate sustainability. The compliance focus serves as a platform for the development of management systems. There is a limit to what can be realised by an ad hoc approach to compliance which is leading companies to implement more systematic approaches to sustainability (Holton *et al.*, 2010:152).

Sustainability reporting can serve to provide business leaders and managers an opportunity to better understand how budding sustainable development issues could be integrated into business practices (Bowers, 2010:250). Reporting has shifted to include strategy, risk, performance and sustainability in one report through the process titled 'integrated reporting'. Recently introduced governance in South Africa, the King III, places significant emphasis on sustainability focused information and its discussion as a key thread that needs to run throughout an annual report as opposed to merely being a separate section of discussion, or a separate report (Ince.motiv, 2010:18).

King III legislation contributes to this shift towards integrating sustainability into strategy and its communication to stakeholders. Leading up to King III, and currently, there are concerns about the limited adoption of Integrated Reporting. Concerns surround the completeness and credibility of reports and the motives of managers preparing them. If sustainability reporting is to lead to improvements in sustainability performance, companies must 'seek to integrate both physical and financial performance indicators for sustainability into various aspects of their management functions' (Adams & Frost, 2008:288; Uusi-Rauva & Nurekka, 2010:301).

Given the growing emphasis on the integration of sustainability, researchers are encouraged to review the corporate WebPages (Lee *et al.*, 2009:141). Riccaboni and Leone, (2010:130) propose case study investigation of sustainability reports based on the premise that 'sustainability reporting presents a social responsible firm, in formal claims and official documents' and that insight is to be achieved when investigating if and how external image, reputation and formal claims are 'reflected in internal practices and tools'.

Indeed, a firm's disclosure must accurately mirror real actions (Gill *et al.*, 2008:245). The users of an organisation's integrated report (the stakeholders) should be able to determine from the report whether the organisation has sufficiently applied its collective mind in identifying the social, environmental, economic and financial issues that impact on the organisation's business, and whether these issues have been appropriately incorporated into its strategy (Dawkins & Ngujiri, 2008:236; Ince.motiv, 2010:18).

3.6 EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY INTO STRATEGISING

3.6.1 Strategising for Sustainability

Strategising for sustainability addresses the alignment of sustainability initiatives with short and long term business decisions and falls in the body of knowledge of strategy. Sources addressing strategising for sustainability identify it as being a continual process, a continuum towards an ultimate sustainability and business goal (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:12). This process is one that a company undertakes to embed sustainability in strategising. Embedding sustainability is a company's response (strategy) to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2).

It is considered that businesses increase their accumulation of knowledge, capacity building and adaption of sustainability over time. The process is viewed as 'gradual, planned, continuous and ongoing incremental change' (Holton *et al.*, 2010:153; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:5; Velazquez *et al.*, 2011:41). It has been advocated that to bring about sustainability goals and overcome barriers, a project management approach to phased change should be taken. These changes should be correlated with external and regulatory impacts. This would enable the organisation to best manage fundamental change (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

Holton *et al.*, (2010:154) suggest a process towards the end goal of strategic integration of sustainability. The authors put forward that companies may first address sustainability with 'rejection' and as they change, they can embark on 'compliance' to mitigate risk of strong community action. Ultimately, the company aspires to 'the sustainable organisation' whereby the organisation becomes an active *promoter* of sustainability principles. Hallstedt *et al.*, (2010:708) discuss the 5 stages of sustainability integration. Ranging from 'pre-compliance' to an 'integrated strategy' where sustainability informs strategies. These descriptions suggest a prescriptive strategy towards strategising for sustainability.

This is contrary to, Hallstedt *et al.*, (2010:703) who promote that under the circumstance with which sustainability has presented itself, that being highly pressured and dynamic, firms are adapting to sustainability by emergent means. The authors put forward that traditional corporate forecasting planning has been successful under fairly stable societal settings when the effects of company actions are possible to predict. A 'future sustainable society' might be so different from the current one that strategists may need to 'first envision the future and invent action pathways' to realize that future. Crews, (2010:17) labels this an 'organic approach' that is more 'appropriate' to the concept of sustainability. It is noted that organisational leaders face a much more complex world than that which existed when most of classical strategy was practiced (Leon-Soriana *et al.*, 2010:249). Leaders today need to differentiate their companies more than ever, achieve low cost and balance the impact of TBL and achieve objectives that seem contradictory in nature.

3.6.2 Tools, models and strategies for embedding sustainability in strategising

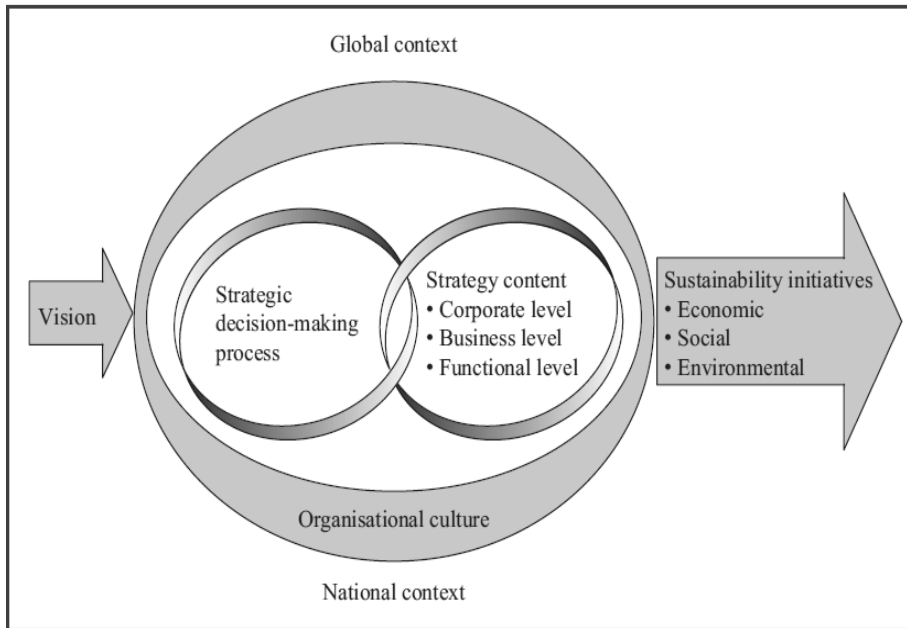
Riccaboni and Leone, (2010:131) relay that if companies are seeking to report on their strategising for sustainability, one may expect that there are some internal mechanisms which guide their activities towards this goal. There are in fact many academic mechanisms, such that practitioners and experts are feeling 'overwhelmed' by the information on sustainability and are in search of *practical* frameworks and tools (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520). There are a growing number of sustainability-related methods, tools and concepts provided that have led to a new challenge.

A holistic tool used by high performing companies is the Five Levers framework. It aspires to generate impressive business value by executing sustainability strategies (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:489). Business leaders can use the tool to address the elements within the business to achieve the goals of strategising for sustainability. It is suggested that successful companies make organisational changes such as altering business processes to maximise the value generated by their sustainability efforts.

Leadership commitment to demonstrating the knowledge and skills for successful sustainability integration encompass competencies including; context (ability to grasp TBL risks and opportunities), complexity (leading in the face of complexity of the future balancing short and long term considerations) and *connectedness (building productive relationships with external partners and engaging with stakeholders outside organisation)*. Studies show many employees care deeply for the environment and social responsibility and want to play a role in their company's sustainability efforts. *Businesses need to increase employee's knowledge about efforts through initiatives and learning.* When understanding that, what cannot be managed cannot be measured, leaders are encouraged to make sustainability a part of key performance measures. When employees are engaged in the sustainability strategy, they proactively communicate and peruse opportunities to execute the strategy (Reilly, 2009:33; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

Another tool providing guidance on the integration of sustainability in strategising can be viewed in Figure 3 titled: 'Sustainability as an integral part of strategy.' demonstrates sustainability integration (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

Figure 3: Sustainability as an integral part of strategy



Source: Bonn and Fisher, (2011:6)

The model promotes the discussion of each element with regard to sustainability adoption, beginning with the vision that serves to guide and lead staff to achieve the businesses purpose and goals and objectives (Lynch, 2009:228). It is especially important when trade-offs between TBL elements are at stake and a business applying this model needs to *ensure their vision includes the sustainability direction the company wishes to go* (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6). The vision also needs to be communicated effectively. This can be achieved by leadership facilitating transformational organisational change and adjusted and new strategies (Reilly, 2009:33).

Strategic decision making involves scanning the environment to gather information and make sustainability decisions. It is important that the business conduct an evaluation of the deep seated beliefs and cognitive characteristics of strategic decision makers (i.e.: leadership). It is regarded as important towards becoming sustainable. The process of evaluation is to identify and re-evaluate the current values and assumptions regarding the topic and its business importance (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

To embed sustainability, leaders need to address corporate, business and functional level strategy. The modern business environment is of increasing pressure by global integration and requires holistic and organic leadership strategies (Crews, 2010:17). *Leaders feature as 'change agents' with the role of recognising the need for change and committing to support change as well as to recruit other internal change agents to work to deliver the commitment (dedicated staff)*. They implement and maintain practices of sustainability in their companies (Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:703; Holton *et al.*, 2010:157).

Managers need to rethink the current business models and analyse whether the corporate portfolio achieves a balance between the companies TBL goals. This

needs to be achieved at all levels and needs to be supported by guidance from managers (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:7). Organisational culture, should support and reflect the sustainable strategies in order to be successful. Sustainability-centred cultures find environment and social values as important to the organisation and encourage behaviour accordingly.

It is important that companies ensuring that the organisational employees are made aware that sustainability is not just a new initiative, that it is not the 'flavour of the month' but rather emphasise their important role in implementing it. This is so they do not reject the idea of sustainability (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:484; Crews, 2010:17).

The relationship between leadership and sustainability implementation in larger companies is by means of a correlation between larger companies and a lack of involvement by senior managers (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58). Quinn & Dalton, (2009:21) formulated a Tasks of Leadership Framework to explore how organisational leaders implement and maintain practices of sustainability in their companies. The authors studied how leaders formally adopted principles and integrated them into day to day operations of business and proposed the framework.

Other suggestions to help firms embed sustainability are; incorporating it into the balanced scorecard card (BSC) and *embarking on a sustainability performance measurement* (Searcy, 2009:50). Although initially developed for the purpose of linking strategic goals in its four dimensions to the financial bottom line and increasing business profitability, most research considers the tool suitable for the management of sustainability and CSR. The BSC has been found to not only to be a tool for the formulation of strategies but part of a wider competitive positioning. Leon-Soriano *et al.*, (2010:249) propose a Sustainability Balanced Score Card (SBSC) that takes into account the 'human' and 'green' cases in order for the company to act according to all three elements of TBL. This is so that they can offer a framework to include the necessary steps to grant the integration of sustainability.

Sustainability measurement can be harnessed through a Sustainability Performance Management System (SPMS). It begins with a 'situational diagnostic' of the company by interpreting the sustainability in the corporate context. The 'goal diagnostic' phase to establish the overall goal and objectives linked to sustainability. The third diagnostic is the 'implementation diagnostic' that identifies how the SPMS will be used and an analysis of required resources (Searcy, 2009:51). Whilst measuring sustainability is critical and the primary method of implementation, this tool does not offer advice from a broader sense nor does it serve to guide the business in integrating sustainability into strategy elements.

Generic strategy responses to sustainability include *approaching sustainability from risk mitigation perspective*, embarking on energy, waste and mineral reduction and product differentiation. Other generic strategies include utilising sustainability trends to enter new market spaces and brand enhancement. Such strategies could also occur in the business context whereby industry standards are influenced. Radical innovation can come from all of the mentioned generic strategies. With these generic strategies, a strategist already covers many of bases to point the company towards confronting ecological and social shifts (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:70).

Additionally to these discussed frameworks and models, literature recommends the following three strategy frameworks for embedding sustainability in strategising. The first two are Generic strategies (Porter, 1985) and a Blue Ocean Strategy (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). Generic strategies can utilise a segmentation, cost leadership or differentiation strategy with sustainability being the source. The Blue Ocean strategy offers unique advantages for *company's perusing new market opportunities based on ecological; and social drivers and can easily applied to sustainability*. The third strategy framework is a Disruptive Innovation strategy. It offers strategising practitioners a framework for addressing global challenges that call for radical rather than incremental change (Christensen, Johnson, & Horn, 2008; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:75).

Despite the powerful forces for corporate sustainability - including global pressure, informed leadership, available tools and frameworks, and clarity on the sustainability business argument - a focus on sustainability may be impeded by equally strong forces against its implementation (Hillestad 2010:440; Klaine & Von Hauff 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:33). It has been said that the added cost of sustainability is a minor footnote to a strategist as they are more interested in sources of value creation. However, in practice the beliefs, among other factors, of business practitioners contribute to holding back strategies for sustainability and shared value opportunities.

Strategising for sustainability is not a trivial task (Holton *et al.*, 2010:152). Research linking corporate strategic change and sustainability has identified some counter forces to implementing corporate sustainability initiatives (Reilly, 2009:35).

3.7 THE GAP

Sustainability has earned its place in high performing businesses and consultancies. The Director of Sustainability of a large company stated that 'for us, sustainability is important, both at the strategic and the operational levels. That is why we created a position Director of Sustainability... however, as for me, the Director of Sustainability, the challenge is to identify areas that need greater sustainability focus, to develop appropriate strategies and to oversee their implementation... it is a very complex process' (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5).

Another businessman is quoted as saying 'my aim is to grow my business in a sustainable way but I do not have the knowledge to do it' he also noted that he 'would like to implement comprehensive approaches to make the business model more sustainable' (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5).

Complaints have been raised in that, what is being *said* (in reports and on websites) is not being *done* (strategised and embedded) (Idemudia, 2011:1). It has been noted that 'increased reporting does not necessarily mean increased accountability' and this has led to a gap between official declaration and actual organisational behaviour (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130). Relayed by Smith and Sharicz, (2011:74) is the point that much sustainability literature assumes seamless and supportive adoption of corporate sustainability strategy, plus a consequent demonstration of appropriate organisational behaviour. Further, it is assumed that managers and employees

accept and adopt a sustainability embedded strategy unchallenged. There appears to be a gap or 'missing link' between the strategising of companies and their external communication.

There are audible concerns expressed by leaders in positions needing to strategise for sustainability. There is consensus that whilst the 'case for change is made' the goal is 'complex' and an 'elusive' one (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

3.7.1 Proposed explanations for the Gap

In spite of the numerous tools and guidance on the integration of sustainability into strategising – the missing link between what is said (corporate reporting) and what is done (strategising) remains a challenge. Studies have investigated aspects of this missing link and suggest these may be some of the barriers or inhibitors:

It has been suggested that a reason for the lack of companies fully embracing sustainability is because most executives do not fully understand the issues, are unclear on what sustainability encompasses and its objectives. They in fact do not know how to devise or apply strategies to adopt a more sustainable path (Holton *et al.*, 2010:157).

The lack of clarity on the topic of sustainability can be attributed to it not being seen as important in the organisation (Collins *et al.*, 2007:736). This is blamed on the lack of established standards and loose and subjective definitions (Smith & Sharicz, 2011:75). Cowan, *et al.*, (2010:524) found that companies have often shaped their own definition of sustainability based on their sector, stakeholder interests, products or services and the business model (Reilly, 2009:41; Crews, 2012:15).

Common concerns by executives relate to how sustainability fits with business initiatives already in place and of course how it impacts the bottom line. In fact, eighty percent of companies acknowledged that identifying and prioritising issues, developing strategies and policies and measuring performance were key challenges (Quinn & Dalton, 2007:21; KPMG, 2008; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:75).

Some companies will make significant strides in strategising but fail to effectively communicate the strategy and vision with staff - and often externally (Reilly, 2009:34). Poor communication channels and different styles of communication by management have an impact on the organisational culture and ultimately the performance outcome desired (White, 2006:386; Holton *et al.*, 2010:157). Unlike many change initiatives that are determined by the firm's senior management and communicated top-down, adopting a sustainability focus may evolve from the bottom as a grass-roots change effort using middle management (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:34)

Employees, influenced by leaders and culture, are critical in the implementation of sustainability and its adoption (Crews, 2012:15). In fact they can also pose as one of the biggest barriers to its success (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka 2009:300). The challenge is that employees do not always have the knowledge and skills to implement

sustainability and nor do they always see the environment or society as a priority amongst other daily tasks (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:59).

Strong sustainability cultures support sustainable initiatives but companies will struggle to achieve implementation if 'going green' separates them from other employees. Staff who fear being seen as too 'green' are hesitant to make suggestions (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka 2009:300). Other cultural buy-in challenges arise when new employees join the organisation. These staff members come from other cultures and from other companies and have different values and awareness background. This affects the outcome of sustainability (Adams & Frost, 2008:293).

The narrow focus on economic performance is found to be a shortcoming in the creation of environmentally and socially responsible companies. The cost of implementing sustainability is a chief barrier to the adoption (Holton *et al.*, 2010:157). Costs including; capital outlay, additional resources, time and the costs of certification where applicable. Leaders are hesitant to make an economic outlay in the short term in spite of the opportunities and often tangible return on investment e.g.: energy efficiency savings (Collins *et al.*, 2007:736; White, 2006:387).

Dawkins (2005:109) points out that communication remains the missing link in the practice of sustainability. For Lewis (2003: 361), although many companies are truly committed to the fulfilment of sustainability, they often fail to communicate in a sufficiently active manner with their stakeholders (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221).

Quick fix instrumental approaches also serve to explain why firms struggle to achieve sustainability goals. External pressure from stakeholders is forcing companies to recognize the importance of sustainability and the associated responsibility. This leads 'dirty' companies to speedily smear on a cover of 'green overtone' for the decade and thereby missing the integrative sustainability goal (Setthsakko, 2009:174).

Transformational organisational change is more difficult to implement than incremental change (Reilly, 2009:33). Transformational change breaks organisational frames of reference and requires focused change leadership. In all cases of success noted by Holton *et al.*, (2010:157) one or more directors were found to have taken direct responsibility for sustainability, commitment to change and as such, change had been transferred down the company (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58 ; Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:707). This type of change that is required to achieve sustainability necessitates a shift in values, culture and strategic repositioning (Holton *et al.*, 2010:153).

3.7.2 Research approaches to addressing sustainability

Aldama, Amar & Trostianki, (2009:506) also identified the challenges associated with embeddedness and strategising and explored a similar implementation gap. Their research explored the ways in which companies were embedding the corporate responsibility function in different organizational structures, and identified, when possible, best practices related to organizational structures which have proved effective in managing corporate responsibility that could be applied by any organization, regardless of size or industry sector. The methodology and approach

took the form of a questionnaire covering more than 40 aspects to describe what companies were doing to integrate the corporate responsibility function in their organizational structures. The design of the survey was based on available literature as well as their own professional experience answering questions commonly received from clients in Latin America. The application of the questionnaire on a sample of Chilean companies using their public information tested the tool as valid and fit for the designed purpose. The main conclusions were that CSR structuring and CSR strategies are both strongly associated with the size of the company in terms of number of employees and revenues.

Studies on sustainability have mostly relied on researcher measurement, surveys or literature research on strategising and the meaning of sustainability in the corporate context.

To date, research on the topic of sustainability has:

- Primarily been on corporate websites or in reports. Studies in general have not been strategically focused investigations and the scope has not covered all available external communication, reports and documents (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221; Bowers, 2010:253; Cowan *et al.*, 2010:524).
- Primarily been internationally focused, incorporating foreign indices, context and best practices (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221; Aldama, Amar & Trostianki, 2009:506).
- Been indirectly studied, studies utilised terms such as 'corporate responsibility' or the elements of sustainability including 'social' and 'environment'. The topic of sustainability has not always been measured as by the definition of it but rather elements of sustainability have been incorporated into studies.
- Been to expand the theory on sustainability and propose various strategising tools to guide practitioners in integrating sustainability into strategising (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520; Lacy *et al.*, 2009:489; Reilly, 2009:33; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6; Crews, 2010:17; Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:703; Holton *et al.*, 2010:157; Searcy, 2009:50; Leon-Soriano *et al.*, 2010:249).
- Mainly utilised forms of measurement including surveys and questionnaires with few studies applying a self designed tool as a form of measurement.

Capriotti & Moreno, (2007:221) however, measured forms of sustainability through the application of a researcher designed tool as part of their research methodology. The authors promoted that research examine the presence and organisation of information on corporate responsibility that was on the corporate web sites of companies that belonged to the index of the Spanish stock market. Part of their methodology and approach involved the design of a specific tool to identify corporate responsibility issues and to analyse how information on such issues was organized and presented on corporate web sites. A content analysis methodology was applied to the web sites of the companies under research. The research findings suggested that the companies that were studied assign great importance to corporate responsibility on their web sites, even though they disseminate on those sites a limited conception of what corporate responsibility is and focus mainly on the topics of social and environmental action. Another relevant finding is the highly dispersed nature of the information that is related to corporate responsibility on corporate web sites.

3.7.2.1 Case companies as a research approach for sustainability in practice

Stake, (1994:244) suggests that a case study is useful when the ‘opportunity to learn is of primary importance.’ A case study approach provides a mode of inquiry for an in-depth examination of phenomenon. Yin, (1989:23) characterizes case study research as empirical inquiry that ‘investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.’ Yin, (2003) suggests the uniqueness of a situation as sufficient rationalising for using a single case and that the ‘distinctive need’ for case study research ‘arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena.’ Yin, (1989:48) further argues that a single case design is warranted or appropriate on the basis the case is revelatory. A revelatory case is one for which there is a belief or assumption that the problems discovered in a particular case are common to other cases as well. If the chosen case study can serve as a revelatory case then there is basis for discovering and describing problems that may be common to other businesses struggling to embed sustainability into strategising (Yin, 1989:48).

On these points, Gray, (2002:697), Adams, (2004) and Parker, (2005), in reference to Social and Environmental Accounting related research, called for further employment of case and field studies ie: research that was more engaged with practice. Adams and Larrinaga-González, (2007:333) found that the “extant literature on sustainability accounting and reporting, in contrast to management accounting and management, has largely ignored practice within organisations”. Moreover, Owen (2008:248) argued that fieldwork studies have great potential in going beyond the analysis of the contents of official statements and reports, as well as in understanding organisational processes and managerial motivations underpinning reporting initiatives and evaluating their effectiveness in promoting organisational transparency and accountability (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130).

Literature presents some case study approaches to studying the sustainability and strategising. The case studies have been on various case companies across different industries. The purposes of the studies applying case research methodology included purposes such as: ‘To investigate how the leaders in the precast industry were managing for sustainability,’ (Holton, 2010:154) “To explore if and how management control systems (MCS) have a role in implementing sustainable strategies’ (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130) and “To present a case study of how a global consumer company, with over 300 brands sold in 180 countries, and 138,000 employees, is building sustainability into the rhythm of its business.” (White, 2009:386).

These studies motivated for case study approaches and in some cases, single case design on the basis that it is a suitable research methodology for types of explanatory questions focusing on contemporary events (Yin, 2003) and because researchers made observations that case studies offer the possibility of understanding the nature of the study in practice, both in terms of techniques, procedures, systems which are used and the way in which they are used (Scapens, 2002; Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130).

3.8 S-A-P THEORY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The advancement of strategy research communicates a shift from an economic perspective on strategy research to a more sociological view (Haugstad, 1999; Whittington, 2002:C3; Johnson *et al.*, 2003; Whittington, 2007). The shift has led to a revised working definition of strategy. The view is that strategy has become something that people do (an activity) in society, while strategising.

This review has highlighted this and also, the significant rise in research and discussion on the concepts of sustainability. There has been an emphasis for the connection between sustainability in light of strategising (Holton *et al.*, 2010:153; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:5; Velazquez *et al.*, 2011:41).

Strategising includes those actions that people take and the practices they use in carrying out the activity of strategy (Chia & MacKay 2007:232; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:282; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69; Whittington, 2002:C1).

Practice theory encourages investigation into business's detailed aspects of strategising. This is proposed by means of investigative research into how strategists practice strategy and the implications of different forms of strategising as an organisational activity - such as with sustainability.

Practice research aims to understand the 'messy' realities of doing strategy as lived experience; to go inside the world of strategy practitioners as they struggle with competing priorities (affecting implementation outcomes), multiple stakeholders and excessive but incomplete information in an attempt to shape a strategy acceptable by markets, financial institutions and consumers (Jarzabkowski, Belogun & Seidl, 2007:15).

To comment on the existence of and explore the identified gap between what is said and what is done, the practice research school poses the pertinent questions for a research into the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising. Practice theory suggests these questions be asked, namely, 'Who is doing of the strategising?' 'How it is done (or not done)?' and 'What resources do they use to strategise for sustainability?'

These questions identify the components of micro level strategising whilst raising the significant areas of concern regarding sustainability embeddedness in companies. They include the practitioners (who), the practices (how) and the praxis (resources).

Jarzabkowski and Spee's (2009:70) nine domains around the praxis, practices and practitioners propose the future questions for studies on sustainability. A review of these domains has revealed three domains that lend support to the application of micro strategy theory to the research of sustainability.

Domain B suggests the following is asked; 'What are the implications of the interactions between the organisational staff (practitioners) and members of a sustainability project team for implementing the new strategic direction?'

Domain E proposes this question; ‘How does the praxis of different business units (such as sustainability) influence an organisation-wide change programme and influence their perceptions of the success of that programme?’

Domain H inquires; ‘What practices do environmental groups and external stakeholders draw upon in an attempt to influence the inclusion of environmental considerations within a company’s strategy?’

Practice theory asks the type of research questions that are suited for the investigation into the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising. Practice theory supports the process and methodology for investigation into sustainability, including case study methodology. It is believed to be the strategy theory perspective that will be most applicable for addressing the implementation gap identified.

3.8.1 Sustainability and strategising conclusion

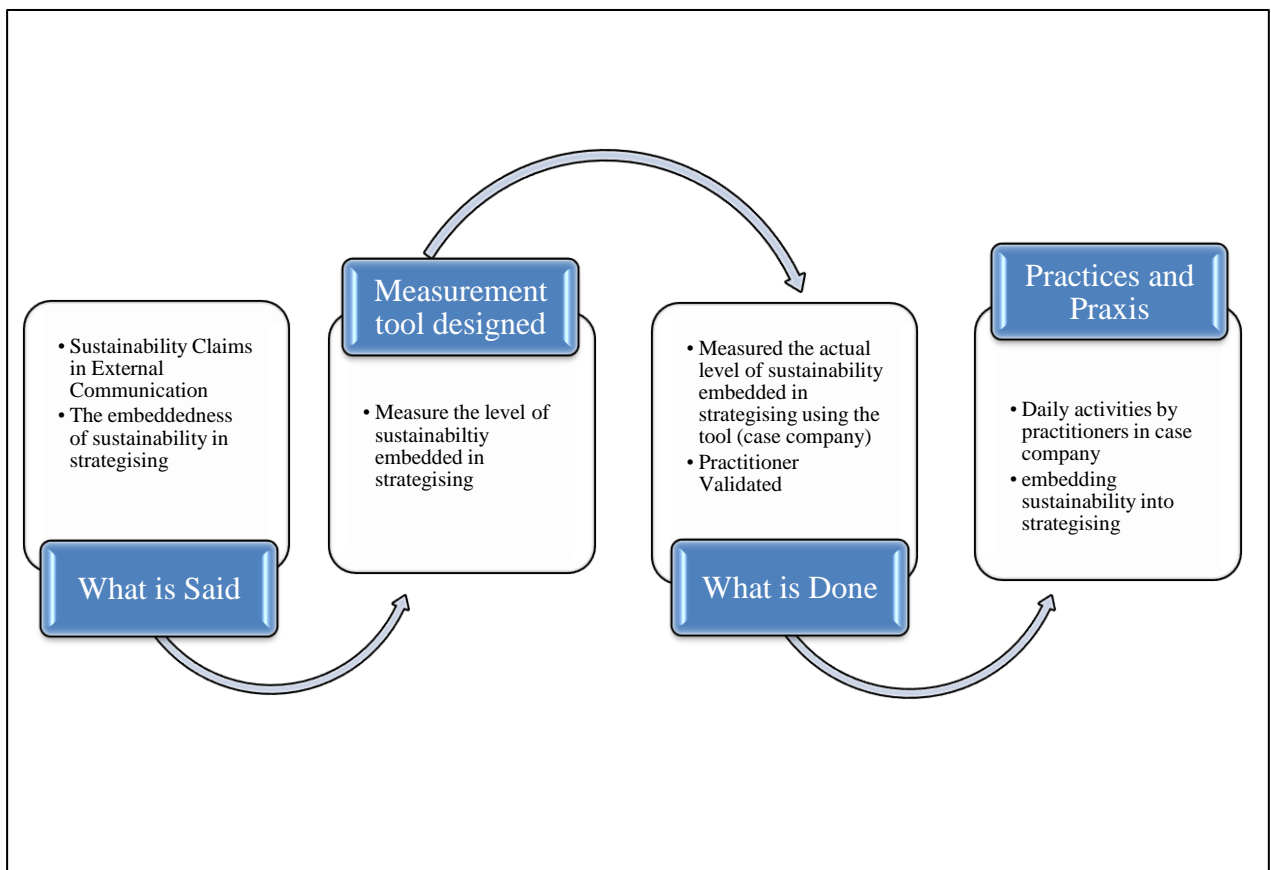
Sustainability needs to be form part of strategising. In fact the case for change has been made and there is much support for practitioners wanting to embed sustainability into strategising. The challenge is that the talk does not always coincide with the walk. There is a need to understand the detailed aspects of strategists when strategising so as to determine the reasons for the apparent implementation gap. Practice theory promotes that studies look at the detailed aspects of strategising in order to understand the implementation challenges and legitimacy of sustainability claims by businesses.

3.9 RESEARCH CONNECTION AND DESIGN LAYOUT

These introduction chapters and review have discussed the relevant theories and research addressing the topics of Sustainability and Strategising. The Gap between what is said and what is done has been highlighted. The review also discussed the potential explanations for the gap as well as the methodologies that have been applied in research to date.

The structure of this research has been designed to approach both angles of the implementation gap and address the highlighted challenges. Figure 4 depicts the research connection and design layout for the research.

Figure 4: Research connection and design layout

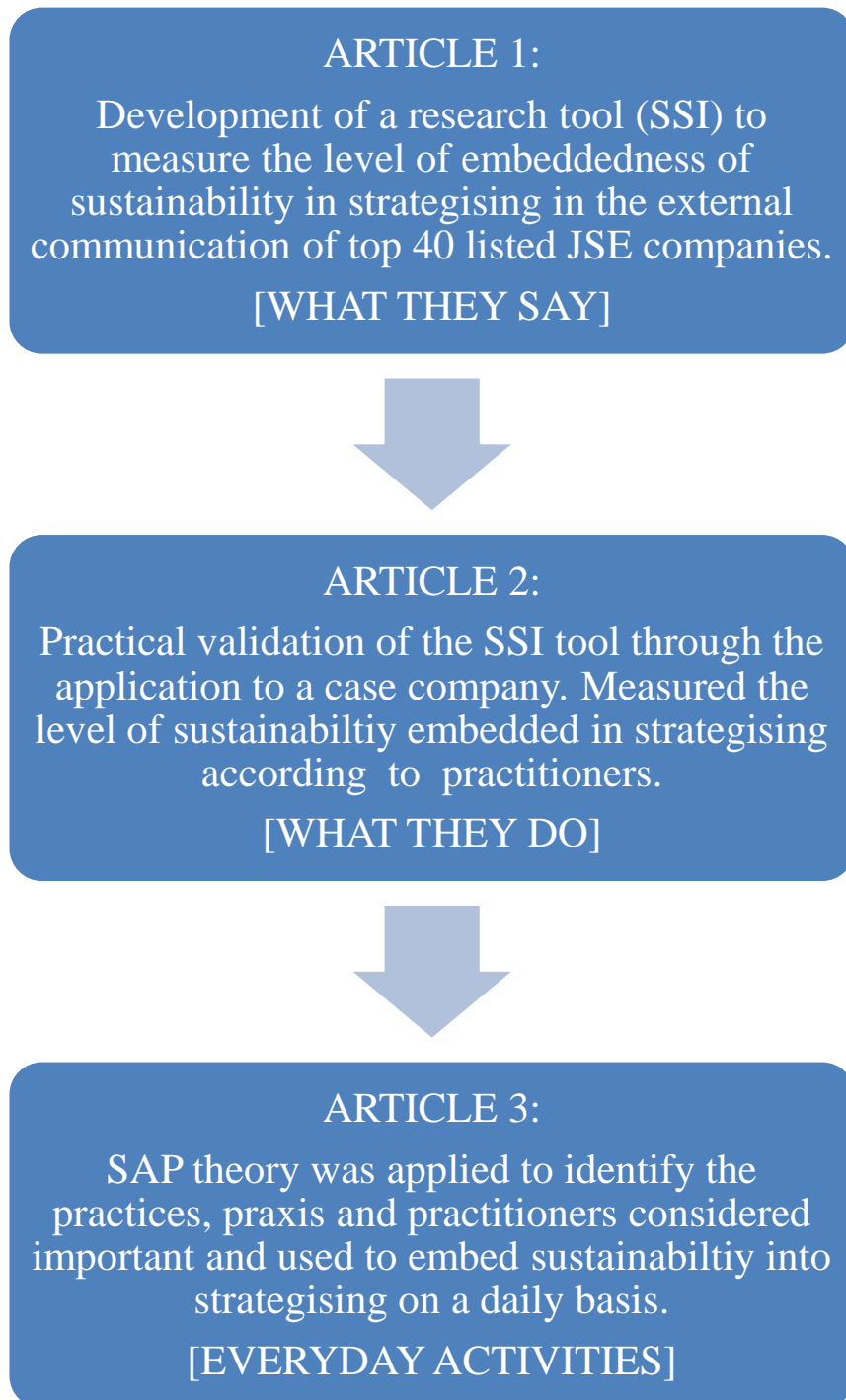


Source: Own Compilation

The research has been structured so as to build on earlier findings within the study in a progressive style towards the key focus and goal of the research. Initial findings spurred on further investigation that focused on the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising in different contexts in order to better explain the implementation gap. Research continued with the exploration into the organisational behaviour of practitioners when strategising for sustainability.

The following overall research design (Figure 5) was carried out. It demonstrates the flow, interconnectedness and developmental nature of the research design.

Figure 5: Overall research design



Source: Own Compilation

Through this research design process the implementation gap was investigated and measured. The three articles are therefore interconnected and developmental in nature.

The articles will be presented in the following order:

1. Article 1

**Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising:
a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies**

2. Article 2

**Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through
applied case research**

3. Article 3

Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice

Each article includes its own research design methodology and evaluation of the findings. A summary and conclusions chapter will draw all the findings together from the three articles. The chapter will also communicate the accomplishment of the research towards answering of the research questions and propositions.

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

ARTICLE 1

TITLE: **DETERMINING THE
EMBEDDEDNESS OF
SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS IN
STRATEGISING: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF THE ALSI 40
COMPANIES**

AUTHORS: **PRETORIUS AND LE ROUX**

SUBMITTED TO: **ACTA COMMERCII JOURNAL IN
THE MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

STATUS: **PUBLISHED**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 2012**

4. ARTICLE 1

4.1 DETERMINING THE EMBEDDEDNESS OF SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS IN STRATEGISING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ALSI 40 COMPANIES

SYNOPSIS

Purpose: To determine the level of sustainability embeddedness in strategising by investigating the public and external communication of companies.

Problem investigated: The extent to which sustainability is embedded in the elements of strategy formulation and implementation (and not merely surface-level statements and claims)

Design: The researchers designed a measurement tool and scale, the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI), based on researched elements of strategising and recent literature on the topic of sustainability and strategy integration. Merit for strategising for sustainability was given to a company on the basis of its fulfilling the relevant criteria. The JSE Top 40 listed companies on the All Share Index as of March 2011 were selected as a purposive sample. Each company's data and each element of the scorecard were judged on a Likert-type five-point scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of embeddedness in the strategy. A comprehensive evaluation sheet was used to judge the presented data individually and independently for each element of the scorecard instrument.

Findings: Ten elements were found relevant and represented: compliance (2 elements); strategy formulation (4 elements); and strategy implementation (4 elements). The findings show wide variation in overall scores. Almost all companies satisfied the compliance requirements but variations were observed in both formulation and implementation embeddedness. The SSI tool has discrimination value despite a relatively complex judging process. The proposed SSI measurement challenges other determinants of sustainability performance, as it incorporates embeddedness of sustainability in strategising. Knowing the level of this could guide management towards directing resources away from 'over-invested' strengths related to sustainability. Considering the scores for the different elements of the instrument would help to prioritise the 'sustainability spend'. Furthermore, the SSI tool directs attention to how sustainability is incorporated in the strategising process.

Originality and Value: The measure of the level of embeddedness of sustainability in strategising has not been done before. This study addresses the possible 'window-dressing' claims surrounding sustainability and highlights those companies who have successfully demonstrated that sustainability is not just for reputation purposes and is, in fact, part of their operating as a listed company.

Conclusion: Firstly, it was possible to use the SSI framework and the evaluation process and apply it to the sustainability reporting and claims for each firm. Secondly, each element could be judged on the unique scale for the specific element. The SSI measurement tool can be used to describe the level of strategising embeddedness. The SSI tool's framework is based on input of literature and on the foundation of strategic principles. The 5-point scale on the SSI tool serves to describe the achievement of a company for each element. The sustainability claims of these companies varied in embeddedness in the process of strategising. The score is lower for the formulation elements, raising the question of whether some projects are possibly implemented ad hoc to score points, without being necessarily formulated as part of strategy.

Key words: Sustainability, Strategising, Measurement, Communication

INTRODUCTION

'For the first time, there's a global understanding, if not a feeling of *urgency* that sustainability, in every possible meaning of the word, is the only way forward' (*Trendwatching*, 2010).

In a single month in 2010, South Africa passed 47 amendments and extensions to its sustainability legislation and regulation, ranging from chemical management to atmospheric emissions to fertilisers and everything in between. Compliance may be a means of response by organisations; however, in terms of sustainability; they have to do more than just 'embrace the notion of being a good corporate citizen' (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:18).

To truly prosper, corporate leaders need to 'move with the culture' (*Trendwatching*, 2010; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:18). A recent study found that nine out of ten consumers around the world say they are ready to switch to companies offering products and services that help to reduce carbon emissions, while two out of three are willing to pay (on average) eleven percent more for them (Lacy, Arnott & Lowitt, 2009:485). Similar findings by the National Consumers League and Fleishman-Hillard survey of United States (US) consumers reported the social responsibility of a company as being the number one determining factor in brand loyalty (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:18).

Sustainability, the new media and business buzzword, yields 28 million results when a Google search of the term is conducted. This suggests that sustainability is more than just a trend and that it is creating a permanent shift in the very nature of business (Crews, 2010:15; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5).

The business case for sustainability, rather than ethics and philosophy, proposes that sustainability is an unavoidable reality for businesses. This can be attributed to rising consumer and investor pressure deriving from publicity about unsustainable business and the detrimental consequences thereof, such as the BP oil spill (Hillestad, Xie & Haugland, 2010:441; Hallstedt, Ny, Robèrt & Broman, 2010:703; *The Guardian*, 2010). In fact, it has been suggested that sustainability is vital for companies to survive and thrive (Adams & Frost, 2008:289). Simply put: whether sustainability is an act of leadership or a desperate reaction to the pressures of NGOs, consumer trends and activist voters, governments are taking social and environmental issues to heart, adding new laws and regulations to the pressures shaping the business environment. The question is: 'Will your company ride the wave of legislative changes to get ahead of the curve, or wait until the waters drag it under?' (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:24).

The question surrounding sustainability is no longer a matter of 'Should we accommodate it?' Instead, given its connection to the financial bottom line and its role of governance, the question has become: how to do so.

Sustainability has been said to be the 'missing ingredient in strategy', which supports the notion of sustainability 'embeddedness' in strategising (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5). Embedded sustainability is a company's response to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value-creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2). Collins, Lawrence, Pavlovich & Ryan (2007:729) argue that a 'prerequisite for all sustainability' is a strategy. The conception that there is a complementary relationship between strategising and sustainability is supported by several authors (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:484; White, 2009:386; Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:703). Each of these stress that a proper understanding of the relationship between strategy and sustainability is crucial in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the twenty-first century.

Those advocating for the integration of sustainability in strategising propose various models, suggestions and tools for leaders in their role of strategising (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:489; Reilly, 2009:33; Quinn & Dalton, 2009:21; Searcy, 2009:50; Leon-Soriana, Munoz-Tirress & Chalmeta-Rosalen, 2010:249; Holton, Glass & Price,

2010:152. Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim, Shockley, Valle, Ludlow & Shah, 2010:58; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

Despite the powerful forces for corporate sustainability – including global pressure, informed leadership, available tools and frameworks, and its connection to business performance – the embeddedness of sustainability may be impeded by equally strong forces against its implementation (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:33; Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:440). Strategising for sustainability is not a trivial task (Holton *et al.*, 2010:152). There is consensus among leaders that while the ‘case for change is made’ the goal is both ‘complex’ and ‘elusive’ (Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

Simultaneously, research indicates a significant rise in the use of corporate websites for reporting sustainability activities of companies attempting to acknowledge and respond to changing local/national and global societal expectations concerning business practices (Lee, Fairhurst & Wesley, 2009:141). It was found that 68 percent of the Top 250 Global Fortune 500 companies embraced sustainability reporting (Gill, Dickinson & Scharl, 2008:244). It is also not a surprise that transparency was chosen as the cover topic of the April 2010 issue of the *Harvard Business Review* (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2)..

The increase in expectation and monitoring of websites by stakeholders necessitates a consistent and transparent communication strategy (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009:249; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:14). Companies who want to harness the benefits of sustainability, secure and assure stakeholders and protect their reputation have turned to their most public and global form of communication: their websites (Coupland, 2005:256; Bowers, 2010:250).

The external communication strategies of companies have been identified as an area of concern. It appears that some sustainability claims are not integrated in strategising and are only surface level. Hillestad *et al.* (2010:441) have determined that eighty percent of the *Fortune 100* flaunt their values publicly – values that too often stand for nothing but wanting to be politically correct. These authors propose that reporting has become an ‘exercise in compliance’ which contributes little to learning or innovation in companies. In fact, sustainability reports have been said to provide little evidence showing how businesses attend to environmental and social issues and their direct enhancement of/impact on the economic performance of business (Bowers, 2010:250).

There is little research investigating the degree to which companies detail sustainability initiatives publicly or strategically (Lee *et al.*, 2009:141). Investigations that have been conducted into the websites of companies have focused on the frequency and level of sustainability claims, language use, themes and the adoption of sustainability into mission and value statements (Coupland, 2005:356; Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221; Adams & Frost, 2008:288; Bowers, 2010:249). Other research has evaluated the presence of corporate responsibility on corporate web pages, conducted content analyses and made comparisons between old and new reports to identify the shift to sustainability (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2010:300). Research focus areas, however, have not provided much insight into the process of strategy formulation and implementation for sustainability, or the embeddedness of

sustainability claims. This is in spite of the genre of the sustainability report, which has been criticised from both inside and outside corporate walls (Bowers, 2010:250).

The JSE SRI Index has a set of criteria to measure those companies listed on the JSE that integrate the principles of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and good governance into their business activities. The process is to target the top 40 companies by market capitalisation on the JSE and then research and scrutinise their most recent publicly available material such as annual reports, company websites and other sources and then give feedback to the preliminary profiles of the companies for the completion of surveys when necessary and *for the companies to clarify research and gather non-public information*. The criteria for measurement are predetermined core indicators that cover elements that companies should have as a minimum, as well as desirable indicators that are aspirational or advanced (JSE, 2011). While also a form of sustainability measurement on the way in which companies detail sustainability initiatives (TBL), the measurement of embeddedness of sustainability in strategising elements is not the focus. The core criteria do not directly measure the level of sustainability in strategising elements, and the process is subject to the influences of marketing and self-evaluation and reputation biases, especially when the survey is supplied to companies in the sample for their input.

The 'well justified' and supported case for strategising for sustainability (Leon-Soriana *et al.*, 2010:249), accompanied by models and tools for embedding sustainability, has provided leadership and management with the 'how to', yet embedding sustainability into strategising remains a complex task and there are challenges in its implementation (Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

Concerns about the legitimacy of claims and the lack of implementation have been expressed amidst a genre of increased reporting and enhanced communication strategies. Companies have been proclaiming the degree to which sustainability forms part of their operations and their achievement of sustainability goals. Yet reporting and corporate websites have also been a source of criticism (Bowers, 2010:250). According to a recent study, twenty-three percent of US consumers say they have 'no way of knowing' if a product is green or if it actually does what it claims. This points to a gap between stakeholders' levels of confidence and the marketing claims on corporate websites (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:15).

The implementation gap between what is said and what is done is the justification for further study on this topic. A gap exists, in that leaders experience challenges in embedding sustainability into strategising, yet there has been an increase in intensity of sustainability reporting and claims. Reports and claims on communication platforms such as websites are considered by some to be only surface-level in nature (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130). Motivation to explore this gap is spurred by the Legitimacy Theory, which argues that an organisation's relationship with society can be built through communication and disclosure between that organisation, government and individuals (Coupland, 2005:356; Cowan, Dopart, Ferracini *et al.*, 2010:525). These points framed the research question of this research as: What is the status of strategising for sustainability amongst the JSE ALSI Top 40? Is there evidence that sustainability is embedded into strategising? (Table 1).

Key focus of the study

Communicating sustainability through external and public communication has acquired increasing importance because it is considered to be an activity that legitimises an organisation in the eyes of society (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221). This research attempts to determine the level of sustainability embeddedness in strategising so as to answer the following questions: What is the strategising for sustainability status of the Top 40 JSE listed companies? For that a measurement tool needs to be designed, leading to: What can the proposed Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) tool describe and reveal about the level of embedded sustainability in the strategising of companies? Key to this article is therefore the proposed tool for measurement and whether it could deliver valid measurements that could discriminate between companies and reveal strategising gaps.

Background to the study

Sustainability has become a boardroom-level strategic business issue. However, according to business leaders themselves, the skills, awareness and knowledge of executives are inadequate to meet this challenge. The radical transformation required cannot possibly be driven by environmental managers hidden away in their environmental silos (Kane, 2011).

Strategising is the process by which business leaders formulate and implement strategies to achieve the goals of the organisation and, hopefully, sustained competitive advantage (Hodgkinson & Clarke 2007:243). New trends, new taxes and new business dimensions are foreseen or reacted to by navigating the path that the business will follow by means of a strategy. Those companies who can identify the opportunities and risks stand to perform best among competitors dealing with the market change.

Before proceeding, it is critical to define the key constructs which are also the units of analysis, namely sustainability, sustainability claims, and strategising, in order to guide the literature study and the development of the proposed measurement tool.

Sustainability creates long-term shareholder value by taking up opportunities and managing associated risks that derive from TBL (economic, environmental and social) developments (Crews, 2010:15; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:59). It is often mentioned in association with responsible leadership, the use of resources and corporate social responsibility.

Sustainability claims are distinctive remarks, marketing labels and brands, developed by public and private sector institutions (UNCTAD, 2011) about sustainability achievements and projects. They are generally communicated through websites, public documents and with products and services. They attest that the company itself, its products and supply chains incorporate the pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental).

Strategising is the process of formulating and implementing a strategy (Hodgkinson & Clarke 2007:243). The interest of strategising is how initiatives are approached and resources applied to eventually achieve competitive advantage.

The next section explores the context in which the search for 'sustainability embeddedness' is sought and provides a working definition of it, as used in this text.

Context for delineation of sustainability embeddedness in strategising

The **sustainability imperative**: is shaping the business landscape and will continue to do so (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:492). In a globalising world, corporate involvement in the elements of sustainability is both necessary and expected (Skinner & Mersham, 2008:239). Lee *et al.* (2009:2) note that sustainability is neither a 'passing trend' nor an 'optional addition' for organisations. Sustainability is in fact a buzzword and has been a significant topic for climate change conferences, governments and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in recent decades (Crews, 2010:15), and also at conferences on management, leadership, ethics, philosophy and more. External forces, including stakeholders such as governments, customers and communities, place pressure on businesses to adopt sustainable practices. Although previously shifted to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) division by companies, in current times the topic warrants greater consideration and attention (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:484).

Ideally, companies should feel compelled to act in a socially, environmentally and financially responsible manner at all times because of ethical obligations that are either internally or externally motivated (Lee *et al.*, 2009:2). Companies are also encouraged to strive for sustainability and, in striving towards such a goal, enjoy success in the financial, social and environmental spheres (Skinner & Mersham, 2008:239). The reality, however, is that irrespective of whether one accepts or rejects the sustainability or CSR premise or its implementation, the concept merits business people's attention for its bottom-line implications (Idemudia, 2011:1; Lee *et al.*, 2009:2). In fact, the case for change has been successfully made and the need to balance the TBL in business is apparent (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

The business case for sustainability, rather than ethics and philosophy, proposes that sustainability is an unavoidable reality for businesses as consumer and investor pressures rise with the knowledge of climate change and other social needs (Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:440; Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:703). The TBL case suggests that all elements of sustainability should be adopted and integrated by businesses, as it 'makes good economic sense' (Collins *et al.*, 2007:729).

The bottom-line motivators for a shift to sustainability (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2009:300; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:73) are known as the drivers or benefits. These include cost savings (Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2009:300), the attraction of talented job applicants, and employee pride and support for the firm's vision and values (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:485). Sustainability is associated with innovation, such as in the process of designing products and services that are more sustainable and welcomed by the newly sensitive market. Companies also stand to enjoy a positive reputation and brand from disclosing sustainable initiatives. Collins *et al.* (2007:730) relate that in a survey, seventy percent of CEOs said that reputation and brand had considerable or extensive impact on motivation and approach to sustainability. These drivers contribute to enhanced revenue, making significant strides towards competitive advantage (Cowan *et al.*, 2010:525).

Strategy theory: identifies strategy as the coordinated means by which an organisation pursues its goals and objectives (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:35). Leaders identify risks and opportunities from internal and external sources and include an analysis of the industry and the macro environment. Strategy formulation,

the process of deciding what to do, involves the formulation of vision, mission, setting of goals and objectives and determining of sources of competitive advantage (Lynch, 2009:490). Strategy implementation, the process of performing all the activities necessary to do what has been planned, encompasses formulating action plans, aligning organisational structure, setting systems and measures and rewards in place to achieve the firm's goals and objectives (Lynch, 2009:490; Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:35). Together, strategy formulation and implementation make the process of strategising (Hodgkinson & Clarke, 2007:243).

Strategising can be achieved through a prescriptive or an emergent approach (Lynch, 2009:6). The prescriptive approach to strategising involves deliberate planning by the firm, it is one where the objective has been defined in advance and the main elements have been developed before strategy commences (Lynch, 2009:37). Leaders are expected to devise thoughtful, informed and deliberate decisions that will lead to achieving organisational goals. The leader is expected to 'know the way and show the way and go the way' (Crews, 2010:18).

The emergent approach, on the other hand, strives towards an objective which is often unclear and whose elements are developed during the course of the strategising process. It suits fast-developing markets as it considers the dynamic changes in the environment and adjusts to accommodate them, offering flexibility. Leaders are guided by strategic intent and the outcome is unknown (Lynch, 2009:225).

Strategising for sustainability: addresses the alignment of sustainability initiatives with short- and long-term business decisions and falls within the body of knowledge of strategy. Embedded sustainability is not just a better environmentalist strategy; it is a company's response to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value-creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2). The King III report emphasised that 'Strategy, risk, performance and sustainability have become inseparable' and this entails integrated reporting by companies (Ince.motiv., 2010).

Most literature sources addressing strategising for sustainability identify it as being a continuous process, a continuum towards an ultimate sustainability and business goal (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:12). The process is viewed as 'gradual, planned, continuous and ongoing incremental change' (Holton *et al.*, 2010:153; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:5; Velazquez, Esquer, Munguia & Moure-Eraso, 2011:41). Hallstedt *et al.* (2010:703) suggest that under the highly pressured and dynamic circumstance in which sustainability has presented itself, companies are adapting to sustainability by emergent means, not having prescriptively planned for it. In fact, a 'future sustainable society' might be so different from the current one that strategists may need to 'first envision the future and invent action pathways' to realise that future. Crews (2010:17) supports this, calling it an 'organic approach.'

The legitimacy theory: is one example of a systems-orientated view of the organisation in relationship with society which allows some focus on the role of communication in disclosure between organisation, government and individuals (Coupland, 2005:356; Cowan *et al.*, 2010:525). From a business's perspective, sustainability has acquired increasing importance because it is considered to be an

activity that legitimises an organisation in the eyes of society (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221).

Communicating a focus on sustainability has become an integral part of the corporate agenda. Companies may use a variety of media, indexes and approaches to discuss sustainability, such as reports, case studies and videos (Reilly, 2009:33). While the number of companies reporting on their sustainability practices has increased in recent years, the genre of the sustainability report and communication has been criticised from both inside and outside corporate walls (Bowers, 2010:250).

The medium of choice for the distribution and leveraging of such reports and communication is the corporate website. The websites are the most public form of communication utilised in efforts to harness the benefits of sustainability (Coupland, 2005:256; Bowers 2010:250). Research indicates a significant rise in the use of corporate websites for reporting TBL activities amongst companies attempting to acknowledge and respond to changing local/national and global societal expectations concerning business practices, and to appear favourably in various indexes (Lee *et al.*, 2009). It has been found that sixty-eight percent of the Top 250 Global Fortune 500 companies have embraced sustainability reporting (Gill *et al.*, 2008:244).

A concern regarding the external communication strategies of companies is that it appears that claims are not integrated with strategising and are only surface level (Bowers, 2010:250; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:20). The external communication of a company is an important guide to the public on how companies are integrating sustainability into business practice, especially strategising, but it appears that the sustainability claims cannot always be identified within the context of strategising. There are concerns that claims are simply empty talk and that there is limited adoption of integrated reporting and communication statements made (Adams & Frost, 2008:288; Uusi-Rauva & Nurekka, 2010:301). If sustainability reporting and communication are to lead to improvements in sustainability performance, organisations must seek to integrate both physical and financial performance indicators into various aspects of their management functions (Adams & Frost, 2008:290). It has also been suggested that sustainability embeddedness will derive from displaying greater transparency and honesty, or having conversations as opposed to one-way advertising, or championing collaboration instead of an 'us-versus-them' mentality (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:20; Trendwatching, 2012).

Based on the premise that 'sustainability reporting presents a socially responsible firm, in formal claims and official documents', Riccaboni and Leone (2010:130) propose case-study investigation of sustainability reports in order to investigate if and how external image, reputation and formal claims are 'reflected in internal practices and tools'. Indeed, a company's disclosure should accurately mirror real actions. An honest report will gain greater credibility and preserve legitimacy. A company must ensure its disclosures are a reflection of accurate behaviour (Gill *et al.*, 2008:245; Uusi-Rauva & Nurekka, 2010:301).

The web is a relatively new context for communication, and commercial websites are treated as public documents, which renders them available to public scrutiny equal to or more stringent than that of the printed form. Corporate websites are geared to

'sell' to audiences, and although theoretically it is possible to create a persona on the web, in practice a company's web presence entails evaluation and accountability. Companies are required to articulate their strategic position with regard to the welfare of all stakeholders (Coupland, 2005:356).

The concept of strategising for sustainability has only recently been reviewed in the literature, having previously been conveyed as a recommendation, for legitimacy purposes, to adhere to compliance obligations, as a warning, or as an argument for companies to adhere to their ethical obligations. This article therefore is interested in determining the level of embeddedness, where *sustainability embeddedness* is defined as the level at which sustainability elements reveal themselves in the strategising actions of the company. This article is interested in measuring sustainability's position within strategising in order to distinguish companies that are strategising for sustainability from those who just communicate sustainability or respond to specific criteria expected of them to be perceived as sustainable.

The next section explores the research objectives and leads to the research design and the proposed instrument to measure strategising for sustainability.

Research objectives and questions

What is clear from the literature is that sustainability is a topic of bottom-line importance. Strategising is critical for the harnessing of benefits deriving from sustainability. If companies integrate sustainability with current strategising activities, they can pursue potential competitive advantage. Some leaders aware of legitimacy and concerned for their reputation attempt to placate stakeholders in their efforts to appear sustainable. This is done through reporting on corporate websites which has, however, been criticised as being nothing more than compliance efforts to be politically correct.

The aim of this research was to ascertain if companies on the JSE ALSI Top 40 were strategising for sustainability, and to create a tool to measure the embeddedness of sustainability. Thus the research questions of this study were: 1) Is there evidence that companies are strategising for sustainability in their external communication? (thus companies' sustainable reporting and claims can direct strategising measurement); 2) Can the proposed measurement tool judge 'strategising for sustainability' meaningfully? (thus a measurement tool can be designed to determine the level of sustainability 'embeddedness' in strategising, and measurement can reveal gaps); 3) Are claims about sustainability embedded in strategy or is it just empty talk? (companies' sustainability claims are not embedded into their strategising); 4) Finally, this research was interested in the ability of the SSI tool to discriminate and reveal strategising gaps.

The potential value-add of the study

The scope and context of reviews of corporate websites for sustainability elements have been limited, and these have not been strategically focused investigations (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221; Bowers, 2010:253; Cowan *et al.*, 2010:524). This research aimed to distinguish companies regarding the degree to which sustainability was strategised for (its embeddedness), thereby taking a more strategic approach to the research, as well as expanding the scope of the research to include all available strategic documents, communication messages and reports

on the websites of the Top JSE ALSI Top 40 Companies. Most corporate studies have been done on the Global Fortune Companies or the Indices of Foreign Countries. This research investigated how leading South African companies were reflecting their internal sustainability actions.

The next section describes the research design and the proposed measurement instrument.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

To approach the object of this research and answer the research propositions, a content analysis methodology was applied to the published works and proposed standards, as well as to frameworks on the topics of sustainability and strategy. From the analysis, 10 elements (of strategising) were identified to measure the degree to which sustainability was embedded in the process of strategy formulation and implementation.

With Table 1 as a framework, this research focused on determining the level of embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising. For this, a framework was proposed and applied to judge the level of the sustainability claims.

Table 1: Research design components

Component	Description
Research question / problem	What is the status of strategising for sustainability? Is there evidence that sustainability is embedded into strategising?
Propositions	P1: Companies' sustainable reporting and claims can direct strategising measurement. P2: A measurement tool can be designed to determine the level of sustainability 'embeddedness' in strategising. P3: Companies' sustainability claims are not embedded in their strategising (measured with the tool). P4: Measurement reveals strategising gaps.
Unit of investigation	Primary – Sustainability reporting and claims Secondary – Strategising Tertiary – Measurement
Unit of analysis	JSE ALSI Top 40 Companies
Logic linking the data to the propositions	Sustainability is an unavoidable business topic, while the JSE ALSI Top 40 Companies are the leaders in their industries and in South Africa. Recent literature has raised concerns regarding strategising for sustainability and the data from this sample had not been given a strategising for sustainability index. Examining and measuring the sustainability claims would give direction for sustainability strategising
Criteria for interpreting the findings	The language used in the communication, together with the reports and claims, would signal the existence or absence of evidence. Strategic terms (referring to formulation and implementation) used to describe strategic initiatives and their levels of sustainability embeddedness were used for making judgements (See also Annexure A)

Source: Yin, (2003:21)

Key scientific beliefs of the researchers

To answer the above questions, the researchers were aware of their own methodological values, beliefs and particular philosophical assumptions. These assumptions could influence the way in which the research was conducted, and are stated here to convey the 'intellectual climate' in which the research was undertaken.

Ontological positions

This position states the researchers' views and the nature and essence of their research reality. Researcher A is an objective realist who believes that knowledge comes from facts associated with the case and the context. If repetitive and consistent conditions of sustainability claims are found in the top companies, they can be generalised. His interest was to approach the research question from a strategy-as-practice view. Researcher B is a practitioner tasked with development of a company's sustainability strategy. She seeks the truth through objective judgement of best practices and scientific proof.

Epistemological positions

The theory of knowledge (epistemology) of the researchers diverged to some extent, allowing for interplay on how decisions on social phenomena can be known and how knowledge can be demonstrated.

Researcher A primarily worked from a scientific paradigm supported by a consultant paradigm. Working as a strategy consultant influenced the search for factual directives, business patterns and answers to existing situations of a similar nature. Researcher B worked from an academic learning paradigm in order to meet the requirements for a Master's degree and simultaneously give guidance to the demands she faces as the person contributing to the development of a company's sustainability strategy.

Case study as a research strategy

A multiple-case approach was used to explain the phenomena within a real-world context where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Yin (2003) suggests the uniqueness of a situation as sufficient rationalisation for using a single case. The specific cases under investigation are leading companies in industry. The extent to which companies are strategising for sustainability is believed to be evident through corporate websites and to date this is not readily talked about nor investigated. Most research discusses the reputation aspect of reporting on sustainability, but this proposed tool contributes to distinguishing those companies who are genuine about sustainability. Reasoning was mostly inductive to explore the external communication.

Research method

Research setting and background: The JSE ALSI Top 40 Companies are deemed to be successful relative to other companies. Due to their ability to read trends and changes in the competitive landscape, these leading companies are aware that consumer and investor markets have changed. The increase in sensitive stakeholders and investors who pay close attention to companies regarding their social and environmental actions and the longevity they promote has turned the JSE ALSI Top 40 Companies towards a sustainability focus.

In response to the market changes, the JSE has sought to leverage its unique position within the financial services environment to focus the debate on responsible investment. The JSE launched the Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) index in 2004 in South Africa to provide a measurement of the TBL performance of participating companies. The index offers incentives for compliance and serves as a tool for facilitating responsible investment (Skinner & Mersham, 2008:239).

To address this new business dimension, preserve reputation and the ability to attract investment, the leading companies have embarked on sustainability reporting and communication. This is attributed to the knowledge that investors use the information on websites (and in reports) to make decisions (Dawkins & Ngujiri, 2008:236).

Transparent reporting and communication in the public domain are widely considered to be the disclosure of the internal activities and operations of companies. This so-called reflection suggests that what companies say is what companies are doing. This is, however, often far from the truth. Often reporting is a merely compliance activity or just 'empty talk' and therefore appears to lack embeddedness in the strategising process. In spite of the bottom-line implications advocating sustainability integration by leading companies, there appears to be a gap between what companies say and what companies do.

Research process: The researchers first embarked on a literature review, followed by the creation of the SSI Tool comprising ten (10) elements based on literature findings. Using the literature and best-practice findings, the measurement criteria for judging companies were developed. Then the sample was identified and sourced, followed by research on the chosen group. Data was captured, analysed and interpreted.

Development of the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) tool: The SSI tool was formulated through a literature search on strategising for sustainability. The search was of all recent literature by choice of topic. Historical theory-building research was not included in the search because the search was undertaken from the premise that the argument for sustainability in business had already been made. This search focused on the integration of sustainability into corporate strategising. The data was sourced from internet searches of best practice for sustainability, as well as from journals on leading platforms, including: ProQuest, EBSCOHost, Emerald and SABINET. The literature search also included books dealing with the topic. The search terms used included 'sustainability,' 'strategy,' 'strategising,' 'integration of sustainability,' 'triple bottom line,' 'reporting,' 'sustainability measurement' and 'corporate social responsibility.'

The following inclusion criteria for literature sources were applied. The work had to report on:

- The content of sustainability
- The content of strategising
- The tasks and/or activities in strategising for sustainability
- The process, giving suggestions for embedding sustainability
- The challenges associated with strategising and sustainability
- The corporate reporting and communication strategies

- Corporate websites and sustainability

The literature identified then underwent a content analysis by the researchers. The purpose of the research was to identify 10 elements by which the SSI tool could measure the extent to which companies' sustainability was embedded in strategising. The researchers considered three broad concepts: compliance, strategy formulation and strategy implementation. Two elements were identified for compliance; four elements for strategy formulation measurement; and four elements to measure strategy implementation. The element titles and criteria were sourced from the content analysis. Support was found for each element.

The measurement scale for judging was developed using the SSI tool as a base. Each of the 10 elements had criteria on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale determined the level of sustainability embeddedness present in each element. The level contributed to describing the overall status of strategising for sustainability. Supporting literature was also used to distinguish the degree of achievement of sustainability embeddedness.

Sampling: The JSE Top 40 listed companies on the All Share Index (ALSI) as of March 2011 were selected as a purposive sample. The JSE SRI Index automatically assesses companies that are in the JSE Top 40. This research selected the same sample size and grouping for assessment, but with the purpose of distinguishing those companies who have truly embedded sustainability from those who make appealing sustainability claims for reputation purposes. Furthermore, the selected sample generally represented large companies of sound financial standing which had widely traded and marketable shares. These are market leaders and, as such, the assumption is that these companies should direct and set benchmarks for sustainability in their strategising that can be measured.

Data collection methods: The researchers first acquired a list of the Top 40 companies on the All Share Index (ALSI) as of March 2011 quartile reporting. The list was acquired from the JSE. The companies on the list became the target for this research. The researchers designed a measurement tool based on researched elements of strategising as well as from recent literature on the topic on sustainability and its integration in strategising. The proposed SSI tool was then applied to the list. The researchers systematically explored all the content of each company's corporate website. Content included reports, CEO addresses, vision and mission statements and case studies.

Data analyses: Merit for strategising for sustainability was given to a company on the basis that the researcher could interpret the language presented and then use the researcher's discretion as to whether the information would meet the measurement tool's criteria on a 5-point scale. The criteria for each awarded point were based on the definitions of strategic and sustainable terminologies. The researcher developed systems of judgement through application of the SSI tool as the research proceeded.

Data criteria: Each company's data and each element of the scorecard were judged on a Likert-type five-point scale (5 being high and 1 being low), with higher scores incorporating higher levels of embeddedness in the strategy. Comprehensive

measurement criteria were used to judge the presented data individually and independently for each element of the scorecard instrument. The 10 elements represented compliance (two elements); strategy formulation (four elements); and strategy implementation (four elements).

Strategies employed to ensure quality of data: The researchers were aware of bias, such as the expectation that the highest-ranking companies (based on market capitalisation) would achieve higher levels on the SSI tool index. To deal with this and ensure the data was accurately captured, the researchers made a mental note of this bias and tried to minimise it. To ensure quality of data, data found was immediately captured into a single growing spreadsheet. This served to avoid findings being forgotten and to ensure that data was captured at the time of interpretation by the researcher. Data and findings were preserved through backups at regular intervals to make certain that no data was lost, which could jeopardise the outcome. Furthermore, research was conducted continuously over the course of one month. This contributed to the use of the same mental framework when applying the SSI tool and making judgements.

Reporting the findings: The findings are reported by firstly presenting the evaluation elements of the proposed SSI tool (based on the literature), secondly stating the key observations and finally responding to the research propositions individually. The style is explanatory, aiming to describe the relationships and finding support (or otherwise) for the propositions set out in Table 1.

FINDINGS

Literature findings

From the literature, 10 elements of sustainability embeddedness were identified and incorporated in the instrument. Each element is described briefly, starting with compliance elements (1-2), thereafter formulation elements (3-6) and finally implementation elements (7-10).

Table 2: Elements of the SSI tool as derived from a content analysis of literature on the topic

ELEMENT NUMBER AND TITLE:	DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENT:	SUPPORTING AUTHORS:
1. INTEGRATED REPORTING	<p style="text-align: center;">COMPLIANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A product of a process or system of processes that seeks to inform stakeholders of an organisations ability to heed to stakeholder and or societal concerns and to provide meaningful performance information to support assertions suggesting effective management. To demonstrate how well an organisation has embedded a comprehensive view of sustainability into the strategic fabric of the organisation that leads the reader to understand whether the organisation is well placed to adapt to economic, social and environmental factors. • The users of an organisation's integrated report (the stakeholders) should be able to determine from the report whether the organisation has sufficiently applied its collective mind in identifying the social, environmental, economic and financial issues that impact on the organisation's business, and whether these issues have been appropriately incorporated into its strategy. • Reporting ranges from mere compliance, disclosure and the acknowledgement of sustainability to an Integrated report. • The accessibility of the report demonstrates a willingness to disclose information • Excellent reports consider the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards, UN Global Compact, JSE SRI Index, and the ISO 2600 sustainability reporting and performance frameworks and communicate a balance of TBL sustainability indicators 	<p>Bowers, 2010:250 Coupland, 2005:256 Dawkins & Ngujiri, 2008:236. Gill <i>et al.</i>, 2008:244 Ince.motiv, 2010:18 Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009:249 Smith & Sharicz, 2011:78 Sustainability Services, (2011). Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka, 2010:300 Velaquez et al., 2011:36</p>

<p>2. SUSTAINABILITY RECOGNITION AND AFFILIATION:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition by third parties can be through endorsements, awards, partnerships and affiliations. • Companies that are confident in their efforts towards sustainability embeddedness seek connections with other leading organisations that share the same beliefs and intentions. • Awards including those such as 'responsible retailer of year' - show a level of accountability for actions. • Voluntary additional reporting such as the Carbon Disclosure Project CDP, displays efforts to go beyond minimum reporting. 	<p>ACCA Bonn & Fisher, 2011 Cowan et al.,2010:524; Searcy, 2009:52 SRI Smith & Sharicz, 2011:78</p>
STRATEGY FORMULATION		
<p>3. VISION & MISSION INCLUDES SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and mission statements and the core values of a business are crucial to the formulation of strategy. • A sustainability embedded vision, mission and core values demonstrate the focus and intent of the organisation towards sustainability. • A sustainability philosophy, statement from the CEO or a sustainability slogan does not demonstrate a high level of embeddedness and in fact can portray half heartedness by the company. • All three elements of sustainability and the word itself should be on the front page of the website and both in the annual report and the sustainability section. 	<p>Adams & Frost, 2008:288 Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6 Bowers, 2010:249 Carpenter & Sanders 2009:35 Coupland, 2005:356 Capriotti & Moreno, 2007:221 Leon-Soriana <i>et al.</i>, 2010:252 Lynch, 2009:490 Reilly, 2009:34 Searcy, 2009:52</p>
<p>4. RISK MANAGEMENT: MACROECONOMIC IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A connection between sustainability risks and company strategy formulation affecting strategic, operational and tactical decisions. • The company should identify the macroeconomic and industry risks and opportunities associated with sustainability. • Companies need to acknowledge the impact of climate change and social challenges and the role the company plays in achieving sustainability. • There should be a visible system to manage the risk including a model or clear plans. 	<p>Lynch, 2009:351 KING III Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130 Searcy, 2009:50 Velaquez <i>et al.</i>, 2011:36</p>
STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION:		
<p>5. PROGRAMMES & STAFF LEARNING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To harness the staff buy-in, companies need to train and educate employees on sustainability embedded company goals and educate them on their role in the desired outcome. • Staff are seen as critical to the success of a strategy and, as such, pivotal to one that incorporates sustainability. • Employee engagement has an impact on company performance and embedding social and environmental considerations into the company's operations spurs engagement and the achievement of financial return and an embedded sustainability strategy. • Learning and education are fundamental methods to communicate to staff the 'revolutionary' drive towards a shift to sustainability • Photos from sustainability awareness contract sessions, campaigns, drives, community outreach and formal training with staff demonstrate embeddedness of sustainability in strategising. 	<p>Elmualim <i>et al.</i>, 2010:58 Holton et al. 2010:157 Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520 Lynch, 2009:550 Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:20; Reilly, 2009:34 Lacy <i>et al.</i>, 2009:491 Reilly, 2009:34 White, 2009:392</p>
<p>6. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A firm's goals and objectives are commitments to actions to achieve the strategic vision of the company • These goals need to incorporate a sustainability focus • Sustainability embeddedness is determined through communicating specific sustainability statements that are visible to stakeholders • Clear goals such as 'we are committed to integrating sustainability into our strategy.' 	<p>Lynch, 2009:491 Lee <i>et al.</i>, 2009:146 Riccaboni & Leone, 2009:36</p>
<p>7. CLEAR SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions and initiatives are tangible efforts that serve as evidence that a company has interacted with stakeholders and made a commitment of resources • The actions need to be aligned with corporate goals and vision and should not just be ad hoc projects • Sustainability actions and projects display decision making in the direction of sustainability through the commitment of resources and capital outlay. 	<p>Bonn & Fisher, 2011:7; Hallstedt <i>et al.</i>,2010:703 Holton et al.,2010:152 Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:36 Reilly, 2009:35</p>
<p>8. DEDICATED STAFF FOR SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance is essentially about effective leadership. Leaders need to define strategy, provide direction and establish the ethics and values that will influence and guide practices and behaviour with regard to sustainability performance. • For the achievement of a sustainable organisation, responsible leadership, are required to be change agents. • Evidence of decision makers at senior leadership level portrays accountability and governance. • Involving staff at middle and operational levels suggest sustainability is truly being implemented. • Companies give special recognition to individuals and teams for sustainability • Implementation of a sustainability embedded strategy is evident from names/photos and titles of sustainability dedicated staff. 	<p>Adams & Frost, 2008 Bonn & Fisher, 2011:12 Cowan <i>et al.</i>,2010:154 Holton <i>et al.</i> ,2010:152 Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520 Lynch, 2009:492 Quinn & Dalton, 2009:21 Reilly, 2009:34 Uusi-Rauva, 2010:300 White, 2009:329</p>

<p>9. SPECIFIC MEASURES AND TARGETS:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies that communicate specific measures and targets for sustainability portray embeddedness of sustainability in the implementation of strategy. • The disclosure of successes or failures towards set goals and objective on a year on year basis shows progressive improvement. • Targets and Measures indicate a commitment to sustainability. • Performance management systems, e.g. Balanced Scorecards and Key Performance Indicators for sustainability targets indicate commitment. • Companies that use both qualitative and quantitative means to describe the achievement on efforts towards sustainability reveal embeddedness. 	<p>Bonn & Fisher, 2016 Holton et al.,2010:152 Lacy <i>et al.</i>,2009:491 Leon-Soriano et al., 2010:249 Quinn & Dalton, 2007:21 Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130 Smith & Sharicz, 2011:73: Searcy, 2009:50</p>
<p>10. SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability innovation encapsulates the ability of the company to allow for sustainability to inform strategy decisions. • Innovation, fairness, and collaboration are key aspects of any transition to sustainability embeddedness – innovation provides new ways of doing things, including profitable responses to sustainability. • The cost of implementing sustainability is a chief barrier to its adoption. Costs include: capital outlay, additional resources, time and the costs of certification where applicable. Leaders are hesitant to make an economic outlay in the short term in spite of the opportunities and often tangible return on investment, e.g. energy efficiency savings. • Companies that are able to turn their business inside out find that addressing sustainability issues can change them from being a burden or cost to an opportunity for efficiency and profit. • Businesses that demonstrate innovative thinking in such a way that their understanding of sustainability informs products, services and processes show. • Mainstream consumers want products that are more affordable, better-performing, healthier, longer-lasting, with added appeal – in other words, it is 'smarter' rather than greener or more responsible, that they are after. • Business plans and decision framework models demonstrate how sustainability forms part of strategising. • Confident statements such as; 'Sustainability elements are built into how we do business and our decision making' show commitment. 	<p>Bonn & Fisher, 2011:11 Collins <i>et al.</i>, 2007:736. Holton <i>et al.</i>, 2010:157 Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:20 Smith & Sharicz, 2011:75 Setthasakko,2009:169</p>

Empirical findings

Tables 3 to 4 and Figure 1 present the empirical findings after application of the SSI tool to the ALSI Top 40 Companies. The findings are presented as support (or otherwise) for the propositions and thereby give perspective by seeking insights.

P1: Companies' sustainable reporting and claims can direct strategising measurement

Supported

Firstly, it was possible for the researcher to use the SSI tool and measurement criteria and apply them to the sustainability reporting and claims for each company. Secondly, each element could be judged on the unique scale for the specific element. Aggregating the scores led to an overall score that could be used to rank the sample companies for SSI. Table 3 shows the outcome of the evaluation process. In spite of well-structured sentences, strategic word choice and creative communication strategies, the actual level of sustainability embeddedness could be measured. The researcher could make meaningful judgements using the evaluation scales for each element.

Table 3: Evaluation results of the Top 40 Companies based on the Strategising for Sustainability index (SSI) measurement tool, with individual elements and rankings

	ELEMENTS										MARKET CAP RANK	SSI SCORE	SSI * RANK
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
BHP	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	5	5	1	41	12
ANGLO AMERICAN	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	2	45	4
SAB MILLER	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	3	47	1
SASOL	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	5	4	44	6
MTN	4	5	3	5	4	3	4	4	3	5	5	40	14
COMPAGNIE FIN	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	6	22	39
ANGLO PLATINUM	4	5	3	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	7	44	6
NASPERS	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	8	20	40
STANDARD BANK	3	5	3	4	2	2	2	4	3	3	9	31	34
KUMBA IRON ORE	3	5	2	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	10	35	26
IMPALA PLAT	5	3	5	3	3	5	3	5	4	3	11	39	16
ANGLOGOLD	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	3	5	3	12	33	30
VODACOM	4	3	2	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	13	33	30
FIRSTRAND	4	4	3	4	5	3	4	3	4	4	14	38	19
ABSA	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	15	36	25
GOLD FIELDS	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	16	47	1
OLD MUTUAL	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	17	40	14
NEDBANK	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	3	5	4	18	45	4
SANLAM	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	5	3	4	19	38	19
BIDVEST	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	20	35	26
EXXARO	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	3	3	4	21	41	12
REMGRO	5	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	22	31	34
SHOPRITE	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	23	25	37
RMB	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	24	42	10
A.R.M	5	3	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	25	39	16
INVESTEC	5	4	5	3	5	4	3	5	4	5	26	43	8
LONMIN	5	3	5	3	4	3	3	3	5	4	27	38	19
ARCELOR MIT	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	28	46	3
STEINHOFF	3	1	3	3	3	4	5	3	3	4	29	32	32
CAPSHOP	3	5	3	2	3	3	5	2	3	3	30	32	32
ASPEN	3	4	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	31	29	35
HARMON	5	4	3	4	2	4	5	3	5	4	32	39	16
TIGERBRAND	5	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	33	37	22
MONDI	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	5	34	43	8
MASSMART	5	4	5	4	3	4	5	3	4	5	35	42	10
TRUWORTHS	5	4	4	4	2	3	4	2	5	4	36	37	22
AFRICAN BANK	3	3	3	2	5	4	4	3	4	3	37	34	29
ASSORE	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	38	26	36
GROWTHPOINT	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	39	34	28
IMPERIAL	4	3	3	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	40	37	22
Element Means	4.18	3.73	3.48	3.65	3.45	3.60	3.98	3.35	3.83	3.75		37.00	

* Where companies had the same SSI score, they were allocated the same ranking but placed in the table based on their market capitalisation
 *Rank is determined on the scores in that 1 is the highest and 40 is the lowest

P2: A measurement tool can be designed to determine the level of sustainability ‘embeddedness’ in strategising

Supported

The SSI measurement tool can be used to describe the level of strategising embeddedness. Table 3 demonstrates the results of measuring the level of sustainability embeddedness in strategising. The SSI tool’s framework is based on input of literature and on the foundation of strategic principles. The 5-point scale on the SSI tool serves to describe the achievement of the company for each element.

This proposed SSI tool addresses the potentially ‘superfluous’ claims surrounding sustainability and puts into perspective those companies who have successfully demonstrated that sustainability is not just for reputation purposes and is in fact part of their strategising and operating as a listed company. Figure 1 shows a graphical depiction of some sample companies to indicate the value of comparing an individual company’s SSI performance against others, thereby identifying gaps to which to direct management’s attention.

Figure 1: Comparative depiction of the SSI element scores for three sample companies compared with the overall mean scores per element

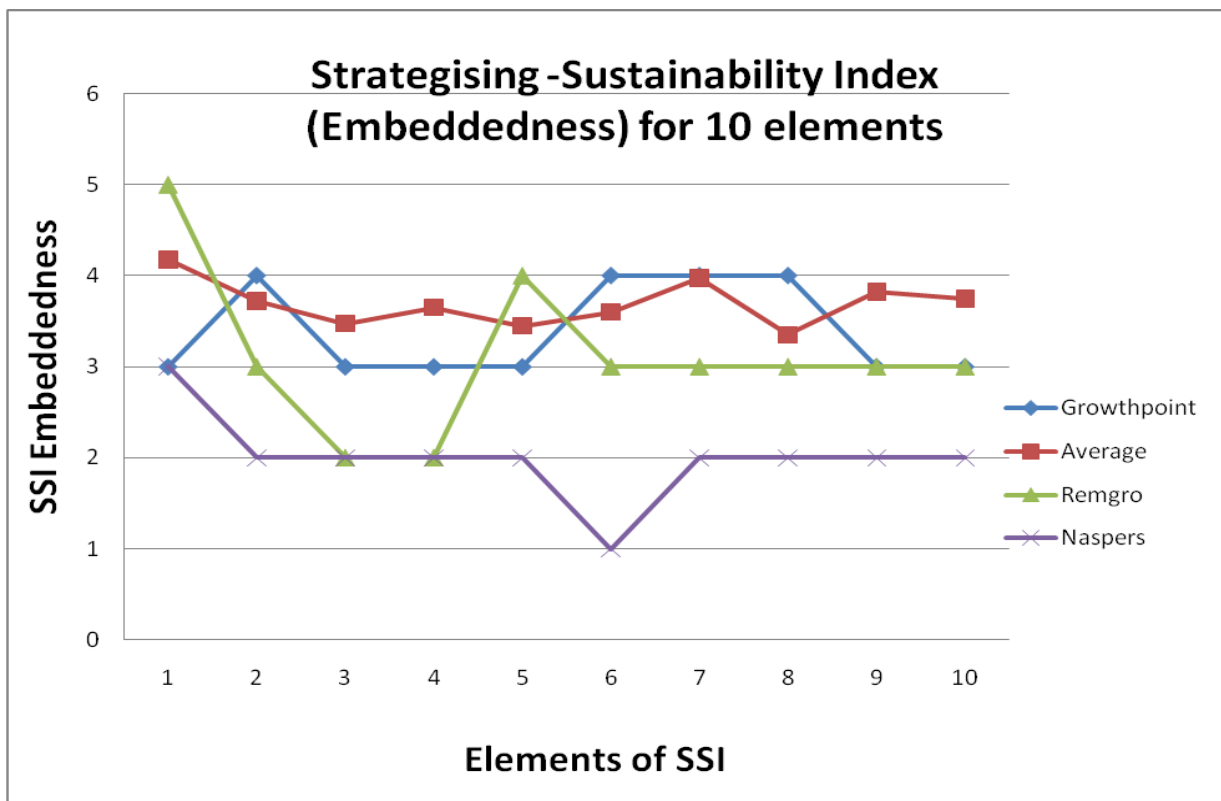


Table 4: Comparison of SSI elements based on different criteria, whereby groups were analysed on SSI index and Market Capitalisation.

ELEMENT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
SSI AVERAGE /ELEMENT	4.18	3.73	3.48	3.65	3.45	3.60	3.98	3.35	3.83	3.75	37.00
MEAN TOP 10 BASED ON SSI	4.70	4.40	4.70	4.40	4.40	4.50	4.60	3.80	4.30	4.80	44.60
MEAN BOTTOM 10 BASED ON SSI	3.30	2.90	2.20	2.80	2.70	2.70	3.30	2.70	2.90	2.60	28.10
MEAN TOP 10 BASED ON M CAP	3.90	4.00	3.30	4.10	3.30	3.50	3.80	3.20	3.80	3.90	36.90
MEAN BOTTOM 10 BASED ON M CAP	4.10	3.70	3.20	3.50	3.00	3.50	4.20	3.00	3.90	3.70	35.80

P3: Companies' sustainability claims are not embedded in their strategising

Not supported – sustainability claims are partially embedded and not equally embedded. The overall average for the level of sustainability claims embedded in strategising is seventy-four percent. Sustainability claims are, however, not *equally* embedded in the Top 40 companies' strategising process. This is apparent when interpreting the data from research on the elements pertaining to the formulation and implementation as strategising elements. See Tables 4 and 5 for comparison.

The mean scores for the Top 10 companies based on Market Capitalisation are 2.55 for formulation and 3.55 for implementation. Similarly, the mean score for the Top 10 companies on the SSI index are 3.25 for formulation and 4.33 for implementation respectively. The sustainability claims of these companies are not *equally embedded* in the process of strategising. While companies did score embeddedness ratings out of 5, it was found that the score was lower for the formulation elements, raising the question of whether projects (forming part of implementation efforts) are not implemented on an ad-hoc basis when they are not necessarily formulated as part of a strategy.

Sustainability claims were found to be *partially* embedded in strategising, depending on whether formulation or implementation components were judged. When judging the formulation elements, it was determined that there was a level of sustainability embeddedness. The results of all companies on the four formulation elements averaged at 2.62, indicating a level of embeddedness of sustainability claims. Incorporating sustainability in the formulation process does not, however, necessarily 'prove' real incorporation of sustainability. Companies on the Top 40 JSE cannot communicate sustainability embeddedness through claims in the formulation elements only. Embedded sustainability requires proof from the implemented strategy – thus, concrete outputs are required. Companies appear to focus on the implementation aspects of strategising and this is a contributing reason why the average embeddedness rating for implementation was a high score of 3.70.

The last four elements of the SSI tool measured the sustainability claims of companies in strategy *implementation*, and in spite of the 3.70 embeddedness rating, the researchers determined that sustainability claims were not always embedded in strategy implementation. This is why embeddedness in strategising is

said to be partially embedded. In circumstances where companies in the study were able to demonstrate programmes and initiatives in all the implementation elements and show case studies of the efforts or projects, they were awarded the highest level of embeddedness. Seventy-four percent of companies could demonstrate they had embedded aspects of sustainability in the elements of implementation.

There was, however, a tendency to discuss ad-hoc social initiatives, which do form part of TBL sustainability but do not form part of balanced sustainability implementation communication. On other occasions, companies communicated a balance of sustainability programmes in spite of not having a sustainability vision and mission or objectives. Companies found creative ways to demonstrate sustainability embeddedness in implementation, which appealed to the SSI elements and to individual criteria in the measurement instrument. Regarding the element of specific measures and targets, companies displayed clear year-on-year improvement (on sustainability initiatives), yet sometimes failed to provide a baseline or only displayed the results using percentages.

While the score for sustainability embeddedness is on the whole quite satisfactory, the researchers need to emphasise that there are concerns about the strategising practices of companies specifically with reference to the dedicated leadership element. The average level of sustainability embeddedness for dedicated staff – those intended to carry out the implementation of sustainability – had the lowest average, of 3.35 out of 5. When matching this to the SSI tool's measurement criteria, it can be interpreted as follows: the company has mentioned a sustainability (or risk) committee as its dedicated staff; however, there are no operational or tactical staff mentioned. The lack of tactical and operational staff among the companies surely affects their ability to strategise for sustainability, which implies that sustainability claims are partially embedded in strategising.

P4: Measurement reveals strategising gaps

Supported

The findings support that there were strategising gaps. Figure 1 graphically depicted the strategising gaps through a comparative assessment. Table 5 compares and displays the discrepancy between the scores for formulation and implementation of sustainability embeddedness. Most companies nevertheless scored high on compliance, suggesting that the approach to strategising for sustainability may be compliance driven.

Table 5: Comparison of SSI elements based on different strategising components of formulation and compiled on SSI index and Market Capitalisation

STRATEGISING ELEMENT	COMPLIANCE	FORMULATION	IMPLEMENTATION
SSI MEAN /ELEMENT	3.95	2.62	3.70
MEAN TOP 10 BASED ON SSI	4.55	3.25	4.33
MEAN BOTTOM 10 BASED ON SSI	3.10	2.05	2.99
MEAN TOP 10 BASED ON M CAP	3.95	2.55	3.55
MEAN BOTTOM 10 BASED ON M CAP	3.90	2.56	3.72

In the process of strategising, formulation and implementation generally occur in sequence (implementation after formulation), or in the case of an emergent strategy, they may occur simultaneously. In unusual cases, implementation can be recorded without formulation, and this would be counter-intuitive to the process of strategising. The SSI tool measured sustainability within the elements of strategising and the level to which the sustainability claim was embedded. The process has revealed strategising gaps in companies.

The higher score for implementation than formulation exposes companies who had prepared good communication strategies or conveyed some 'green washing' in the company. In other words, while the company report was mere compliance (and thus the high score for compliance), they displayed cases of ad-hoc implementation efforts to show the stakeholders they were involved in sustainability efforts. These implementation sustainability claims were measured in the strategising elements and revealed the overall strategising gaps when compared with formulation scoring.

Some companies met the measurement criteria and requirements for elements of sustainability implementation in spite of the fact that their initiatives often lacked incorporation in the vision or specific sustainability objective. This attests to the ability of the SSI tool to expose strategising gaps. Company representatives are 'savvy', and understand that investors are interested in the fundamental strategy elements in order to ascertain the existence of sustainability. Guidelines such as GRI also propose that companies refer to certain key indicators. The existence of sustainability claims in elements does not necessarily mean that the company is strategising for sustainability.

The SSI tool therefore has discrimination value and is able to measure sustainability in the context of strategising and reveal strategising gaps resulting from strategic marketing and communication efforts by companies. This is demonstrated by understanding the process of strategising and interpreting the findings.

DISCUSSION

The research has determined the level of embeddedness of sustainability claims in the strategising of the JSE Top 40. The findings and answers to the propositions

contribute to describing the status of strategising for sustainability in these leading companies. The research explored the extent of sustainability embeddedness in strategising in their external communication. Following are some discussion points from the research:

The average score for the integrated report (element 1) was 4.18. This high score out of 5 can be attributed to the presentation of fully integrated reports that disclose information on each element of sustainability in a balanced way, according to established reporting guidelines of KING III. Companies that scored a full five points were able to assure the researcher that they had gone to great lengths to produce an integrated report and make it accessible on the website. These companies also asserted that they complied with KING III and the GRI guidelines. Examples of companies who were able to demonstrate this basic compliance element with the greatest success were BHP, Impala Platinum and Goldfields. The companies referred to their disclosure of sustainability under the heading of 'sustainability' and not CSR. They also presented the sustainability sections of the report in the same way as the financial results – with the intention that they be read and analysed by investors.

The connection between strategising for sustainability and compliance has to do with the company outlook. Good compliance demonstrates that the company, either proactively or reactively, is responding to the concept of sustainability by formulating a strategy and plan. Good compliance is further demonstrated when companies adhere to volunteer reporting standards such as the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP). The CDP also requires that companies report on strategising for sustainability in the company. The mean compliance score was 3.95. This indicated a fairly high level of compliance by companies on the JSE ALSI 40.

The average score for a vision and mission including sustainability (element 3) was 3.48 and the clear sustainability initiatives and programmes (element 7) achieved an average of 3.98. These scores suggest that there was more embeddedness of sustainability in programmes implemented (associated with element 7) in spite of a lower score for embeddedness in planning and formulation (element 3). This was confirmed by the overall mean for the formulation elements (2.62), in contrast to the mean for implementation elements (3.70).

Support for the counter-intuitive finding of greater implementation than formulation is best described when looking at the dedicated leadership for sustainability (element number 8, forming part of implementation). It was the only element that was scored below 4 points among the Top 10 SSI companies. The mean score was 3.35, which was lower than the implementation mean score for sustainability programmes and initiatives: 3.98. This raises questions around the strategising for sustainability of companies; how are companies that communicate sustainability initiatives implementing these initiatives when they do not have sustainability staff positioned to carry them out? This finding suggests that companies have strategising gaps, which highlights an area for future research.

The SSI tool is considered an effective tool for determining sustainability embeddedness owing to its ability to offer discriminating value and reveal strategising gaps. This is supported by the following findings and statements:

- The Top 10 companies based on market capitalisation scored only 2.55 for formulation and 3.55 for implementation. In contrast, the Top 10 companies who (overall) scored the highest in the SSI index reveal a 3.25 score for the formulation elements and a 4.33 for the implementation elements. These high-scoring SSI companies were not the highest market-capital companies, yet had much higher embeddedness ratings. This may suggest that the SSI tool does discriminate between companies on sustainability embeddedness.
- The JSE SRI index's five best-performing companies all fall within the range of 1 and 16 when positions are ranked by market capitalisation. The SSI tool's Top 5 scoring companies fall within the range of 1 to 28 in the rank by market capitalisation (refer to Table 3). Only two companies scored in the Top 5 for both the SRI Index and on the SSI tool (JSE, 2012). The SSI tool has a broader disparity between companies in the sample, showing that, on fundamental strategy principles, some companies are communicating their embeddedness with strategic significance that can be distinguished by the SSI tool. These findings emphasise the discriminating value of the SSI tool.
- The SSI tool was found to address superfluous sustainability claims through the measurement criteria. The SSI tool measured sustainability in the context of strategising and revealed the strategising gaps arising from companies who took a compliance outlook to strategising and used marketing strategies, as opposed to communicating sustainability embeddedness in strategising.

General researcher observations:

Besides the inability of the majority of companies to communicate any form of real, dedicated leadership towards sustainability, the following points were made apparent to the researchers.

It was found that most companies failed to communicate that they understood what sustainability means, both officially and in their interpretation of it applicable to their industry and corporate goals. Phrases such as 'we respect the environment' immediately suggested that the company did not have full comprehension of sustainability or the business case for it. Phrases such as these influenced the score of the final element of implementation: sustainability innovation.

Furthermore, there was a tendency for companies to label their reporting as 'integrated' although the researcher was redirected to another site with another link to access a 'lonely' sustainability report, whereas the financial reports (and other aspects of TBL sustainability) were on the main page. To ascertain the true integrated report from a 'combined' report or an 'adjacent' report, definitions were consulted.

Management implications and recommendations for use of the SSI tool:

This research has investigated strategising for sustainability in the light of the gap between the challenges experienced by leadership in embedding sustainability in strategising and the rising levels of sustainability reporting and claims on communication platforms such as websites. Some commentators suggest that these claims are only surface level (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130).

The findings suggest that although some level of sustainability embeddedness was found, superfluous claims were taken into consideration to reveal strategising gaps among the leading companies' external and publicly available communication.

Smith and Sharicz (2011:76) pose the question of how it is possible for organisations to demonstrate that their sustainability declarations are not just window dressing for good looks. The researchers believe that the SSI tool addresses this challenge and supports managers in the following ways:

- **Addressing strategising gaps and better-informed decision making:** Knowledge of the communicated level of embeddedness in strategising affords management the opportunity to evaluate the strategising for sustainability process internally and ensure it is aligned with what is communicated. The findings afford management the chance to make informed decisions in future on strategising and on the communication to stakeholders.
- **Improvement of communication strategy:** Awareness of the status of one's company offers a basis for improving or redesigning the existing communication, reporting processes, marketing and corporate website design in order to project sustainability embeddedness as opposed to ad-hoc sustainability claims and implementation efforts.
- **Company benchmarking:** The Top 40 leading companies on the JSE were benchmarked on the embeddedness of strategising. The information the company was measured on was its external communication that was relayed to investors. With this information, management would be able to model a framework for the company to address the elements that the company is not achieving. Awareness of weak areas can lead to improvements to attract the socially responsible investor.
- **Sustainability investing:** The benchmarking quality of the SSI tool affords investors comparability and the ability to discriminate between companies to invest in. Investors who want to ascertain the sustainability embeddedness and longevity of a company's strategising can interpret the level with this SSI tool.
- **Holistic sustainability measurement:** The SSI tool was formulated from literature on the topic as well as an incorporation of best practice for sustainability. Measurement criteria included these, and as such, the level of sustainability embeddedness of a company that can be determined provides management with a holistic picture and measurement of sustainability in strategising.
- **Quick access to information:** This SSI tool can be used without internal investigation and access to restricted strategies and policies. It can be used with easily accessible, publicly available communication. It does not require confidential information. Managers who want the year-on-year results of their level of sustainability embeddedness in public communication can acquire outside skills for application of the tool without disruption of day-to-day activities.
- **Discriminating quality of the SSI tool:** The SSI tool contextualises sustainability within strategising and provides a level of embeddedness. This offers management the ability to determine the sustainability embeddedness level of their company in a way that is different from the current indexes and market capitalisation rankings.

Suggested future research:

It is recommended that future research could address and further investigate the implementation gap between what is said and what is done. Future research should make a comparison between what was communicated publicly (the level of strategising for sustainability determined by the researcher on the SSI tool) and what is actually occurring in the JSE ALSI Top 40 Companies. A thorough internal analysis of a case company could support the making of the SSI tool and provide greater insight into the implementation gap. The research could also serve to reveal the reasons for a company's strategising for sustainability embeddedness rating by assessing how practitioners rate, rank and support the level of sustainability embeddedness in elements of strategising. Further research could seek to challenge the legitimacy of sustainability claims by determining the ground ratings for embeddedness of sustainability.

It is also suggested that further exploration investigate the consistency between the embeddedness of sustainability in company core values, vision and mission and ascertain the correlation with implementation efforts. This would address the strategising gaps identified.

Literature and industry conversation has raised concerns regarding the alignment of implementation efforts with core business. Businesses have been found to show inconsistency between the purposes, existence and positioning of the business and implementation efforts. Further research could explore the question: Are implementation efforts in line with the core business of the company or merely fashion projects?

The present scope of research included the Top 40 Companies on the JSE ALSI ranked by market capitalisation. The research distinguished those companies who had embedded sustainability in strategising from those who held their position due to market capitalisation or who may have communicated a sustainable outlook. Further research could look at the sustainability performance or levels of embeddedness of these Top 40 companies in the context of their industries. The research could compare the strategising for sustainability performance of industry sectors to identify industry influences and highlight market leaders.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research employed the researchers, the measurement SSI tool and the interpretation of the English language to judge the strategising claims in sources of external communication. One researcher was positioned to interpret the information and then judge it according to a descriptive scale. In its current form, the research was therefore subject to several biases. With this type of descriptive research come the following research limitations and biases:

Researcher bias: deriving from one of the researchers being a Growthpoint employee. She has access to the inside happenings of the company and has adopted elements of corporate culture and loyalty. This made judging the company on the basis of external communication only and not internal knowhow a challenge.

Forced bias: the SSI tool is an interpretive model that leans heavily on the researcher's assimilation. Judgement is made according to the scale and the

researcher's assessment of the communicated piece of information. In some cases a sustainability claim may be applicable to two different ratings out of 5. Of necessity, the researcher must rate the claim, which results in forced bias.

Distraction and noise interruptions when researching: A stylish and modern website that was user friendly also served as a limitation, as the researcher needed to avoid being distracted by these visual factors when ascertaining how the company had strategised for sustainability.

Unachieved scores: A company that may truly integrate sustainability into strategising but fail to create an effective communication strategy will not appear in a good light with this SSI tool (as applied to external communication), as it will not be awarded a score for embeddedness in the elements of strategising.

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

ARTICLE 2

TITLE: **STRATEGISING FOR
SUSTAINABILITY: MEASUREMENT
AND VALIDATION THROUGH
APPLIED CASE RESEARCH**

AUTHORS: **PRETORIUS AND LE ROUX**

SUBMITTED TO: **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
JOURNAL**

STATUS: **SUBMITTED, RECOMMENDED
FOR PUBLICATION SUBJECT TO
REVISION**

DATE: **1 AUGUST 2012**

5. ARTICLE 2

5.1 STRATEGISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY: MEASUREMENT AND VALIDATION THROUGH APPLIED CASE RESEARCH

SYNOPSIS

Purpose: To investigate if the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) tool designed for external communication can be applied in practice and be practitioner validated.

Problem investigated: The SSI tool was theoretically founded in the literature on sustainability and strategising and successfully applied to 40 companies to determine sustainability embeddedness. However, there is no empirical research that supports its validity and application for practitioners within companies which is required for it to have application value.

Design: A target company was conveniently identified to explore the practical applicability of the tool. The target group were managerial practitioners on all levels, across divisions, involved in company strategising. Data obtained included participant opinions, rankings, agreement and ratings. Practitioners were asked four questions namely: How supported is each element as a measurement/indicator to determine sustainability strategising in a company? How embedded is each element on the SSI tool in the company's strategising? How do you agree with the researcher's SSI rating score of the organisation for each element? Considering all the elements for strategising for sustainability, how would you rank them? The process relied on facilitated guidance, participant observation and a documentation method involving an adjusted post-mortem analysis process.

Findings: Ten elements of the SSI tool for determining sustainability embeddedness in strategising for the company were rated and found to be supported by practitioners. Practitioners were able to identify elements of the SSI tool that were embedded in company's strategising for sustainability, revealed agreement for the measures and the application of the SSI tool relative to the SSI tool's original aims and identified Specific Measures and Targets for sustainability to be the most important element of the SSI tool for embedding sustainability, thus suggesting discrimination value for the SSI tool when applied within a company by practitioners.

Originality and Value: The SSI tool measures embeddedness through a process but involves interpretation by a researcher. The findings of this article confirm that the SSI tool reflects sustainability embeddedness with valid measures and that it can be applied with relative ease in practice by different levels of practitioners.

Conclusion: The findings confirm the SSI tool at three levels namely: 1) confirming elements as measures for sustainability embeddedness in strategising 2) the elements can be rated and incorporated into strategising and 3) the SSI tool measures embeddedness and practitioners can obtain direction from results to adapt strategising.

Key words: Sustainability, Strategising, Measurement, Practice

INTRODUCTION

To truly prosper, responsible leaders need to 'move with the culture' (Trendwatching, 2010; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:18). Sustainability, the new media and business buzzword, yields twenty eight million results when a Google search of the term is conducted. But more than that, sustainability is creating a permanent shift in the very nature of business (Crews, 2010:15) and is considered more than just a trend (Bonn & Fisher's, 2011:14). The movement by leading businesses is to embed sustainability into corporate strategising. They are motivated by sustainability's connection to performance and profits (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1).

Some of the benefits associated with sustainability embeddedness include the building of a strong positive corporate brand, employee retention, cost savings, enhanced innovation and sales (Adams & Frost, 2008:299; Cowan, Dopart, Ferracini, Sahmel, Merryman, Gaffney & Paustenbach, 2010:525; Hillestad, Xie & Haugland, 2010:441; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5).

However, embedding sustainability is a company's response to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2). The head of strategy and environment at a corporate emphasised the impact of embedding sustainability into strategising. He postulates that it 'allows us to continue to profit and

grow, it helps us to be a responsible business and it is crucial for our competitive advantage.’ (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1).

Literature supports the process of embedding sustainability into strategising by offering various models, suggestions and tools for leadership in their role of strategising (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:489; Reilly, 2009:33; Quinn & Dalton, 2009:21; Searcy, 2009:50; Holton, Xie & Haugland, 2010:152; Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim, Shockley, Valle, Ludlowb, Shah, 2010:58; Leon-Soriana, Munoz-Tirress & Chalmeta-Rosalen, 2010:249; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6). This is to be expected given its importance and connection to profit and performance. The tools and models are of such a quantity that practitioners and experts are feeling ‘overwhelmed’ by the information on sustainability and are in search of practical frameworks and tools to measure their sustainability embeddedness (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520).

The key organisational features and actions of embedded sustainability strategies are not always clear or are absent amongst companies’ sustainability reports, stated vision and mission statements and corporate communication messages. The concerns surrounding the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising are raised in reference to the internal structures and practices of organisations. Managers have even come forward to declare the concept of embedding sustainability in strategising to be both ‘complex’ and ‘elusive’ (Elmualim, Shockley, Valle, Ludlowb, & Shah, 2010:58).

There appears to be a gap between the official declarations of companies (the talk) and actual organisational behaviour through execution (the walk), which is lagging behind (Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130). An implementation gap was brought to attention by the criticism of external and publically available communication, coupled by manager’s challenges in integrating sustainability into strategising.

KEY FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH

Sustainability is no longer a question of ‘if’ but rather a question of ‘how’. Responsible leaders have started incorporating sustainability into their vision and goals but, whilst noises are being made, implementation is suspect. To address the gap, Pretorius and le Roux (2012) proposed an SSI tool which measures the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising (Table 1 reports its elements). The SSI tool was applied to publically available documents and information in order to describe the status of strategising for sustainability. Research sought evidence that sustainability was embedded into strategising amongst the local stock exchange Top 40 companies. They reported that the SSI tool presents sufficient measurement criteria for determining sustainability embeddedness given that its elements are derived from literature tools, models and sources on the topic of sustainability and strategising. While they applied the tool to 40 companies, their methodology did not allow for practitioner evaluation of the proposed tool.

This research addresses the practical validation gap through the application of the SSI tool – building on the instrument used by Pretorius and le Roux (2012) - to a case company. For this, a sample of practitioners in a case company was investigated in search for the embeddedness of sustainability within internal structures. The following research questions were asked; ‘Can the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) tool be supported by practitioners?’ This leads to questions of whether 1) elements contained in the SSI tool can be rated by practitioners and if they are in fact 2) incorporated into

strategising. The research aims to determine the level of support by practitioners for the SSI tool, asking if 3) practitioners support the SSI as a means of measurement of sustainability embeddedness. Finally the researchers ask 4) if practitioners can obtain direction from results.

The article proceeds by stating the relevant literature on sustainability embeddedness and strategising. Thereafter it describes the research methodology followed by the findings. Finally the findings are discussed concluding with implication for theory and practice with suggestions for future research.

REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE AND THEORIES ON SUSTAINABILITY EMBEDDEDNESS AND STRATEGISING

Many firms claim to be focused on a sustainability agenda; however, when digging deeper and through informal investigation, it appears as if many of these claims often have little substance.

Whilst the case for sustainability embeddedness has been made, executives express a lack of skills, awareness and knowledge adequate to meet this challenge (Crews, 2010:17). Kane (2011) put forward that the radical transformation that is required of businesses (in terms of sustainability) cannot possibly be driven by environmental managers hidden away in their environmental silos.

Literature suggests that to address the sustainability of business there is a need to understand its connection to strategising (White, 2009:386). The key is to build sustainability into the business strategising (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:484). Bonn and Fisher (2011:6) suggest that, for businesses to be more sustainable, there is a need to ensure that sustainability is integrated into the strategy process from the beginning and on an ongoing basis. This notion highlights the need to look at strategy from a practitioner's level, within the organisation, and identify the 'detailed aspects of strategising' (Jazarbkowski & Spee, 2009:69).

Sustainability theory has provided responsible leaders with various tools for embedding sustainability into strategising (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520; Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:131; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6). The Five Levers Framework is one such tool which is used by high performing companies and aspires to generate impressive business value by executing sustainability strategies (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:489). Another tool of this kind is the model titled: 'sustainability as an integral part of strategy'; it promotes sustainability integration by means of discussing each element in the model with regard to sustainability embeddedness (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

Other suggestions to help firms embed sustainability are: incorporating it into the balanced scorecard (BSC) and embarking on a sustainability performance measurement (Searcy, 2009:50). Although initially developed for different purposes, most research considers the BSC suitable for the management of sustainability and CSR. The BSC has been found to "not be a tool for the formulation of strategies" but part of a wider competitive positioning. Leon-Soriano *et al.*, (2010:249) propose a Sustainability Balanced Score Card (SBSC) that takes into account the 'human' and 'green' cases in order for the company to act according to all three elements of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), thus offering a framework for the integration of sustainability.

The challenge identified by literature in the process of embedding sustainability is that, in spite of the extent of support offered, the desired outcome of sustainability embeddedness is not always achieved. Leaders who want to be responsible are 'still struggling to define sustainability in a way that is relevant to their business' and are feeling overwhelmed and distracted by the 'daily grind of business' (Smith & Sharicz, 2011:74; Velazquez, Esquer & Munguia, 2011:36; Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1). Practitioners express that in spite of the frameworks, tools and models provided, the goal is 'complex' and an 'elusive' one (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

Despite the powerful forces for corporate sustainability - including global pressure, informed leadership, available tools and frameworks, and clarity on the sustainability business argument - a focus on sustainability may be impeded by equally strong forces against its implementation (Klaine & Von Hauff, 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:33; Hillestad 2010:440). Strategising for sustainability is not a trivial task (Holton *et al.*, 2010:152).

Besides leadership's challenges with embedding sustainability in strategising, various stakeholders have raised concerns pertaining to the actions taken by organisations in communicating their sustainability goals. If this is the case, then the concept of sustainability may not be successfully embedded in the 'doing of strategy' (Jazarbkowski & Spee, 2009:69). As a result of leadership's difficulties with the embedding of sustainability in business strategising and the concerns over the legitimacy of sustainability claims in external communication, researchers have begun exploring the challenges.

Some studies have explored the integration of sustainability into strategising within an organisation across different industries (Holton, 2010:154; Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130; White, 2009:386). These studies, however, have not measured the extent or success of the incorporation of sustainability in strategising nor the implementation of it.

Before proceeding, it is critical to define the key constructs of this research. *Sustainability* creates long term shareholder value by taking up opportunities and managing associated risks that derive from TBL (economic, environmental and social) developments (Crews, 2010:15; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:59) and is often mentioned in association with responsible leadership, the use of resources and corporate social responsibility. *Sustainability claims* on the other hand are distinctive remarks, marketing labels and brands, developed by public and private sector institutions (UNCTAD, 2011) about sustainability achievements and projects. They are generally communicated through websites, public documents and with products and services. They attest that the company itself, its products and supply chains incorporate the pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental). *Strategising* is the process of formulating and implementing a strategy by practitioners (Hodgekinson & Clarke, 2007:243) and deals with how initiatives (practices and praxis) are approached and resources applied to eventually achieve embeddedness.

THE SSI TOOL AS BASIS FOR THIS RESEARCH

The SSI tool first presented and applied by Pretorius & le Roux (2012) applied to the external communication of listed companies measured the level of sustainability embedded in strategising and offered discriminating value. The SSI tool's effectiveness in measuring the embeddedness of sustainability with a proven practical application of the tool would attribute to the body of knowledge for this field, by addressing the gap between the theory and the practice of sustainability. The SSI tool could serve to measure the

success (or not) of previous endeavours by management through the use of other literature tools. Ten elements are put forward as components and determinants in the SSI tool, two of which measure compliance, four measure strategy formulation and four measure strategy implementation. Together the three categories form the SSI tool for determining sustainability embeddedness in strategising. Table 1 and Figure 1 propose the elements of the SSI tool.

Table 1: The SSI Tool element titles and short description adapted from Pretorius & le Roux, (2012)

ELEMENT NUMBER AND TITLE:	DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENT:
1. INTEGRATED REPORTING	A product of a process or system of processes that seeks to inform stakeholders of an organisations ability to heed to stakeholder and or societal concerns and to provide meaningful performance information to support assertions suggesting effective management. To demonstrate how well an organisation has embedded a comprehensive view of sustainability into the strategic fabric of the organisation that leads the reader to understand whether the organisation is well placed to adapt to economic, social and environmental factors.
2. SUSTAINABILITY RECOGNITION AND AFFILIATION	Recognition by third parties can be through endorsements, awards, partnerships and affiliations. Companies that are confident in their efforts towards sustainability embeddedness seek connections with other leading organisations that share the same beliefs and intentions.
3. VISION & MISSION INCLUDES SUSTAINABILITY	Vision and mission statements and the core values of a business are crucial to the formulation of strategy. A sustainability embedded vision, mission and core values demonstrate the focus and intent of the organisation towards sustainability
4. RISK MANAGEMENT: MACROECONOMIC IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES	A connection between sustainability risks and company strategy formulation affecting strategic, operational and tactical decisions. Identifying the macroeconomic and industry risks and opportunities associated with sustainability
5. PROGRAMMES & STAFF LEARNING	To harness the staff buy-in, companies need to train and educate employees on sustainability embedded company goals and educate them on their role in the desired outcome. Learning and education are fundamental methods to communicate to staff the 'revolutionary' drive towards a shift to sustainability
6. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY	A firm's goals and objectives are commitments to actions to achieve the strategic vision of the company. These goals need to incorporate a sustainability focus.
7. CLEAR SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES	Actions and initiatives are tangible efforts that serve as evidence that a company has interacted with stakeholders and made a commitment of resources. Sustainability actions and projects display decision making in the direction of sustainability through the commitment of resources and capital outlay
8. DEDICATED STAFF FOR SUSTAINABILITY	For the achievement of a sustainable organisation, responsible leadership, are required to be change agents. Evidence of decision makers at senior leadership level portrays accountability and governance. Staff at middle and operational levels suggest sustainability is truly being implemented.

9. SPECIFIC MEASURES AND TARGETS	Companies that communicate specific measures and targets for sustainability portray embeddedness of sustainability in the implementation of strategy. The disclosure of successes or failures towards set goals and objective on a year on year basis shows progressive improvement.
10. SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION	Sustainability innovation encapsulates the ability of the company to allow for sustainability to inform strategy decisions. Innovation, fairness, and collaboration are key aspects of any transition to sustainability embeddedness – innovation provides new ways of doing things, including profitable responses to sustainability.

Leading on from the reported SSI tool, this research takes a case study approach to investigate the internal strategising of Growthpoint Properties - evaluated based on the SSI tool - with the intention to challenge support (or not) for the SSI tool and to comment on the implementation gap between sustainability embeddedness theory and practice.

CONTEXT FOR DELINEATION OF SUSTAINABILITY EMBEDDEDNESS IN STRATEGISING

Companies have responded to this shift to sustainability focus by creating sustainability management positions, resulting in the increased complexity of strategising (Kane, 2011). These managers have described sustainability strategies as a complex process (Crews, 2010:17). Companies' sustainability efforts are further driven by society, who offer support for companies' sustainability efforts and put pressure on those who do not take strides towards transparent initiatives (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:485).

Strategising for sustainability refers to embedding sustainability in strategising and the alignment of sustainability initiatives with short and long term business decisions. This concept is emphasised in the latest governance report, the KING III, which states that 'Strategy, risk, performance and sustainability have become inseparable' (Ince.motiv., 2010).

Strategy is the coordinated means by which an organisation pursues its goals and objectives (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:35). Responsible leaders identify risks and opportunities from internal and external sources and include an analysis of industry and macro environment. Strategy formulation, the process of deciding what to do, involves the formulation of vision, mission, setting of goals and objectives and determining of sources of competitive advantage (Lynch, 2009:490).

Strategy implementation, the process of performing all the activities necessary to do what has been planned, encompasses formulating action plans, aligning organisational structure, setting systems, measures and rewards in place to achieve the firm's goals and objectives (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:35; Lynch, 2009:490).

Strategising (strategy formulation and implementation) can be achieved through a prescriptive or an emergent approach (Lynch, 2009:6). The prescriptive approach to strategising involves deliberate planning by the firm, where the objective has been defined in advance and the main elements have been developed before strategy commences (Lynch, 2009:37). Responsible leaders are expected to devise thoughtful, informed and deliberate directives and decisions that will lead to achieving organisational goals. Such

leaders are expected to 'know the way and show the way and go the way' (Crews, 2010:18).

Most literature sources addressing strategising for sustainability identify it as being a continual process, a continuum towards an ultimate sustainability and business goal (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:12). The process is viewed as 'gradual, planned, continuous and ongoing incremental change' (Holton *et al.*, 2010:153; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:5; Velazquez *et al.*, 2011:41). The interest of this article, thus, leans towards the deliberate approach.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This research poses the following investigative questions: Can the proposed SSI tool be supported in practice? Can practitioners rate the elements? Are the elements of strategising incorporated into the doing of strategy? Do practitioners support the measurement tool and can direction be derived? These questions aspire to deliver insight and the ability to comment on the gap between what is communicated externally and the internal practices of sustainability embeddedness.

RESEARCH POTENTIAL VALUE ADDED

The research aim was to validate the SSI tool's effectiveness in measuring the embeddedness of sustainability in company strategising and to verify the practicality of the tool for application by practitioners. Verification would be beneficial for practical use of the SSI tool by practitioners.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

A conceptual analysis was applied to the SSI tool. From the content used to design the measurement tool, ten elements (of sustainability) were identified to measure the degree to which sustainability was embedded in the process of strategy formulation and implementation (refer to Table 1).

The analysis began with identifying research questions and choosing research subjects. A sample of staff members in a case company participated willingly. In order to answer the research propositions, a facilitation session was conducted with the subjects at their company premises. The facilitation process was broken down in two stages with four instructions in the first stage and three instructions in second stage. The facilitator broke down the research content into meaningful and pertinent units of information and instructions. Implicit and explicit terms were explained and clearly defined by the facilitator to the practitioners before the beginning of the process. To limit the subjectivity in the definitions of concepts, a standard document with definitions was used to bring clarity. Table 2 summarises the research design.

Table 2: Research design components based on the design description of Yin (2003:21)

Component	Description
Research question / problem	Is the proposed SSI tool valid (accurate and relevant as measurements) for application in practice?
Propositions	P1: SSI elements from the tool can be rated by practitioners P2: Practitioners support the SSI outcome as a means of measurement of sustainability embeddedness P3: Elements are incorporated into strategising P4: Practitioners obtain direction from the results
Unit of investigation	Elements that make up sustainability embeddedness within the strategising of a company as measured by the SSI tool Support for the tool by practitioners
Unit of analysis	Managers and staff involved with strategising for sustainability
Logic linking the data to the propositions	Practitioners in a 'typical' company can judge the measurements of elements for accuracy, relevance and utilisation. Their ratings in support (or not) can give direction to the usefulness of the SSI rating for practical application.
Criteria for interpreting the findings	1 Practitioners' independent ratings and ranking of each element (for relevance) 2 Practitioners' agreement about incorporation into strategising measurement 3 Practitioners' agreement about the 'researcher ranking' for each element 4 Practitioners' reasoning about action to increase embeddedness

Source: Own compilation based on the Yin (2003:21) design

Key Scientific beliefs of the Researchers

To answer the above questions, the researchers were aware of their own methodological values, beliefs and particular philosophical assumptions. These assumptions could influence the way in which the research was conducted and are stated to understand the 'intellectual climate' in which the research was undertaken.

Ontological positions

This position states the researchers' views and the very nature and essence of research reality. Researcher A is an objective realist who believes that knowledge comes from facts associated with the case and the context. If repetitive and consistent conditions of sustainability claims are found in the Top companies, they can be generalised. His interest was to approach the research question from a strategy-as-practice viewpoint. Researcher B was tasked with a practitioner role in the creation of an organisation's sustainability strategy. She seeks the truth through objective judgement of best practices and scientific proof.

Epistemological positions

The theory of knowledge (epistemology) of the researchers diverged to some extent, allowing for interplay on how decisions on the social phenomena can be known and how knowledge can be demonstrated.

Researcher A primarily worked from both a scientific paradigm supported by a consultant paradigm. Working as a strategy consultant influenced the search for factual directives, business patterns and answers to existing situations of similar nature. Researcher B worked from an academic learning paradigm in order to meet the requirements for a

Masters degree and simultaneously give guidance to the demands she faced as the person contributing to the development of a company's sustainability strategy.

Case study as a research strategy

Stake (1994:244) suggests that a case study is useful when the 'opportunity to learn is of primary importance.' A case study approach provides a mode of inquiry for an in-depth examination of phenomenon. Yin (1989:23) characterizes case study research as empirical inquiry that 'Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.' Yin (2003) suggests the uniqueness of a situation as sufficient rationalising for using a single case and that the 'distinctive need' for case study research 'arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena.' Annexure E provides a summary of the specific types of information, the data sources, data collection technique, data recording method and type of data collected through this research of a case company.

The researchers believe that given the nature, uniqueness and complexity of the relationship between sustainability and strategising – there was a need for case study research methodology to explore the phenomena.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research setting and background

A meeting invite was sent to practitioners using MS Outlook for a 2-hour meeting to be held (also see the workshop plan Annexure B). Practitioners were given the options to 'Accept' or 'Decline' attendance which represented consent to participate in the research. The following information was made available to the 17 practitioners prior to the session.

The purpose of the workshop was communicated to the CEO and practitioners as: 'To investigate and evaluate the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) allocated to the company and evaluate strategising actions currently used. The workshop will engage with staff members on the elements of strategising and integration of sustainability. The information from the session will give immediate feedback to decision makers and eventually form part of a master's thesis' (Annexure F). Practitioners were informed that an external strategy facilitator would be present and were provided with a detailed programme.

Sampling

The sampling method was a combination of convenience and purposive sampling. The target group were managerial practitioners on all levels (line and staff managers) involved in company strategising. It included members of the sustainability division counting the sustainability coordinator. Seventeen practitioners participated willingly.

Data collection methods

A qualitative research study imitating grounded theory for the literature search and a case study as inductive research approach involving a focus group through action research were used. The data collection method was based on a modified process described by Bjornson, Wang and Arisholm (2008) to gather specific data to support (or not) the measurement tool. The process collected responses on participant rankings, agreement

and ratings. It relied on facilitated guidance, participant observation and a documentation method on Post-Its.

The data was collected by asking the following specific questions:

Question 1: How supported is each element as a measurement/indicator to determine sustainability strategising in a company? 5 = highly supported. 1 = not at all supported.

Question 2: How embedded is each element on the SSI tool in Growthpoint's strategising? 5 = embedded. 1 = missing

Question 3: How do you agree with the researcher's rating score of Growthpoint for each element? What is your agreement rating? 5 = completely agree. 1 = completely disagree.

Question 4: Considering all the elements for strategising for sustainability, how would you rank them? 10 = most important. 1 = least important

Time was allocated as each element was presented individually and consecutively for subjects to evaluate in a focused manner.

Data analysis

Data was collected on multiple coloured and adhesive cards (Post-Its). These had drawn on shapes for responses and for ease of application of instructions given. It was in this form that the primary data was initially analysed. The process of reducing data to a manageable size involved capturing the data into interpretable MS Excel spreadsheets. This was done by using colour and coding the data to make the different data sets and criteria easily recognisable. Part of the analysis process included the application of descriptive statistics including average, deviation, mode and rank. Findings were reported as graphs and tables to synthesise data into information.

Data criteria

Researcher A facilitated the session where practitioners were asked to rate, support, agree and rank elements from the evaluation tool used in the first research. Data was judged on a 5 point scale where 5 represented the most supported and 1 the least supported.

Strategies employed to ensure quality of data

Data was collected at one point in time from the primary practitioners onto Post-Its. These were gathered after the session into a sealed envelope. There was a record of biographic data of every participant in reference to all response cards (see Annexure C). The data was captured directly from the primary source by the researcher. All data was captured by one researcher and without distraction. The practitioners were coded so as to avoid any potential biases based on practitioner's position and hierarchy in the organisation.

FINDINGS

Research Findings

From the literature, ten elements of strategy formulation and implementation were identified which formed the basis of the SSI tool as shown in Table 1. These were applied to the strategic communication of companies on the JSE to judge the level of sustainability embeddedness which resulted in a score (refer to Annexure D for an example). The SSI tool was then further developed and applied to company practice in the case study. The individual elements and their ratings are described for easy interpretation. Each measurement outcome is individually discussed.

Figure 1: Radar diagram depicting SSI elements, support, embeddedness and agreement ratings

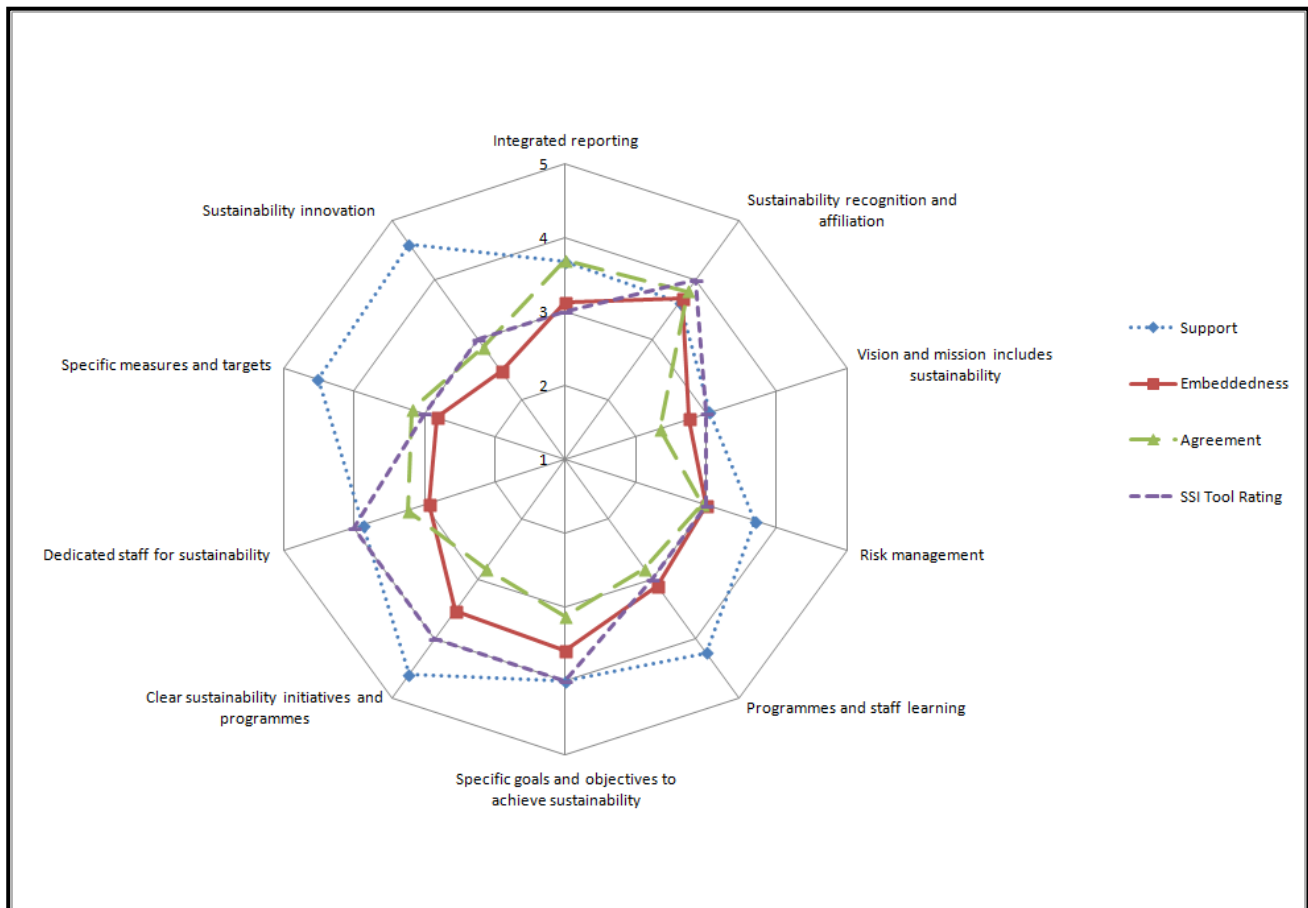


Figure 1 demonstrates four sets of information. Firstly it shows the average ratings by practitioners on elements of SSI tool describing their level of support for the elements as indicators and measures for sustainability strategising in the company. Secondly, the graph portrays the average embeddedness ratings allocated by practitioners on each element of the SSI tool pertaining to Growthpoint’s sustainability strategising. Thirdly the figure indicates the average level of agreement by practitioners towards the researcher’s scoring of each element on the SSI tool. Finally it portrays the SSI tool rating for embeddedness by the researcher on publicly available communication and documents of Growthpoint. Each is elaborated in more detail.

Support: While all elements were supported as indicators and valid measures for determining strategising for sustainability, practitioners differed on the extent of their support. Interpretation of the information in Figure 1 suggests that all measures for determining strategising for sustainability were considered primarily to be ‘somewhat’ (4 score) to ‘highly’ supported (5 score) by practitioners. On average, practitioners were less sure (3 score) about the occurrence of sustainability in company vision and mission as being an indicator that the company is strategising for sustainability. The highest supported elements were the presence of ‘specific measures and targets’ for sustainability, evidence of clear sustainability initiatives and sustainability innovation.

Embeddedness: The mean rating ($x = 3.4$) for the compliance elements (integrated reporting and sustainability recognition and affiliation) suggested a relatively high level of embeddedness of sustainability compliance in the company's strategising. Practitioners rated sustainability embeddedness in strategy formulation elements as just above average ($x = 3.12$). They rated sustainability embeddedness in strategy implementation elements a mean rating of just below average ($x = 2.94$). The findings indicate that sustainability is embedded evenly across the elements of strategising for sustainability. For strategy implementation mean rating according to practitioners was slightly less than for strategy formulation which suggests more strategic planning than executing. This contrasts the finding by the researcher on the SSI tool as applied to publicly available communication of the case company. The researcher reported more strategy implementation than formulation present on the corporate website and other sources. This may suggest a degree of "disjointedness" between what is said and what is done, but it nevertheless determines that the SSI tool is accurate in measuring the level of embeddedness as the deviation seems minimal.

In reference to Figure 1, when a comparison is made between the ratings by practitioners and those findings from the researcher, both using a 5 point scale and the elements of the SSI tool, the largest deviation is found in the element of dedicated staff for sustainability. Practitioners indicated there is less embeddedness of dedicated staff in company strategising than reported by the researcher. The external messages/claims communicated greater embeddedness of dedicated staff in strategising for sustainability in the case company. A high rating ($x = 4$) was given to the existence of dedicated staff for sustainability by the researcher on the SSI tool. This differed to the mean rating by practitioners ($x = 3$). This may indicate that practitioners do not believe that dedicated staff for sustainability is as embedded in strategising as the researcher judged them to be when using the external communication of the company. This rating was given in spite of the case company's sustainability division's (ie: dedicated staff) presence in the session. This may suggest another measure of disjointedness between what is said and what is done but also amongst divisions. In order to gain more insight into the embeddedness of sustainability and specifically that of the dedicated staff as well as the differences in opinion, the following comparison was made.

The average score per element as rated by practitioners from all departments, except for that of sustainability, was compared to the average score per element as rated by practitioners in the sustainability department. The three elements with the largest average differences are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of the average embeddedness ratings between different practitioners on the three elements with the largest average differences

	Vision & Mission includes Sustainability	Risk Management	Programmes & Staff Learning
Average score of embeddedness per element for <u>all divisions</u> in the sample <u>except Sustainability</u> (n = 14)	3.071	2.642	2.786
Average score of embeddedness per element of the <u>sustainability division</u> (n = 3)	1.333	4.667	4.667
Differences between average score per element of the practitioners from all divisions <u>except</u> sustainability to those in the Sustainability department	1.73	-2.023	-1.881

Table 3 indicates there are differences in ratings between the sustainability department (dedicated staff for sustainability) and the rest of the practitioners. The level of embeddedness for risk management was rated as more embedded by the sustainability department than by the other divisions ($x = 4.667$). The sustainability department also of the opinion that sustainability programmes and staff learning were strongly embedded in strategising ($x = 4.667$), more so than the rest of the subjects. This differed from the other divisions, which did not rate the embeddedness of this element very highly ($x = 2.786$). This may suggest that programmes could not be as widely integrated with other divisions and general strategising. Interestingly, the other practitioners rated the embeddedness of sustainability in Growthpoint's vision and mission as higher than the sustainability department.

Agreement: At the end of the facilitation process, practitioners were shown the results of the application of the SSI tool to their company's external communication by the researcher (also shown on Figure 1). The SSI tool's score for the company was based on application of the SSI tool to all publicly available communication including reports by the researcher. The scores indicated the level of agreement by practitioners towards the researcher's score with 5 being total agreement. Table 4 shows the practitioners average agreement rating towards the researcher's score on the SSI tool for each element, the element rankings by agreement and importance rankings.

Table 4: The practitioners average agreement rating towards the researcher score on the SSI tool for each element, element rankings by agreement and importance rankings.

Element:	Agreement to SSI Tool evaluation			Mode for agreement	Rank by Importance of elements	
	Researcher Score on SSI Tool	Practitioners average agreement rating on the SSI tool's score for each element	Rank based on agreement (10 = high)	Mode determined from agreement score	Practitioner Average score for rank of elements by importance	Rank of averages based on importance (10 = high)
Sustainability recognition & affiliation	3	3.812	10	4	3.375	2
Integrated reporting	4	3.688	9	4	3.25	1
Dedicated staff	3	3.235	8	4	6.470	7
Specific measures & targets	3	3.176	7	4	8.588	10
Specific Goals and Objectives to achieve sustainability	3	3.118	6	4	6.882	8
Risk management	4	2.941	5	2	4.353	3
Sustainability innovation	4	2.882	4	2	5.23529	6
Programmes & staff learning	3	2.823	2.5	2	4.824	4
Clear Sustainability Initiatives and Programmes	4	2.823	2.5	2	7.176	9
Vision & Mission includes Sustainability	3	2.353	1	2	4.941	5

In Table 4 the rank based on agreement (column 3) shows the element that practitioners agreed most with the researchers score. The mode (rather than average) shows the rating of agreement out of 5 towards the researcher's score that occurred the most. The table also includes the average rankings by practitioners by importance between 10 and 1. Their average responses were ranked to show which elements are considered most and least important as elements for determining sustainability embeddedness in strategising.

The highest ranking deviations between the researchers score and the agreement of practitioners to the score are explained as follows:

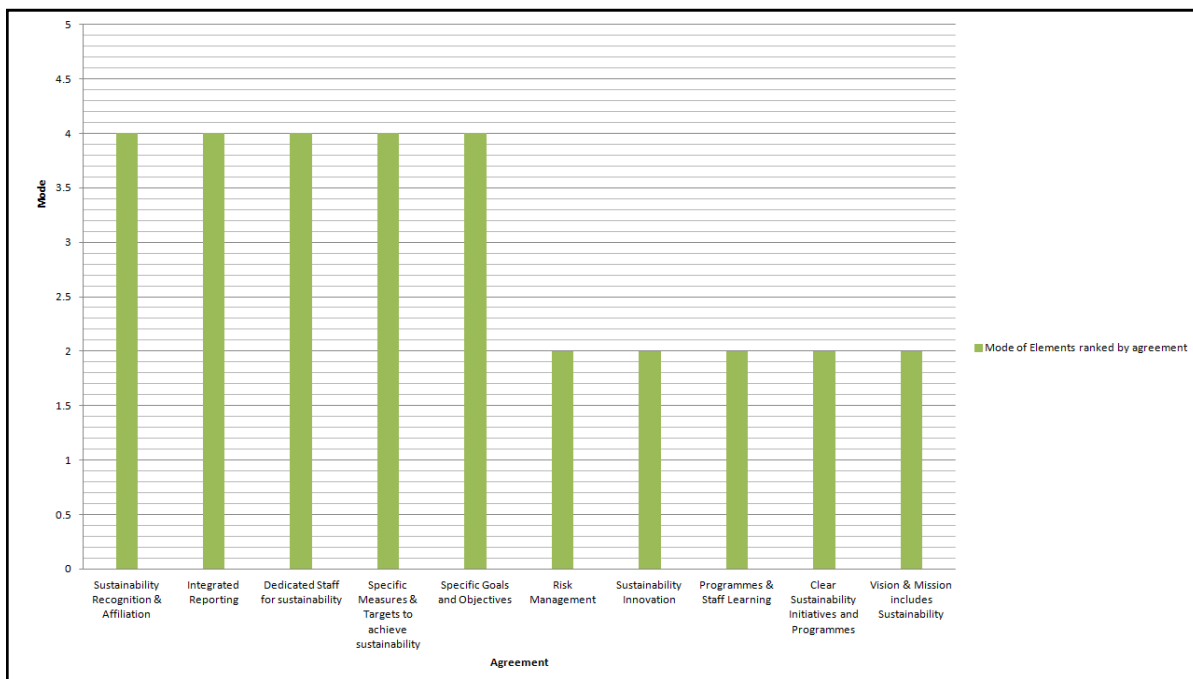
The rank based on agreement demonstrates that practitioners were in most agreement (10) with the SSI tool’s score for the element: sustainability recognition and affiliation. This element pertains to the recognition and affiliation of a company with/towards associations sharing the same sustainability values. The average agreement response for this element was higher ($x = 3.812$)

Practitioners agreed with the researcher’s score for the element; integrated reporting ($x = 3.688$). The rank based on agreement demonstrates that practitioners were in high agreement (9) with the researcher’s score for this element.

These elements show that there is support for these ratings by the researcher using the SSI tool. On the bottom end, practitioners showed an average agreement score for vision and mission that includes sustainability ($x = 2.353$). The rank based on agreement reveals that practitioners disagreed (1) the most with the researcher’ score for this element (mode = 2). The researcher awarded a score of 3 according to this criterion on the SSI tool.

Mode: the value that occurs most frequently for each element was evaluated for this data set on the agreement responses. The mode was determined for each element on the SSI tool on agreement ratings (also see Table 4). The mode of four occurred most frequently indicates strong agreement by the practitioners. A mode equal to four was obtained for both compliance elements, two strategy implementation elements and one strategy formulation element. The remaining elements on the SSI tool have a mode of two suggesting less agreement. Practitioners agreed mostly with the researcher on the researcher’s score for the compliance elements. Figure 2 indicates the modes for the data set on agreement. The modes were ranked by the importance of the element.

Figure 2: Bar graph indicating the modes of elements by agreement



Rank: practitioners ranked the ten elements by importance for sustainability. The ranking revealed that practitioners found the element “specific measures and targets for

sustainability” as most important by ranking it first (rank score = 10). Practitioners ranked the integrated report as least important suggesting that it demonstrates the least embeddedness of sustainability in strategising. An integrated report is the product of a process or system of processes that seeks to inform stakeholders of an organisations ability to heed to stakeholder and or societal concerns and to provide meaningful performance information to support assertions suggesting effective sustainability management. It is to demonstrate how well an organisation has embedded a comprehensive view of sustainability into the strategic fabric of the organisation that leads the reader to understand whether the organisation is well placed to adapt to economic, social and environmental factors (Sustainability services, 2011). In spite of the purpose of the integrated report, subjects proposed that integrated reporting is not an important factor for determining sustainability embeddedness. Practitioners rated it the lowest on the SSI tool. This suggests that practitioners do not think that the element is a strong indicator for sustainability embeddedness. An integrated report was as such not considered as important as measures and targets for sustainability nor more important than initiatives or programmes for sustainability, both of which are strategising activities. (see both Table 4 and Figure 1).

The insight gained from these questions offers support for the relevance and applicability of this SSI tool. The ability to rank the elements by the practitioners discloses the elements suitability as indicators in measuring a firm’s strategising for sustainability embeddedness.

Finally Table 5 shows the difference between the two methods for embeddedness measures. The practitioners rated the embeddedness lower than the researcher. For compliance and formulation the differences were small but for implementation they were much lower (no significance determined). This finding is interesting as the two evaluations were based on different sources of information. The researcher used the public documents as source data while the practitioners used their own experience and perceptions. What can be deduced from table 5 is that implementation is not rated as high compared to what is claimed.

Table 5 Comparison of SSI category based on different strategising components compiled on SSI ratings of researcher versus practitioners for the case company

STRATEGISING CATEGORY	Compliance	Formulation	Implementation
Researcher rating SSI Mean / category for embeddedness out of 5	3.5	3.25	3.5
Practitioner rating SSI Mean / category for embeddedness out of 5	3.4	3.12	2.94
Difference	0.1	0.13	-0.56

PROPOSITIONS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

P1: Elements of SSI can be rated by practitioners

Sufficient support was found as practitioners in the research were able to rate the elements of the SSI tool on the provided 5-point scale, indicating that the elements were understood and of substance to be able to be rated. They could use the indicators to discriminate sustainability strategising in a company for embeddedness, agreement and importance. The SSI tool is supported by practitioners as a measure of strategising for sustainability. Based on the support for proposition 1, it was meaningful to progress to the next propositions.

P2: Practitioners support the SSI as a means of measurement of sustainability embeddedness

Sufficient support was found as practitioners, by means of rating and judging the elements of the SSI tool as measures for determining sustainability embeddedness in strategising, supported the SSI tool as valid for sustainability measurement. Further support for P2 was derived from the practitioner's ability to determine their company's sustainability embeddedness. Practitioners were asked: How embedded is each element on the SSI tool in Growthpoint's strategising? Their ability to respond supports the SSI tool's ability to measure sustainability embeddedness in an organisation. Practitioners could also judge the researcher rating and find agreement or not.

P3: Elements are incorporated into strategising

Sufficient support was found as practitioners, using the elements that they supported, were able to judge the extent to which elements of sustainability were embedded in strategising. The level of embeddedness of sustainability was rated in the company using the elements. Practitioners described the extent to which sustainability was embedded in strategising which suggests that the elements should form part of strategising for sustainability if rated.

P4: Practitioners obtain direction from the results

Sufficient support was found as much direction can be obtained from the results. Practitioners can boast the following benefits from the SSI tool and its findings:

Resource and time allocation: the results highlight the embeddedness ratings of Growthpoint according to its practitioners. These ratings have also been compared to that of publicly available communication. Knowledge of company embeddedness allows for improvement and heightened awareness of shortfalls for resources to be allocated accurately towards. The results also show those elements that practitioners find most important in determining sustainability embeddedness allowing more attention to be paid towards those indicators.

Knowledge: results show management the opinions, views and experience of staff towards strategising for sustainability. Few companies are informed of their staff perceptions. This knowledge can translate into informed organisational restructuring and management knowhow.

Legitimacy: the findings also compared the embeddedness rating of the SSI tool on public communication to the ratings by practitioners. The results indicated the alignment of claims with actions. This SSI tool can aid them to monitor this result to uphold legitimacy. The differences observed in Table 5 can be used as feedback for evaluation and especially further investigation leading to strategic conversation. While the researcher evaluation is the cheapest option, it should probably be supported by practitioner evaluations to gain the management benefits from involvement, reflection and measurement.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this research was to determine if the SSI tool can be applied in practice (by practitioners) through measurement and validation of the elements of the SSI tool. The decision to apply the SSI tool to practice was derived from a desire to address a validation gap between theory and practice in strategising for sustainability.

The research explored the practical value of the SSI tool by confirming its ability to measure for the embeddedness of sustainability in internal structures of strategising. The outcome was that the SSI tool was supported in practice and all propositions have been supported. It has also been determined that the SSI tool is an accurate measure for embeddedness showing minimal difference in embeddedness ratings between its application to external documents and internal practices.

The ratings by practitioners for embeddedness on the SSI tool's elements were closely aligned with those scores given by the researcher. This means the SSI tool can be applied to a company's external communication and give an accurate reading for embeddedness internally. It also further supports the SSI tool's ability to be used in practice: the strategic focus of this SSI tool overcomes empty talk and false sustainability claims by focusing on concrete measures.

There appears to be a degree of disjointedness between corporate strategising for sustainability and the practices of the sustainability division. This was determined from the higher deviations between the sustainability team and the rest of the sample.

These findings echo the cries of sustainability management who find embedding sustainability into strategising a 'complex' and 'elusive' goal (Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58). There is disjointedness and not all staff views and understanding are the same. The struggles of sustainability management can be sympathised with when considering that practitioners did not rate the dedicated staff highly present in company strategising for sustainability. This emphasises the sustainability division's 'silo' configuration Kane (2011) refers to.

The findings from the research also support theory on sustainability and strategising and expand on the concept of embeddedness of sustainability. It was found that embeddedness could be measured, supporting the existence of it in strategising. The practitioners' ability to rate the extent of sustainability embeddedness in their company revealed that the process of embedding sustainability may be complex but the goal is not totally elusive.

Due to the fact that practitioners rated their agreement harsher than when asked to give their own opinion on embeddedness – there appears to be a form of self-evaluation bias. Researchers surmise that practitioners could have experienced discomfort at being judged and this affected their agreement ratings but decided to be more honest when asked about their opinion on the level of embeddedness of sustainability in strategising activities as this could be blamed on external factors. This however, should be investigated.

Rank findings showed that when practitioners were asked to discriminate the elements by importance, they became selective and ranked those they felt most important for determining the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising.

The low rankings for the integrated report indicated that it is not considered an important measure of sustainability embeddedness according to practitioners. An integrated report could therefore exist despite of an absence of sustainability embeddedness. This knowledge may speed up resource allocation decisions into improving the level of embeddedness in those elements considered most important to practitioners and encourage investigation into the reasons for the absence of sustainability embeddedness in the integrated report.

The results of this research reveal that the SSI tool can, in fact, be applied and has value in practice. The SSI tool has discriminating value through its application

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTED

Simons (2009) reports that critics of the case study method believe that the study of a small number or single case can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Yet researchers continue to use the case study research method with success in carefully planned and crafted studies of real-life situations, issues, and problems (Yin, 2003). As this study is exploratory in nature, the researchers were open to any new trends that could give direction to future research. The researchers required this formal case results to direct future research with the tool under investigation.

Limitations

During the facilitation session there were some limitations and biases:

Noise and Distraction: The sample of practitioners involved colleagues resulting in conversations sometimes started amongst colleagues. One senior management practitioner got aggressive and did not support the methodology of the evaluation and facilitation process used by the facilitator. This caused him to make verbal outbursts and he left half way through the session. Other participants were surprised at this colleague's behaviour.

Time Constraints: In light of needing to get through the necessary questions during the period allocated, questions were asked directly with a short explanation. Little time was provided for discussion or in depth thinking and practitioners needed to respond quickly.

Future research

Strategising for Sustainability and the embedding of sustainability as a strategic process has been partially explained by the SSI tool. The tool has been applied to external communication by Pretorius and le Roux (2012) and now successfully applied internally to a company. However, this begs the question of: how do strategists go about strategising for sustainability? Future research should also investigate those practices and praxis of practitioner strategists in the process of strategising for sustainability. The leading research questions could be: what feedback can be obtained from applying the SSI tool and how can it be incorporated in future strategising.

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies.
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

ARTICLE 3

TITLE: PRAXIS AND PRACTICES FOR
EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN
PRACTICE

AUTHORS: PRETORIUS AND LE ROUX

SUBMITTED TO: STILL TO BE SUBMITTED TO A
SUITABLE JOURNAL

STATUS: TO BE SUBMITTED

DATE: 2012 / 2013

6. ARTICLE 3

6.1 PRAXIS AND PRACTICES FOR EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE

SYNOPSIS

Purpose: to determine what practices and praxis (strategising components) are applied by practitioners when strategising for sustainability.

Problem investigated: to ascertain the ability of practitioners to identify, rate and judge strategising for sustainability in their every day practices and praxis (strategising components).

Design: The case study was executed in a listed company ranked 39th on the JSE ALSI (March 2011). The subjects were staff members. The method was a combination of convenience and purposive sampling. The target subjects were managerial practitioners on all levels, across divisions, involved in company strategising for sustainability. The data collection process obtained data on participant rankings, agreement and ratings. Practitioners were asked questions namely; how important are the following strategising activities in reference to embedding sustainability in your company? How often do you use these activities in your company? How would you rank these strategising activities according to their importance to enhance embeddedness? The process relied on facilitated guidance, participant observation (of the proposed practices and praxis) and a documentation method involving Post-its.

Findings: Practitioners agreed to eight strategising components presented to them and identified two more namely: leadership and benchmarking. The findings reveal that practitioners were of the view and opinion that the most important strategising components for strategising for sustainability was leadership, followed by the incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals and sustainability related workshops. The three highest rated strategising for sustainability components in terms of importance can be classified into one of each of the three components of micro level strategising (practitioner, praxis and practice). Practitioners on average rated the most frequently used strategising practice to be informal discussions pertaining to sustainability followed by reports on sustainability and sustainability related workshops. A discrepancy between importance and utilisation was found.

Originality and Value: the strategising components that practitioners use and rate as important give direction to managers as to how to go about embedding sustainability in strategising.

Conclusion: the strategising components applied most frequency in strategising for sustainability is informal discussions. This is in spite of practitioners emphasising the need for leadership involvement as the most important strategising for sustainability practice.

Key words: Sustainability, Strategising, Practitioners, Practices, Praxis

INTRODUCTION

There has been an urgent pull from both strategy practitioners and academics for a deeper connection between strategy theory and the practice of strategy which has led to the development of a new approach to strategy research: strategy-as-practice (s-a-p) (Haugstad, 1999; Whittington, 2002:C1; Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003; Whittington, 2007:1575).

Strategy-as-practice (s-a-p) is concerned with the detailed aspects of strategising; how strategists think, talk, reflect, act, interact, embellish and politicize, what tools and technologies they use, and the implications of different forms of strategising for strategy as an organisational activity (Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidi, 2007:5; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:283). S-a-p as an agenda, researches the flow of organisational activity that incorporates the content, process, emergence of thinking and acting of strategy. It supports the false division of formulation and implementation ie: strategising (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:285).

Various researchers have sought to explore the 'doing of strategy' (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:5; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69). Their research asks strategy questions

such as 'how it is done?', 'who does it?' and 'what do they use to do it?' Findings support the field of practice research to address the theory gap between the theories of strategy and actual practice.

Just as the field of strategy practice has received interest, so too, has the field and study of the concept of sustainability and its connection to business strategy and performance. In fact, for the first time, there is a global understanding, if not a feeling of *urgency* that sustainability, in every possible meaning of the word, is 'the only way forward' (Trendwatching, 2010).

More than the way forward, some acclaim that the sustainability movement is in fact; 'near its tipping point' (Haanaes, Reeves, Von Streng Velken, Audretsch, Kiron, & Kruschwitz, 2012:1). Seventy percent of executives surveyed in a recent study said that their companies have made sustainability a 'permanent fixture on the management agenda'. In support, the Boston Consulting Group and MIT Sloan Management Review surveyed data from more than three thousand corporate leaders in one hundred and thirteen countries and on twenty nine in-depth interviews with industry experts and academic scholars. It was found that, two thirds of respondents said management attention to, and investment in, sustainability has increased in the last year (2010-2011). Additionally, two thirds of companies found that sustainability is 'necessary to being competitive in today's marketplace'. On this point, some authors have suggested that sustainability is vital for companies to 'survive' and 'thrive' (Adams & Frost, 2008:289; Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:18).

Sustainability has been referred to as the 'missing ingredient in strategy' which supports the notion of sustainability 'embeddedness' in strategising (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:5). Embedded sustainability is a company's response to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2). Collins, Lawrence, Pavlovich & Ryan (2007:729) advocate that a 'prerequisite for all sustainability' is a strategy. The conception that there is a complementary relationship between strategising and sustainability is supported by several authors (Lacy, Arnott & Lowitt, 2009:484; White, 2009:386; Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:703), each of whom stress that a proper understanding of the relationship between strategy and sustainability is crucial in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the twenty first century.

Those advocating for the integration of sustainability in strategising propose various models, suggestions and tools for leadership in their role of strategising (Quinn & Dalton, 2009:21; Searcy, 2009:50; Lacy *et al.*, 2009:489; Reilly, 2009:33; Holton, Xie & Haugland, 2010:152; Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim, Shockley, Valle, Ludlowb, Shah, 2010:58; Leon-Soriana, Munoz-Tirress & Chalmeta-Rosalen, 2010:249; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

These strategising models for embedding sustainability support leadership to enjoy to the profit benefits associated with an embedded sustainability strategy. There is a strong connection between those companies enjoying the profit benefits and distinctive organisational choices made. Companies who acclaim to be enjoying the profits of a sustainability embedded strategy have also made changes in their mindset and design of business operations that supports sustainability (Laszlo &

Zhexembayeva, 2011:2). Compared to other businesses, the leaders attesting to strategise for sustainability are three times more likely to have a business case for sustainability. They are also fifty percent more likely to have CEO commitment to sustainability, twice as likely to have a separate sustainability reporting process and twice as likely to have a separate function for sustainability. They are also fifty percent more likely to have a person responsible for sustainability in each business unit and more than two and a half times as likely to have a chief sustainability officer (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1; Sustainable Business, 2012)

It can be said that a sustainability embedded strategy is dependent on the management and leadership decisions within the organisational structures regarding implementation (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1). It seems that despite the powerful forces for corporate sustainability - including global pressure, informed leadership, the availability of tools and frameworks, and its connection to business performance – the embeddedness of sustainability may be impeded by equally strong forces against its implementation (Klaine & Von Hauff 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:33; Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:440). Strategising for sustainability is not a trivial task (Holton *et al.*, 2010:152). There is consensus amongst leadership that whilst the ‘case for change is made’ the goal is both ‘complex’ and ‘elusive’ (Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58).

The sustainability movement may be at its tipping point, however, academics and practitioners are of the opinion that sustainability has more ground to gain. While sustainability has made it onto many management agendas, responses from the Boston Consulting Group and MIT Sloan Management Review also indicate that it ranks just eighth in importance among other agenda items. This could be on account of many companies ‘still struggling to define sustainability in a way that is relevant to their business’ and managers feeling overwhelmed and distracted by the ‘daily grind of business’ (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:74; Velazquez, Esquer & Munguia, 2011:36).

The question surrounding sustainability is no longer a matter of ‘should we accommodate it?’ Instead, given its connection to the financial bottom line and its role of governance, the question has become: how to do so?

KEY FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

Managers and sustainability co-ordinators attest to the presence of sustainability on their agendas, but how do they go about embedding sustainability in their daily tasks and routines? What are they doing to embed sustainability in strategising on a practical level? Various authors have proposed models on the integration of sustainability in strategising yet research suggests that managers are still struggling with the process and find that the goal appears elusive.

This research acknowledges the challenges that leadership and management have voiced regarding embedding sustainability into practice and takes a s-a-p approach to identify the means that strategising for sustainability takes place. This research aims to identify the practices and praxis for embedding sustainability in strategising. It investigates the ‘doing’ of strategising for sustainability on a micro level which will contribute to a clearer understanding of the process and attribute to uncovering the

on-the-ground actions that management should direct resources and attention towards.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

S-a-p theory (also known as micro level strategy theory or practice theory) seeks to reinstate the actor in strategising on a *practical level* and *identify those practices of strategising done by actors* who are in many cases not in primary leadership positions (Jarzabkowski & Spee: 2009:68). Quinn and Dalton (2009:21) reiterate this point in their research by stating that “we are not as interested in learning about the traits, skills, and abilities of the individuals who introduce the concept of sustainability into their organizations. Rather, we want to understand what these leaders do.” Quinn & Dalton, (2009:21) formulated a Tasks of Leadership Framework to explore how organisational leaders implement and maintain practices of sustainability in their companies. The authors studied how leaders formally adopted principles and integrated them into day to day operations of business and proposed the framework. These authors assert that a focus on the study of behaviour and practice is more relevant for studies into sustainability embeddedness.

The field of sustainability does not have a single, rigid methodology, and the use of interpretive methods are welcomed (Carroll, 1994; Quinn & Dalton, 2009:21). With specific reference to Social and Environmental Accounting related research, many scholars (Gray, 2002:697; Adams, 2004; Parker, 2005) called for further employment of case and field studies ie: research that was more engaged with practice. Adams and Larrinaga-González, (2007:333) found that the ‘extant literature on sustainability accounting and reporting, in contrast to management accounting and management, has largely ignored practice within organisations’.

Recent studies on the embeddedness of sustainability in strategising have found support for the creation and application of an SSI tool (Pretorius & le Roux, 2012). The SSI tool was created to describe the status of strategising for sustainability and to determine if there was any evidence that sustainability was embedded into strategising amongst the ALSI Top 40 companies. The SSI tool was applied to publically available documents and information. The SSI tool offered discriminating value for determining strategising for sustainability embeddedness, in fact, the SSI tool was able to address the potential ‘superfluous’ claims surrounding sustainability and put into perspective those companies who have successfully demonstrated that sustainability is not just for reputation purposes and that it is part of their strategising and operating as a listed company.

Pretorius & le Roux, (2012) explored the practical value of the SSI tool by searching for the embeddedness of sustainability in internal structures of strategising. The following question was asked; ‘Can the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) tool be supported in practice?’ The outcome of the research was that the SSI tool could be supported in practice through case study investigation. It was also determined that the SSI tool is an accurate measure for embeddedness showing minimal difference in embeddedness ratings between its application to external documents and internal practices.

Quinn & Dalton, (2009:21)'s research answered 'how' practitioners implement and maintain sustainability in their companies and process of integrating these practices into day to day operations. The SSI tool determined that practitioners could rate their own embeddedness rating for strategising for sustainability on ten (10) elements on the SSI tool which demonstrates the occurring practice of embedding sustainability. What remains unanswered is: what do practitioners do (or not do) to obtain the specific rating of embeddedness given to them? This research aims to specifically investigate the 'what' of this process, as well as to investigate the views of practitioners (the who) and the frequency of activities (the how often). The researchers assert that a lingering question remains. The question that will guide this research is: what are those practices and praxis's for embedding sustainability into strategising? In other words; what are practitioners doing (or not) to embed sustainability into strategising?

Having established support for a connection between sustainability and strategising and identified the gap between sustainability claims in external communication and the internal strategising practices, the emergence of the need to view sustainability within the context and boundaries of practice theory is highlighted. The aim of this research is to build on strategising for sustainability theory. Process theory seeks to explain the impact of systems and processes of organisations as a whole. It demonstrates an interest in activities of human actors and its ability to drive or counteract change (Pettigrew, Thomas & Whittington, 2002:3). It has been criticised for not showing much interest in explaining the minute and trivial practices in strategising (Whittington, 2007:1575). In the journey of strategising research, micro strategy and the investigation of the doing of strategy – derives from and incorporates much of - process theory. In light of the sustainability literature on the integration of sustainability into strategising, this article refers to the process aspect of strategising in conjunction with the investigation of the micro strategising practices.

Micro level strategising and sustainability

The evolution of strategy research communicates the shift from a purely economic perspective on strategy research to a more sociological view (Hughes, 1971). In light of this shift, strategy's working definition supports that strategy is something that people do (an activity) in society while strategising (Whittington, 2006:613).

The activities are on a micro level and include the actions that people take and the practices they use in accomplishing the activity of strategy (Whittington, 2002:C1; Chia & MacKay, 2007:217; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:282; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69).

Practice theory encourages investigation into business' 'detailed aspects of strategising.' This is proposed by means of internal investigative research into how strategists practice strategy and the implications of different forms of strategising as an organisational activity - such as with sustainability. The practice research school poses the pertinent questions for this research , namely; 'who is doing the strategising?' 'how it is done?' and 'what resources do they use to do it?'

These questions identify the components of micro level strategising. They include the practitioners (who), the practices (how) and the praxis (utilisation of resources).

Practitioners: Practitioners are actors who shape the construction of the practice of strategy through who they are, how they act and what resources they draw upon (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:18).

S-a-p research aims to reinstate these actors in strategising. The scope of strategy research in the past has focused primarily on top managers – as if only one elite group act strategically. S-a-p acknowledges this ‘curious absence of human actors and their actions’ (Jarzabkowski & Spee: 2009:69). Whilst other/some practitioners may not be designated formally as strategists – their actions may contribute to the achievement of strategising in their organisations.

The actors are those who do the work of strategy, including ‘internal actors’ such as employees on all levels in the organisation involved in the process of strategising. Practitioners may also be ‘external actors’ such as consultants and analysts. These external actors in fact exercise influence that shapes the realised strategy of an organisation (Johnson *et al.*, 2003:15; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:286;).

Practices: Practices are the cognitive, behavioural, procedural, discursive, motivational and physical resources that are combined, coordinated and adapted by the practitioner to construct practices (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:5). Practices include material tools and models used every day. Examples include Porter's (1985) SWOT analysis or the PESTEL tool for addressing macroeconomic forces. Technology tools such as PowerPoint presentations and flipcharts also play a role in the practice and action of strategising.

Practices have been broken down into three types namely; administrative, discursive and episodic. Administrative practices in strategising include the organisation and planning mechanisms such as budgets, forecasts and performance. The discursive practice provides the discourse for strategy language academic concepts, tools and techniques that populate strategy classes. Lastly, episodic (periodic) practices refer to those practices that create opportunities for and organise the interaction between practitioners in doing strategy. These include meetings, workshops and presentations (Orlikowski, 2000:404; Kaplan, 2006).

Praxis: Praxis point to socially accomplished flows of activities that are strategically consequential to the direction and the survival of the organisation (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:15). Strategy praxis comprises of the interconnections between the actions of, and utilisation of resources by practitioners, the organisation's actors and the organisation within which these individuals and groups act. This flow of activity is however, not only in a singular direction, these actions run parallel, intersect, diverge from or depend on each other or even collide (Grandy & Mills, 2004:1157).

Before proceeding, it is critical to define the key concepts in the research.

Sustainability: creates long-term shareholder value by taking up opportunities and managing associated risks that derive from the triple bottom line (economic, environmental and social) developments (Crews, 2010:15; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:59) and is often mentioned in association with responsible leadership, the use of resources and corporate social responsibility.

Strategising: is the process of formulating and implementing a strategy (Hodgekinson & Clarke 2007:243). The interest of strategising is how initiatives are approached and resources applied to eventually achieve competitive advantage.

Context for delineation of sustainability embeddedness in strategising

The sustainability imperative is shaping the business landscape and will continue to do so (Lacy *et al.*, 2009:492). In a globalising world, corporate involvement in the elements of sustainability is both necessary and expected (Skinner & Mersham, 2008:239). Lee *et al.*, (2009:2) note that sustainability is neither a 'passing trend' nor an 'optional addition' for organisations.

The business case for sustainability, rather than ethics and philosophy, proposes that sustainability is an unavoidable reality for businesses as consumer and investor pressure rises with the knowledge of climate change and other social needs (Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:440; Hallstedt *et al.*, 2010:703). The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) theory suggests that all elements of sustainability should to be adopted and integrated by businesses as it 'makes good economic sense' (Collins *et al.*, 2007:729).

Strategy theory identifies strategy as the coordinated means by which an organisation pursues its goals and objectives (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:35). Strategy formulation, the process of deciding what to do, involves the formulation of a vision, mission, setting of goals and objectives and determining sources of competitive advantage (Lynch, 2009:490). Strategy implementation, the process of performing all the activities necessary to do what has been planned, encompasses formulating action plans, aligning organisational structure, setting systems and measures in place and rewards to achieve the firm's goals and objectives (Lynch, 2009:490; Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:35). Together strategy formulation and implementation make the process of strategising (Hodgekinson & Clarke 2007:243).

Strategising for sustainability addresses the alignment of sustainability initiatives with short-term and long-term business decisions and falls in the body of knowledge of strategy. Embedded sustainability is a company's response to a radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2).

The KING III report emphasised that 'strategy, risk, performance and sustainability have become inseparable' and this entails that companies embark on integrated reporting (Ince.motiv., 2010). An Integrated report is the product of a process or system of processes that seeks to inform stakeholders of an organisations ability to heed to stakeholder and or societal concerns and to provide meaningful performance information to support assertions suggesting effective sustainability management (Sustainable SA, 2011). It is to demonstrate how well an organisation has embedded a comprehensive view of sustainability into the strategic fabric of the organisation that leads the reader to understand whether the organisation is well placed to adapt to economic, social and environmental factors (Sustainability Services, 2011). Integrative reporting is an example of a practice for embedding sustainability in

strategising and this research seeks to explain the practices of strategising for sustainability.

Research objectives and questions

What is clear from literature is that sustainability is a topic of bottom line importance. Strategising is critical for the harnessing of benefits deriving from sustainability. By companies integrating sustainability with current strategising activities, they can pursue potential competitive advantage. The research objectives of this research are to determine if 1) Practices and praxis can be identified by practitioners 2) Practitioners can rate practices and practices and praxis importance, 3) Practitioners can rate practices and praxis utilisation and lastly 4) There is a discrepancy between importance and utilisation.

The potential value-add of the research

The practitioners of strategising find the embedding of sustainability a complex task. This research aims to identify those tasks and actions, specifically those practices and praxis that are considered important and frequent for reaching a sustainability embedded goal.

Through the identification of those practices and praxis in strategising for sustainability, management can accurately focus their attention and direct their resources to achieve their sustainability goals.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

The analysis began with a study of s-a-p theory and sustainability literature. From the review of both literatures, the research determined and proposed eight practices and praxis's to be associated with strategising in the research.

The research questions were identified and a sample company identified for research. The objective was to answer the research propositions. For this, a facilitation session was conducted at the target company. The facilitation process introduced and presented practitioners with the practices and praxis's for the research (strategising components).

Following the introduction of the strategising components, three instructions were given to practitioners who participated. Researcher A broke down the research content into meaningful and pertinent units of information and instructions. Implicit and explicit terms were explained and clearly defined by the facilitator to the practitioners before the beginning of the process. To limit the subjectivity in the definitions of concepts, a standard document with definitions was used to bring clarity. A documentation method involving a post-mortem analysis process was applied (Myllyaho, Salo, Kääriäinen, Hyysalo, Koskela, 2004:4).

With Table 1 as a framework, this research aimed to determine what practices and praxis are applied by practitioners when strategising for sustainability.

Table 1 Research design components

Component	Description
Research question / problem	What practices and praxis are applied when strategising for sustainability?
Propositions	Practices and praxis can be identified by practitioners Practitioners can rate practices and praxis importance Practitioners can rate practices and praxis utilisation There is a discrepancy between importance and utilisation
Unit of investigation	Practitioners, practices and praxis related to strategising for sustainability
Unit of analysis SSI and investigation	Practitioners involved in strategising for sustainability directly and indirectly in a sample company
Logic linking the data to the propositions	Practitioners who are involved in strategising for sustainability are the best respondents to ask about practices and praxis
Criteria for interpreting the findings	Agreement, Ratings and Rank

Source: Adapted from Yin, (2003:21)

KEY SCIENTIFIC BELIEFS OF THE RESEARCHERS

To answer the above questions, the researchers were aware of their own methodological values, beliefs and particular philosophical assumptions. These assumptions could influence the way in which the research was conducted and are stated to understand the ‘intellectual climate’ in which the research was undertaken.

Ontological positions

This position states the researchers’ views and the very nature and essence of research reality. Researcher A is an objective realist who believes that knowledge comes from facts associated with the case and the context. If repetitive and consistent conditions of sustainability claims are found in the top companies, they can be generalised. His interest was to approach the research question from a strategy as practice view. Researcher B is a practitioner tasked with development of a organisation’s sustainability strategy. She seeks the truth through objective judgement of best practices and scientific proof.

Epistemological positions

The theory of knowledge (epistemology) of the researchers diverged to some extent, allowing for interplay on how decisions on the social phenomena can be known and how knowledge can be demonstrated. Researcher A primarily worked from both a scientific paradigm supported by a consultant paradigm. Working as a strategy consultant influenced the search for factual directives, business patterns and answers to existing situations of similar nature. Researcher B worked from an academic learning paradigm in order to meet the requirements for a Masters degree and simultaneously give guidance to the demands she faces as the person contributing to the development of a company’s sustainability strategy.

Case study as a research strategy

A case approach is used to explain the phenomena within a real world context where the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident. Yin, (2003) suggests the uniqueness of a situation as sufficient rationalising for using a single case. Research motivates for case study approaches and in some instances, single case design on the basis that it is a suitable research methodology for types of explanatory questions focusing on contemporary events (Yin, 2003). The researchers made the observation that case studies offer the possibility of understanding the nature of the study in practice, both in terms of techniques, procedures and systems which are used and the way in which they are used (Scapens, 2002; Riccaboni & Leone, 2010:130).

This specific case investigation is on a leading company in their industry and a listed company on the JSE ALSI Top 40. The case company has been measured for its level of embeddedness of sustainability in strategising. The strategising activities of practitioners in the company are believed to be evident through research into this case study. A single case design has been developed that offers both intrinsic and instrumental value to the topic of the research (Stake, 1994:237).

This research article aims to encapsulate, on behalf of practitioners and for further studies, the strategising components necessary for embedding sustainability. To provide insight into those strategising components (practitioners, praxis and practices) considered important and of which are being utilised frequently when strategising for sustainability.

Research method

The case company chosen for this research was Growthpoint Properties. Leading up to the date and planned session for gathering data, a meeting invite was made for practitioners from Growthpoint Properties using MS Outlook. Practitioners were given the options to 'accept' or 'decline' attendance which represented consent to participate in the research. The following information was made available to the sample of practitioners prior to the session.

The session time slot was scheduled for the duration of two hours on the 5th of September 2011. The purpose of the workshop was communicated to the CEO and practitioners in an introductory email (see workshop plan Annexure B). Practitioners were informed that an external strategy facilitator would be present and were provided with the following programme for the workshop:

1. Introduction of strategy consultant and workshop facilitator (outsider)
2. Introduction of the strategising components and the research process
3. Discussion on the topic
4. Collect input from practitioners on their views and opinions
5. Feedback on session

As part of the motivation to receive permission (Annexure F) for this research by the CEO an offer was made that this research would give staff an opportunity to provide their thoughts and input on the concept of strategising for sustainability. The case company was also offered a report back on the findings.

Sampling

Sampling method: The sampling method was a combination of convenience and purposive sampling.

Sampling frame: The target group were managerial practitioners on all levels involved in company strategising. Due to the busy schedules a convenience approach was taken in the inviting of attendees. The sample frame included Growthpoint Properties practitioners from various management positions including top, middle and other functional practitioners. The sample included members from across divisions and in line functions. It included members of the sustainability division counting the sustainability coordinator.

Sample size: Seventeen (17) Growthpoint practitioners were included in this research. The sample includes a consistency of practitioners representing more than fifty percent of the population at the company directly involved in strategising. The sample size is further motivated by the monetary value of the time of each key practitioner in the sample. Key practitioners exchanged attention towards important business practices associated with the operating of the business for participation in the research. Increasing the number of the sample could have adversely impacted the case company.

Data collection methods

A qualitative research imitating grounded theory and an inductive research approach that involves a focus group and action research was used. Practitioners in the case company were required to complete a biographic data sheet which required of them to provide their position in the company. Next the research data was collected using a process described by Bjornson, Wang and Arisholm (2008) and modified to gather specific data to support the proposed strategising components. The method included the use of Post-It stickers (with responses) for documentation analysis. The process collected responses on ratings, frequency responses and rankings. It relied on facilitated guidance, participant observation and a documentation method on Post-Its.

The data was collected by asking the following questions:

1. How important are the following strategising activities in reference to embedding sustainability in your company? 5 = very important. 1 = not important at all.
2. How often do you use these activities in your company? 5 = very often. 1 = never.
3. Practitioners were requested to observe all the strategising components and asked; How would you rank these according to importance? 10 = most important. 1= least important

Data analysis

Data was collected on multiple coloured and adhesive cards (Post-Its). These had drawn on shapes for responses and for ease of application of instructions given. It was in this form that the primary data was initially analysed. The process of reducing data to a manageable size involved capturing the data into interpretable MS Excel spread sheets. This was done by using colour and coding the data to make the different data sets and criteria easily recognisable. Part of the analysis process included the application of determinacy statistics including deviation. Data

visualisation techniques such as graphs were used to synthesise data into information.

Data criteria

Researcher A facilitated the session where practitioners were asked to rate, support, agree and rank elements from the evaluation tool used in the first research. Data was judged on a 5 point scale where 5 represented the most supported and 1 the least supported except in the case of ranking.

Strategies employed to ensure quality of data

Data was collected at one point in time from the primary practitioners onto Post-Its. These were gathered after the session into a sealed envelope. There was a record of biographic data of every participant in reference to all response cards. The data was captured directly from the primary source by the researcher. All data captured was by one researcher and without distraction. The practitioners were coded so as to avoid any potential biases based on practitioner's position and hierarchy in the organisation.

FINDINGS

Literature Findings

The development of the practices and praxis proposed were formulated through a literature search on s-a-p and sustainability theory. The search was on all related literature which was recent in nature by choice of the topics. Historical theory building research on sustainability and strategising were not included in the search. The search was taken from the platform that the argument for sustainability in business has already been made (Crews, 2010:17; Elmualim *et al.*, 2010:58). Also, the research on strategising included recent literature on account of the intent of this research to explore practice theory and the 'doing of strategy' which has only been recently explored (Johnson *et al.*, 2003; Whittington, 2007:1575; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008:283).

This search focused on the integration of sustainability into corporate strategising. The data was sourced from internet searches as well as from journals on leading platforms including; ProQuest, EBSCOHost, Emerald and SABINET. The literature search also included books advocating the topic.

The search terms used included; 'strategising practices', 'sustainability,' 'strategy,' 'strategising,' 'integration of sustainability' and 'strategy as practice.' The following inclusion criteria for literature sources were applied. The work had to report on:

- The content of sustainability
- The content of strategising
- The tasks, activities or practices in strategising for sustainability
- The process, giving suggestions for embedding sustainability
- The challenges associated with strategising and sustainability
- Practice theory

The literature that was identified then underwent a content analysis. The analysis's purpose was to identify practices and praxis that are necessary for embedding sustainability into strategising. The research considered the definitions of strategising components determined from micro level strategising (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:15) and the definition of sustainability used in this research. The content analysis focused on those strategising components for strategising for sustainability.

The researchers narrowed down the content into eight practices and praxis. Each were sourced and defined from the content analysis and the description included the embeddedness of sustainability. Support was found for each element. The strategising practices and praxis's presented for this research are described in table 2.

Table 2: Strategising Components for embedding sustainability that were presented in this research with their description and supporting sources.

Strategising Components	Description (embedding Sustainability)	Elements of s-a-p	Sources
1. PowerPoint Presentations	A resource tool utilised by practitioners in the actions of strategising	Practice	Bonn & Fisher, (2011:6); Collins <i>et al.</i> , (2007:729); Crews, (2010:17); Elmualim <i>et al.</i> , (2010:58); Grandy & Mills, (2004:1157); Hallstedt <i>et al.</i> , (2010:703); Holton <i>et al.</i> , (2010:152); Jarzabkowski <i>et al.</i> , (2007:5); Kaplan, (2006); Lacy <i>et al.</i> , (2009:484); Leon-Soriana <i>et al.</i> , (2010:249); Orlikowski, (2000:404); Quinn & Dalton, (2009:21); Reilly, (2009:33); Searcy, (2009:50); White, (2009:386)
2. Reports	An administrative practice of communication on past sustainability actions and strategic intentions in written form.	Practice	
3. Workshops	Interactive sessions coordinated and adapted by the practitioner to construct practices of experiential learning on sustainability and to achieve the strategic outcomes desired in strategising.	Practice	
4. Project teams	Teams of actors (practitioners) who apply strategising practices and utilise resources to achieve strategy implementation of sustainability	Praxis	
5. Policy documents	A discursive and formal document that addresses the procedural practices of actors that influences the allocation of resources towards sustainability and strategising outcomes	Practice	
6. Informal discussions	Day-to-day discussions between practitioners that influence cognitive behavioural and motivational practices in strategising for sustainability.	Practice	
7. Incorporation into corporate goals	A praxis demonstrating the interconnection between the cognitive and motivational practices (derived from knowing sustainability is part of the strategic goals) and the utilisation of company resources to achieve the goals.	Praxis	
8. Intranet projects	A technology portal of information that captures past learning from projects (combination of actions and utilisation of resources) that requires the cognitive practice of interpretation for the making of future informed sustainability decisions	Practice	

Source: Own Compilation

The measurement scale for judging the extent of achievement towards each strategising component was on a 5 point likert scale. The scale determined the extent to which each strategising component was embedded in strategising in the company.

Research Findings and discussion

The practitioners were introduced to the eight strategising components in table 2. They were then asked to verbally suggest other: 'every-day' strategising components (activities) that they think contribute to the 'doing of strategy' that would result in the embeddedness of sustainability in company strategic outcomes.

After suggestions were made, unanimous group consensus was to introduce; 'leadership' and 'benchmarking' as additional strategising components to be applied in the research. Practitioners immediately recognised the need for sustainability to be embedded in the strategising by Growthpoint leadership (practitioners in top management positions). Subsequently, the following two components were added to the research and are defined below:

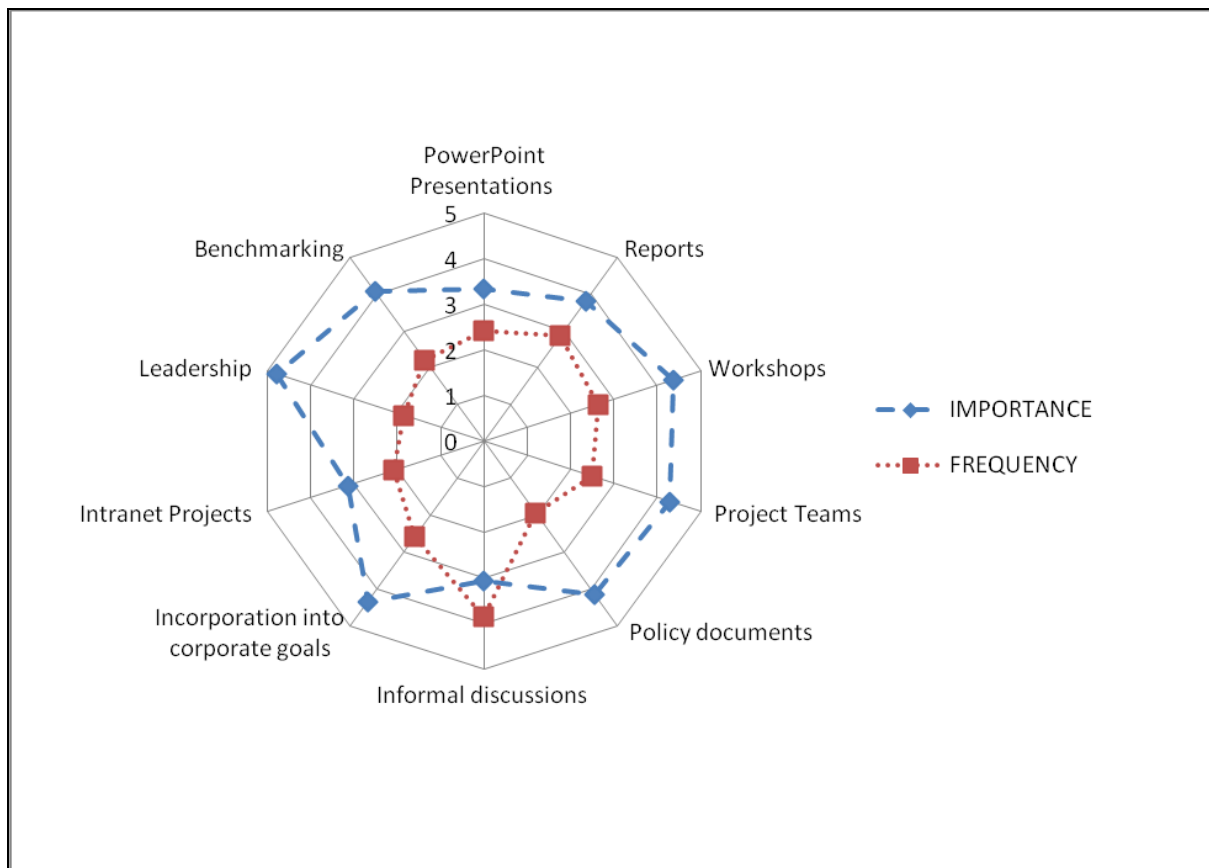
9. **Leadership:** primary actors in top management positions. They are responsible for strategising for the sustainable outcomes of the company. They utilise practices and praxis when interconnecting actions and resources (practitioners).
10. **Benchmarking:** the collection of information on strategising performance by the company in comparison to other companies. It contributes to the motivational and resource allocation practices. Benchmarking reviews the behavioural, procedural, discursive resources utilised in the market that are adapted by the practitioner to construct practices within the organisation (practice).

Importance and frequency of strategising activities for embedding sustainability

Practitioners were asked; 'how important are the following strategising activities in reference to embedding sustainability in their company?' A response of 5 communicated that the strategising component was very important for embedding sustainability whilst a response of 1 indicated that the strategising component was not important at all. Followed shortly by this question, was; 'how often do you use these activities in your company? A response of 5 indicated very often and a 1 represented never.

Practitioners' responses on the importance and frequency of strategising activities for embedding sustainability in strategising of Growthpoint are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The level of importance of strategising components for embedding sustainability into strategising, as well as, the frequency of utilisation or application.



Importance: Practitioners rated the 10 strategising components for embedding sustainability into strategising. The findings reveal (refer to figure 1) that practitioners were of the view and opinion that the most important strategising components for embedding sustainability was leadership for sustainability (4.79) followed by the incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals (4.36) and sustainability related workshops (4.36).




Other highly rated strategising components were project teams (4.29), policy documents (4.14) and benchmarking (4.07). An example of a project team for sustainability is a staff team assigned to strategising for a specific initiative such as energy saving or tasked to find innovative sustainability products. Policy documents is a praxis influencing strategising decisions eg: an environmental procurement policy. Benchmarking refers to the collection of information on strategising performance in comparison to other companies. It contributes to motivational and resource allocation practices. In South Africa, companies can benchmark their sustainability performance using the JSE's SRI (Social Responsibility Index). Leading companies can also compare integrated reports which communicate company sustainability as well as utilise the SSI tool for benchmarking (Pretorius & le Roux, 2012). This SSI tool is a strategising tool that has benchmarking attributes. It provides the practitioner with comparability and between companies on the JSE. Application of the SSI tool to the publically available communication of the top 40 companies on the JSE (March 2011) confirmed its discriminating value. The SSI tool

distinguished companies on their level of sustainability embeddedness in strategising and has since been validated in practice.

The role of leadership in practice theory on strategising has recently received considerable attention. It has been noted that the practitioners are fundamental in resource and behavioural decisions that result in the strategic outcomes of the organisations (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69). Growthpoint practitioners communicated this importance and identified that to achieve an embedded sustainability strategy – leadership’s support for sustainability is crucial. Leadership (primary actors in strategising in top management positions) was suggested as a strategising component that should be added to the eight initially proposed. This was on account of it being considered by the sample to be necessary for sustainability embeddedness.

The three highest rated strategising for sustainability components for importance can be classified into one of each of the three components of micro level strategising. This demonstrates that when practitioners were asked the most important strategising for sustainability components, they had a balanced view of the strategy elements necessary for embedding sustainability into strategising (from a practical perspective). Furthermore, the three most important rated components for embedding sustainability in strategising (in the research) are supported by literature and can be identified in models and tools for embedding a sustainability strategy.

Table 3: A framework describing the most important and highest rated components of micro strategy and support from literature on strategising for sustainability.

Micro level strategy components	Most important rated strategising for sustainability components	Strategising for sustainability literature
Practitioners: the actors who shape the construction of the practice of strategy through who they are, how they act and what resources they draw upon.	Leadership (4.79) 	Sustainability literature communicates the role of Leaders in top management positions to determine the organisational vision that includes sustainability which signals strong corporate norms and values and provides principles that guide the decisions of senior managers, line managers and employees.
Practices: resources that are combined, coordinated and adapted by the practitioner to construct practices that create opportunities for and organise the interaction between practitioners in doing strategy.	Workshops (4.36) 	Sustainability literature refers to workshops as necessary interactive sessions held to facilitate experiential learning on sustainability and attribute towards the strategic outcomes desired by the actors in strategising. These workshops are aimed at various stakeholders and are to develop cognitive models that are communicated to guide practitioner’s thinking and the direction of their decisions.
Praxis: the socially accomplished flows of activities that are strategically consequential to the direction and the survival of the organisation.	Incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals (4.36) 	Sustainability literature also emphasises the importance of sustainability forming part of the corporate goals to signal a corporate commitment to the goals such that it shapes the norms and values and guide practitioner decision making and to communicate the intentions of the company to stakeholders

Source: Own compilation derived from research findings, micro level strategy theory (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:15 and strategising for sustainability literature (Adams & Frost, 2008:231; Bonn & Fisher, 2011:6).

On the bottom end of the findings, practitioners rated the least important strategising components, in their opinion, for strategising for sustainability. The least important strategising component for sustainability in Growthpoint context was informal discussions (3.07). Informal discussions are those in-between passing conversations that emerge on a casual basis amongst other more 'urgent' day to day tasks and discussions. Informal discussions are not planned meetings yet can influence cognitive behavioural and motivational practices in strategising for sustainability. The outcomes are rarely recorded and it is not often that decisions are made from these informal discussions. Critics of informal discussions suggest that informal discussions are subject to time constraints (in between planned activities), the lack of objective direction in the discussion and the lack of consensus, solutions or formal decisions that are recorded and measured (Hadler, 2005).

Yet, these informal discussions are often an overflow of strategising practitioners' concern about a topic leading them to utilise conversation opportunities to voice concerns or ideas on the topic of sustainability. This point emphasises that informal discussions could be something applied daily due to the lack of prior planning required to initiate them, in spite of it being rated as least important as a strategising practice.

Other less important rated strategising components for embedding sustainability were intranet projects (3.14) and PowerPoint presentations (3.36).

After practitioners responded with their view on the importance of the presented strategising components for sustainability within the context of the organisation, they were immediately asked to rate the frequency of the same strategising components.

Frequency: Practitioners were asked to rate the frequency utilisation of each of strategising components used in the process of embedding sustainability into strategising. Practitioners on average rated the most frequently used strategising component to be informal discussions pertaining to sustainability (3.86) followed by reports on sustainability (2.86) and sustainability related workshops (2.64).

Informal discussions, as described earlier, is an activity that could be convenient to engage in and there is a likelihood that it could be used frequently amongst other planned daily talks and meetings. Case study practitioners were found to use informal discussions, as a strategising practice, most frequently to communicate and debate topics on sustainability.

Informal discussions may be a practice used frequently by strategising practitioners both in general and in the case company (3.86) but it was not considered important as an activity to embed sustainability into strategising (rated 3.07 in previous question). In fact, informal discussions were considered least important.

Reports, an administrative practice of communication on past sustainability actions and strategic intentions in written form, were rated as a strategising practice that was utilised quite frequently in the case company. Sustainability reports and integrated reports communicate performance past and share revised targets and intentions for the future with stakeholders (Sustainability SA, 2011). This strategising component

was considered in the previous question to not be very important as it was rated on the bottom end of the rating list (3.79). These findings are also depicted in figure 1.

Workshops refer to the interactive sessions coordinated and adapted by practitioners to construct practices of experiential learning on sustainability and to achieve the strategic outcomes desired in strategising. This strategising component was rated amongst the top three most important strategising components by Growthpoint practitioners (4.36). The practitioners then rated the frequency utilisation of the practice as amongst the most frequently (2.64) used as in strategising for sustainability.

As depicted in figure 1 with reference to the bottom end of the frequency findings; the least frequently used strategising component for embedding sustainability was leadership (1.86). Growthpoint practitioners rated leadership least utilised along with policy documents (1.93) and intranet projects (2.07).

Leadership, as recently discussed was rated by case study practitioners as the most important strategising component for embedding sustainability into strategising. Yet, it was rated least frequently used in the company.

There are two seemingly contradictory findings that emerged out of reviewing the rating responses from the first two questions. Leadership was rated the most important strategising component for embedding sustainability that was rated the least frequently used in the case company. Similarly, informal discussions was rated the least important component for strategising but was rated the most frequently used practice.

As a result of the above inconsistency between importance and frequency ratings of sustainability strategising components, a comparison was made where the deviation between importance and frequency was determined for all ten strategising components which have been ranked. The deviations between the average ratings out 5 for the importance of the strategising component and the frequency of each component are presented in Table 4 and have been sorted from the smallest deviation to the largest deviation.

Table 4: The ratings and rank of ratings for importance and frequency are sorted by the deviation between the ratings for importance and frequency of strategising activities

Strategising components	Importance rating (out of 5)	Rank of importance (10 is the highest)	Frequency rating (out of 5)	Rank of frequency (10 is the highest)	Ranked Deviation between importance and frequency (smallest to largest)
Informal discussions	3.07	1	3.86	10	9
PowerPoint presentations	3.36	3	2.43	5	8
Reports	3.79	4	2.86	9	8
Intranet projects	3.14	2	2.07	3	7
Policy documents	4.14	6	1.93	2	6
Workshops	4.36	8	2.64	8	5
Project teams	4.29	7	2.5	6	3
Incorporation into corporate goals	4.36	8	2.57	7	3
Benchmarking	4.07	5	2.21	4	1
Leadership	4.79	10	1.86	1	1

Table 4 confirms the assertions discussed previously; the largest deviation between importance and frequency is for leadership. The smallest deviation was for informal discussions.

When looking for insight on these findings in s-a-p theory, the argument over the 'reinstatement' of the actors in strategising was identified. The scope of strategy research in the past has focused primarily on top managers as initiators and actors in strategising. S-a-p acknowledges this 'curious absence of human actors and their actions' in the process of strategising with reference to the need to consider the rest of company practitioners as actors in strategising (Jarzabkowski & Spee: 2009:69).

As a result of the concerns over the neglect of strategising practitioners in the research of strategising, this research included a diverse sample of practitioners across all divisions and levels of management. The findings from this broad sample communicated the extent of the importance of leadership (top management practitioners) and the inverse frequency of its use in strategising. The researchers believe it is necessary to determine the impact of this diverse sample of practitioners on these apparent inverse findings.

Even though a broader mix of practitioners may be considered more reflective of how strategies are achieved in practice, a micro analysis into the impact that top management had on the research and their views on the frequency of use of leadership in comparison to the rest of the sample is likely to bring more insight to these findings.

The researchers confirmed this point through practice theory which communicates that in some companies, there are circumstances of disjointedness between the perceptions and intentions of strategising by top management from practitioners on other management levels (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69). In light of this a micro analysis was conducted. By using the biographic data supplied by practitioners, the research separated top management from the sample when analysing the findings on frequency. Table 5 demonstrates the deviations between the average ratings on frequency (out of 5) between top management and other Growthpoint practitioners in the sample including middle and lower management.

Table 5: Deviations between the average frequency ratings by levels of management

	Top management (n = 5)	Other management levels excluding top management (n = 12)	Deviation
Leadership	0.67	2.18	-1.51
Benchmarking	3	2	1
Policy documents	1.33	2.09	-0.76
Powerpoint presentations	3	2.27	0.73
Incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals	2	2.73	-0.73
Informal discussions	4.33	3.73	0.6
Workshops	3	2.55	0.45
Project teams	2.67	2.45	0.21
Reports	3	2.82	0.18
Intranet Projects	2	2.09	-0.09

The largest deviations between the frequency ratings of top management and the rest of the sample were in the strategising components: leadership (-1.51) and benchmarking (1).

Leadership was rated the most important strategising component for sustainability and the sample rated it least frequently used (1.86). Table 5 demonstrates that top management utilise the concept leadership for sustainability far less frequently (0.67) than it is believed to be used by other Growthpoint practitioners on other management levels (2.18).

Growthpoint's top management utilise most frequently; informal discussions (4.33), PowerPoint presentations (3), workshops (3), reports, (3), project teams (2.67), intranet projects (2) and the praxis of incorporating sustainability into corporate goals (2). These are the order of frequency utilisation of strategising components by top management (table 5). Out of the five most utilised strategising components by top management; workshops, the praxis of incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals and project teams were rated by the sample as being amongst the top five most important strategising components (figure 1 and table 3).

The strategising component considered least important by the sample is the component utilised the most by top management as indicated in Table 5. The sample average frequency rating for informal discussions was 3.86 out of 5. This

micro analysis demonstrates the top management utilise informal discussions much more frequently (4.33) than both the overall sample average (3.86) and the rest of the sample excluding top management (3.73). This suggests that the topic of sustainability is less formally discussed by top management than perhaps, what might be envisaged of top management in reference to strategising for sustainability. Top management frequently use three of the top five rated important strategising components for sustainability and as such have a frequency utilisation percentage of sixty percent. In other words, sixty percent of the time when top management strategise for sustainability, they utilise strategising components that the sample of practitioners rate as important. Leadership and policy documents were the two strategising components rated as very important yet were not rated as frequently utilised by top management.

The micro analysis confirmed that the reinstatement (inclusion) of all the actors and initiators of strategising as opposed to just considering top management in strategising did have an impact on the ratings and this is clear when observing the deviations in Table 5. This exercise also supported practice theory's postulation that there is often disjointedness between the perceptions and intentions of strategising by top management and other management levels and practitioners.

Rank: Practitioners were requested to observe all the activities presented to them (10 strategising components) and rank them according to their importance. A rank of 10 indicated the most important and 1 indicated the least important.

The findings on the average rank are summarised in table 6 along with the rank of averages, ratings of importance and rank of importance ratings

Table 6: The rank rating for each strategising component for sustainability. The company rank of rank rating and importance ratings.

Strategising component	Rank rating	Rank	Importance rating	Rank of importance
Intranet projects	2.62	1	3.14	2
PowerPoint presentations	2.86	2	3.36	3
Reports	4.31	3	3.79	4
Informal discussions	4.69	4	3.07	1
Benchmarking	4.86	5	4.07	5
Project teams	6.46	6	4.29	7
Policy documents	6.69	7	4.14	6
Incorporation in corporate goals	6.77	8	4.36	8
Workshops	6.92	9	4.36	8
Leadership	8.21	10	4.79	10

Table 6 communicates the average rank rating responses by practitioners for the strategising components. These are displayed adjacently to the ratings of importance from the first question. These rank findings support the findings on the importance as rated previously by practitioners. Table 6 demonstrates that there is noticeable

consistency in opinion by practitioners on those strategising for sustainability components that are considered important.

Through the rank exercise, practitioners reconsidered the importance of certain activities and the rank findings confirm that leadership is the most important strategising component (10). Practitioners also supported workshops for sustainability as highly important (9), also the incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals (8), policy documents (7) and project teams (6). The rank of averages and rank of importance columns confirm the top five most important strategising components as rated and ranked by practitioners.

From these findings and micro analyses' further insight was gained into the views and opinion of practitioners in strategising for sustainability. Practitioners findings suggest that they have a clear idea of the strategising components necessary to embed sustainability into practice (strategise for it), however, there are deviations between the importance and frequency ratings.

This next section links the propositions and the findings before the discussion takes place in the next section on the management implications.

Empirical Findings to research propositions

P1: Practices and praxis can be identified by practitioners

This proposition is supported. Practitioners proposed two additional strategising components. These were leadership (practitioners) and benchmarking (practice). They also were able to use these newly identified practices when responding to research questions including the rating of importance, determining of frequency of use and rank.

P2: Practitioners can rate practices and praxis importance

This proposition is supported. Practitioners rated the importance and frequency of 10 strategising practices and praxis (strategising components). The ratings were used in the findings and interpreted into information on the strategising activities of practitioners.

P3: Practitioners can rate practice and praxis utilisation

The importance and frequency ratings by practitioners instructed practitioners to respond in reference to their organisation (Growthpoint). The results were findings on the importance and frequency of activities used and applied in Growthpoint when strategising for sustainability. The practitioners were able to determine the extent of utilisation of activities with ease. Insight was gained from considering the ratings of frequency utilisation of strategising components in conjunction with those strategising components considered important. It was determined that utilisation differed slightly between the top management in the sample as opposed to the rest of sample.

P4: There is a discrepancy between importance and utilisation

There was a large discrepancy between importance ratings and utilisation. In fact, the most important activity, suggested and put forward by practitioners, was rated the highest for importance yet rated the least frequently used. This was the strategising component of leadership. Growthpoint practitioners also rated the least important activity for strategising for sustainability (informal discussions) to be most frequently used in amongst practitioners. This was confirmed when the largest deviations were determined. Leadership strategising component had the largest deviation between importance and frequency rating (2.93). Further micro analysis into the utilisation of informal discussions revealed that top management utilised this least important element more than the rest of the sample of practitioners. This information contributes to the discrepancy found in the research and suggests that practitioners have a clear idea of the strategising components necessary to embed sustainability into practice but are failing to apply the practices on a frequent basis.

DISCUSSION AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Strategy is the coordinated means by which an organisation pursues its goals and objectives (Carpenter & Sanders 2009:35). The 'coordinated means' by which companies pursue their goals and objectives - is by means of strategising. Strategising is the process of formulating and implementing a strategy (Hodgekinson & Clarke, 2007:243).

Literature has suggested that a sustainability embedded strategy is dependent on the management and leadership's decisions within the organisational structures regarding its implementation (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1). It has been supposed that, despite the powerful forces for corporate sustainability, including global pressure, informed leadership, the availability of tools and frameworks, and its connection to business performance – the embeddedness of sustainability may be impeded by equally strong forces against its implementation (Klaine & Von Hauff 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:33; Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:440).

This research set out to explore the 'coordinated means' by which strategising for sustainability is carried out, in a sample company, by gaining support for strategising for sustainability strategising components. Practitioners rated and ranked the cognitive, behavioural, procedural and physical resources that are combined, coordinated and adapted by the practitioner to construct practices of strategising for sustainability. They also considered the socially accomplished flows of activities that are strategically consequential to the direction and the survival of the organisation in terms of sustainability and considered the actors in the process of strategising; the practitioners (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:15).

It was determined that practitioners, even without a theoretical background of strategising were able to propose and rate the strategising practices necessary for embedding sustainability into strategising and this is clear from the balanced selection of micro level strategising components of which are supported by literature. This research has encapsulated, on behalf of practitioners of strategising and for further studies, the strategising components necessary for embedding sustainability. Through this research process, it was found that practitioners have an ability to identify, rate and rank strategising for sustainability in their every day strategising activities. Whilst the exact forces impeding sustainability embeddedness are not

confirmed, this research has provided insight into those strategising components (practitioners, praxis and practices) considered important and of which are being utilised frequently.

These are some of the management implications of the findings:

- The significance of the proposed strategising for sustainability component: leadership
- The apparent inverse correlation between importance and frequency utilisation of strategising components for embedding sustainability
- The most utilised strategising components and their effectiveness as the 'coordinated means' to achieve their strategy for sustainability
- The measurability of current strategising components utilised in the embedding sustainability into strategising

Leadership

Strategic leadership consists of those practitioners tasked with managing an overall enterprise and influencing key organisational outcomes such as companywide performance, competitive superiority, innovation, strategic change and survival. Leaders are those practitioners tasked with communicating the vision and mission and for setting the stage for implementation (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:57).

Literature on sustainability emphasises the importance of leadership in driving change and embedding sustainability by strategising for it. In fact, companies acclaiming to be enjoying the profit benefits associated with sustainability tend to all have a distinctive organisational mindset and design that supports sustainability. Compared to other businesses, the leaders are three times more likely to have a business case for sustainability. They are also fifty percent more likely to have CEO commitment to sustainability, fifty percent more likely to have a person responsible for sustainability in each business unit and more than two and a half times as likely to have a chief sustainability officer (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1; Sustainable Business, 2012).

These findings point to the fact that strategising requires leadership. Strategies can be developed through a prescriptive or emergent process. The prescriptive strategic process involves long term monitoring and control. Leaders are expected to devise thoughtful, informed and deliberate decisions that will lead to achieving organisational goals. The leader is expected to 'know the way and show the way and go the way' (Crews, 2010:18). The emergent process entails active experimenting learning and adjusting (Lynch, 2009:1).

Most literature sources addressing strategising for sustainability identify it as being a continual process, a continuum towards an ultimate sustainability and business goal (Bonn & Fisher, 2011:12). The process is viewed as 'gradual, planned, continuous and ongoing incremental change' (Holton *et al.*, 2010:153; Smith & Sharicz, 2011:5; Velazquez *et al.*, 2011:41). However, Hallstedt *et al.*, (2010:703) suggest that under the circumstance within which sustainability has presented itself, that being highly pressured and dynamic, companies are adapting to sustainability by emergent means and not having prescriptively planned for it (Crews, 2010:17).

In this research, leadership, as in the actors and practitioners in strategising for sustainability, was a component that was proposed by the sample and then rated by

the sample as the most important strategising component for embedding sustainability. The rank findings also confirmed leadership's position as the most important component and it is these practitioners that are needed to drive the organisational mindset for sustainability and to drive the strategic change either prescriptively or by emergent means.

The research findings confirm that companies aspiring to strategise for sustainability need to first turn to leadership to guide the organisational mindset and to develop strategy. Leadership has been confirmed as pivotal to responding to this radically different market reality and business dimension, one that unifies the profit, ecological and social spheres in a single integrated value creation space (Laszlo & Zhexembayeva, 2011:2).

The apparent inverse correlation between importance and frequency utilisation

Leadership was the strategising component rated as least frequently used in strategising for sustainability and the micro analysis served to emphasise that top management asserted that leadership as a strategising component was used even less frequently than the rest of the sample considered it to be. The deviation between the importance rating of top management and the frequency utilisation was the highest deviation in the findings, suggesting the biggest differences in scoring by practitioners.

There are two managerial implications drawn from these findings. The first refers to the visibility and active involvement of leadership when embedding sustainability. Judging from the rating on frequency given, practitioners appear to not consider leadership to be active in the strategising for sustainability process nor very visible. Alternatively, they are simply not communicating the key organisational outcomes and vision and mission for sustainability with the rest of the strategising practitioners. This highlights the need for leadership to be active and visible in driving change and in the implementation of sustainability.

The second managerial implication refers to top management not being cognisant of their role in leadership. Top management did not rate their own role of leadership for sustainability as a frequent activity or role used in strategising for sustainability. Yet, sixty percent of the time when top management strategise for sustainability, they utilise frequently, the strategising components that the sample of practitioners rated as important, namely: workshops teams, project teams and incorporating sustainability into corporate goals. The researchers believe that top management might not be confident in their role in embedding sustainability but are still active in strategising for sustainability given their other important and highly frequently used strategising activities.

Informal discussions was the strategising practice used most frequently and the practice considered least important for strategising for sustainability. In fact, it was rated as even more frequently used by top management than the rest of the sample. Informal discussions on sustainability can be described as conversations lacking clear objective direction, the need for a solution or general consensus or direction and lacking measurability. In spite of the criticism for informal discussions as a

strategising practice and the lowest rating given for importance, informal discussions have the following management implications for embedding sustainability:

Firstly, given the high frequency of use as an activity, it can be said that informal discussions are an overflow of concern by practitioners and attests towards the relevance and urgency attached to sustainability. This is clear from practitioners using unplanned time as opportunities to discuss sustainability and the business implications.

Secondly, it was highlighted earlier in the discussion that whilst strategising for sustainability is mostly referred to as being a prescriptive strategy, the current circumstances with in sustainability has presented itself in business, that being highly pressured and dynamic, propels companies to adapt to sustainability by emergent means. Emergent strategies are characterised by their lack of formal planning and decision making and defined as being a process of adjusting and learning. Given that top management in the sample, utilised informal discussions most frequently, even more frequently than the rest of the sample, the researchers suggest that strategising for sustainability in practice is taking an emergent means and future research should take cognisance of this process and the implications on strategising.

An implication of an emergent strategising process is that business strategising is more informal but is still purposely driven by leadership towards the goals of the company. Emergent strategising entails active experimenting learning and adjusting (Lynch, 2009:1).

This point is further supported by the findings on frequency that surmise that, top management, after using informal discussions most frequently, use other measurable strategy formulation and implementation components including; PowerPoint presentations, workshops, reports and project teams. This emphasises that strategising practices are being used frequently, by what appears to be by 'learning and adjusting means' (Lynch, 2009:1).

The most utilised strategising components and their effectiveness as a 'coordinated means' to achieve a strategy for sustainability

This research set out to determine the strategising process for sustainability, in other words, to investigate the 'coordinated means' by which practitioners formulate and implement strategy.

Workshops, project teams and the incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals were the practices and praxis' that practitioners rated as frequently used in strategising and these were also rated as the highly important practices and praxis's. Management should focus on these strategising components for embeddings sustainability.

These three highly utilised strategising components are also those rated as important (top four rated) for strategising for sustainability. Their effectiveness as components in strategising are confirmed by literature on the topic of sustainability and the measurability.

It has become clear from Figure 1 that frequency scored much lower than importance on a five point scale. Whilst practitioners were found to be utilising the strategising components overall less than they are considered important, workshops, project teams and the praxis of incorporating sustainability into corporate goals attest to effective strategising as these components are activities of both strategy formulation and implementation.

This research informs and directs management towards the strategising components considered important for embedding sustainability into strategising and uses a case study as an 'in practice' reference for the process. Furthermore, management can make informed resource and time allocation decisions with this information.

This research has researched the 'who' of strategising (practitioners), determined the 'what' of strategising, namely the components in their activities in the context of sustainability and measured the 'how' or specifically the 'how often' strategising for sustainability is done. Findings also contribute to the SSI tool that measures sustainability embeddedness in companies. From a clearer picture on what practitioners are doing (or not), management are able to make strategic decisions towards focussing on the practices and praxis for embedding sustainability and by which, increase their rating for utilisation (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2007:5; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69).

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTED

Simons, (2009) reports that critics of the case study method believe that the research of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. That it is too subjective to contribute to grounded theory or policy making on the topic. Others propose that the intense exposure to the study of the case, in fact biases the findings. Some dismiss case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool. Yet researchers continue to use the case study research method with success in carefully planned and crafted studies of real-life situations, issues, and problems (Yin, 2003).

Limitations

During the facilitation session there were these limitations and biases:

Noise and Distraction: The sample of practitioners involved colleagues resulting in conversations sometimes started amongst colleagues. Also, on occasion practitioners left the room to take a phone call. Other noise disturbances occurred when people arrived late or left early. The facilitator tried to minimise break out discussion or attention to the distraction through mechanisms of engagement.

One senior management practitioner got aggressive and did not support the methodology of the evaluation and facilitation process used by the facilitator. This caused him to make verbal outbursts and leave half way through the session. Other participants were surprised at this colleague's behaviour. This served as a distraction

before continuing with the process. The results obtained were considered for skewness of results however, it was found to have no drastic impact on the research.

Time Constraints: In light of needing to get through the necessary questions during the period allocated, questions were asked directly with a short explanation. Little time was provided for discussion or in depth thinking and practitioners needed to respond quickly.

Case study as a limitation: Case study research, while an appropriate research approach for researching sustainability embeddedness of companies on the JSE ALSI Top 40, it is not without its limitations and problems. A major limitation of a single case study is the lack of statistical generalizability (Simons, 2009). This research did not have a goal of generalise ability but one of understanding a complex phenomenon. It was to determine what practices and praxis by practitioners are applied when strategising for sustainability. The researchers believe however, that insofar as Growthpoint may be a revelatory case of strategising for sustainability, it was possible to abstract or distil important conclusions and learning from the research.

Suggested future research

It has been supposed that, despite the powerful forces for corporate sustainability, including global pressure, informed leadership, the availability of tools and frameworks, and its connection to business performance – the embeddedness of sustainability may be impeded by equally strong forces against its implementation (Hillestad *et al.*, 2010:440; Klaine & Von Hauff 2009:520; Reilly, 2009:33).

This research has investigated and determined the strategising components for embedding sustainability. There was an apparent inverse use between practices, practitioners and praxis rated important to those which were utilised frequently. Literature has suggested that a sustainability embedded strategy is dependent on the management and leadership decisions within the organisational structures regarding its implementation (Haanaes, *et al.*, 2012:1). Practitioners and their strategising activities within their organisational structures has been assessed however, the reasons or barriers affecting the inverse strategising utilisation and importance requires future research and investigation.

Another research could investigate the leadership role in strategising for sustainability as it was rated the most important in spite of being least utilised. Future research could also bring clarity to the process of strategising for sustainability in practice is taking place.

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies.
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the outcome of this research in the form of a summary of findings. In doing so, it will address how the problem statement has been addressed and the accomplishment towards answering of the research questions and propositions. Overall conclusions will be briefly discussed on account of them having been debated in depth in the research articles. This will be followed by a summary of practical contributions of the research. The research limitations will be reviewed along with the research ethics applicable to the research. This chapter will end with suggested future research to expand the body of knowledge on the topic of sustainability and strategising.

The problem statement of this research determined that:

There appears to be a gap between the official declarations of companies (the talk) and actual organisational behaviour through execution (the walk) - that is lagging behind. Sustainability claims are made on corporate websites and in reports but are believed not necessarily to be part of company strategising. Strategists are struggling to embed sustainability in strategising which questions the external communication and reporting. The problem to be investigated is this implementation gap in strategising for sustainability.

7.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

7.1.1 Research Question 1

The purpose of the first article was to determine the level of sustainability embeddedness in strategising by investigating the public and external communication of companies. The research investigated the extent to which sustainability was embedded in the elements of strategy formulation and implementation (and not merely surface level statements and claims). The leading research question was: What is the status of strategising for sustainability? Is there evidence that sustainability is embedded into strategising?

By determining the level of sustainability embeddedness, this research was able to comment on the status of strategising for sustainability in companies on the JSE. The current status of strategising for sustainability amongst the JSE's Top 40 ALSI, according to research on company external communication, is described in the following summary paragraphs:

Firstly, it was possible for the researcher to use the SSI framework and measurement criteria and apply it to the external communication to measure the embeddedness of sustainability claims for each company. Secondly, each element of the SSI tool could be judged on the unique scale for the specific element. Aggregating the scores led to an overall score that could be used to rank the sample companies for the level of embeddedness of sustainability claims in elements of strategising - thereby offering discriminating value to the tool.

It was found that sustainability claims were partially embedded and not equally embedded in strategising according to research on the external communication of the sample. The Top 40 JSE Companies strategising claims were not equally embedded in the process of strategising. Whilst companies did score embeddedness ratings out of 5, it was found that the score was lower for the formulation elements than the implementation elements. This begs the question if projects (forming part of implementation efforts) are not being implemented on an ad hoc basis when they are not necessarily formulated as part of a strategy.

Sustainability claims were found to be partially embedded in strategising depending on whether formulation or implementation components were judged. Companies on the JSE top 40 appear to focus more on the implementation aspects of strategising and this is a contributing reason as to why the average embeddedness rating for implementation was a high score.

The average level of sustainability embeddedness for dedicated staff – those to carry out the implementation of sustainability - had the lowest overall average. The lack of tactical and operational staff amongst the companies surely impacts their ability to strategise for sustainability which advocates that sustainability claims are partially embedded in strategising.

The findings support that there were strategising gaps regarding the embeddedness of sustainability claims. There was a discrepancy between the scores for formulation and implementation of sustainability embeddedness. Most companies also scored high on compliance suggesting that the approach to strategising for sustainability may be compliance driven.

Some companies met the measurement criteria and requirements for elements of sustainability implementation in spite of the initiatives often lacking incorporation in the vision or specific sustainability objective. This attests to the strategising gaps exposed by the SSI tool.

Overall, this SSI tool addresses the potential ‘superfluous’ claims surrounding sustainability and puts into perspective those companies who have successfully demonstrated that sustainability is not just for reputation purposes and is in fact part of their strategising and operating as a listed company.

7.1.2 Research Question 2

The purpose of the second article was to investigate if the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) tool could be applied in practice by using practitioner validated measures. The research investigated the SSI tool after it had been theoretically founded in the literature on sustainability and strategising. The research sought support for empirical research that supported its validity and application in practice. The leading research question for this part of the study was: Is the proposed SSI tool valid (accurate and relevant as measurements) for application in practice?

The SSI tool’s application to practice in search for support in reference to forms of validity, accuracy and relevance was studied and the findings are described in the following summary paragraphs:

It was found that all elements of the SSI tool were supported as indicators and valid measures for determining strategising for sustainability although practitioners differed on the extent of their support. Over all, all measures for determining strategising for sustainability were considered primarily to be 'somewhat' to 'highly' supported by practitioners in practice.

Practitioners rated the level of embeddedness of sustainability in their company using each element of the SSI tool. The practitioners used their experiences and understanding as a frame of reference. The findings for the embeddedness question, using the elements of the SSI tool, indicated that sustainability was embedded evenly across the elements of strategising for sustainability. The strategy implementation mean rating, according to practitioners, was slightly less than formulation which suggests more strategic planning than executing. This contrasts the findings on the SSI tool as applied to publically available communication of Growthpoint (the case company). The research reported more strategy implementation than formulation present on the corporate website and other sources. This confirms a degree of disjointedness between what is said and what is done however, also determines that the SSI tool is very accurate in measuring the level of embeddedness as the deviation is very minimal. Furthermore, these findings lend support to the SSI tool's ability to be used to rate embeddedness of sustainability in practice (and its relevance in practice).

Practitioners were asked to agree to the embeddedness rating of sustainably claims given to their company upon application of the SSI tool to their external communication. The practitioners were in most agreement (10) with the SSI tool's score for the element: Sustainability recognition and affiliation. They least agreed with the score given to the element Vision and Mission includes sustainability. In spite of there being elements of TBL sustainability in the case company's external communication warranting their previous score, practitioners in the company did not agree to the embeddedness of sustainability in their vision and mission.

The findings for rank revealed that practitioners found the element: specific measures and targets for sustainability to be most important by ranking it first (rank score = 10). Practitioners ranked the integrated report as least important suggesting that it demonstrates the least embeddedness of sustainability in strategising.

Practitioners supported the SSI elements as a means of measurement of sustainability embeddedness and then used the same elements to make decisions about sustainability embeddedness in practice. Additionally, the findings between the researcher's score and the level of embeddedness determined by practitioners demonstrated the accuracy of the tool and lastly, the ranking of importance revealed practitioners ability to distinguish the elements further as suitable measures of sustainability embeddedness. Sufficient support was found as practitioners, by means of rating and judging the elements of the SSI tool as measures for determining sustainability embeddedness in strategising, supported the SSI tool as valid for sustainability measurement.

7.1.3 Research Question 3

The purpose of the third article was to determine what practices and praxis practitioners apply when strategising for sustainability. The research set out to

ascertain the ability of practitioners to identify, rate and judge strategising for sustainability in their every day practices and praxis (strategising components).

Research was guided by the following research question: What practices and praxis are applied when strategising for sustainability?

This part of the research set out to determine what practices and praxis by practitioners are applied when strategising for sustainability. In other words; what are practitioners doing (or not) to embed sustainability into strategising? The researcher found that practitioners could rate their own embeddedness rating for strategising for sustainability on ten elements. This leads to inquiry into – what do they do (or not do) to obtain the specific rating of embeddedness? Having determined the status of strategising for sustainability amongst the JSE ALSI 40 companies and the level of sustainability embeddedness of sustainability in a case company, the research set out to determine what activities or strategising components are carried out in practice in the process of strategising for sustainability. For this, eight strategising components (practices and praxis) were proposed. After the practitioners were introduced to the eight proposed strategising components they were then asked to verbally suggest other: ‘every-day’ strategising components (activities) that contribute to the ‘doing of strategy’ that would result in the embeddedness of sustainability in company strategic outcomes. After suggestions were made, unanimous group consensus was to introduce; ‘leadership’ and ‘benchmarking’ as additional strategising components to be applied in the research. The findings are summarised in the following paragraphs:

Practitioners were asked to rate the importance of strategising activities in reference to embedding sustainability in their company. The findings reveal that practitioners were of the view and opinion that the most important strategising components for embedding sustainability was leadership for sustainability followed by the incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals and sustainability related workshops. Other highly rated strategising components were project teams, policy documents and benchmarking. On the bottom end of the findings, practitioners rated the least important strategising components, in their opinion, for strategising for sustainability. The least important strategising component for sustainability in the case company context was informal discussions. Informal discussions are those in-between passing conversations that emerge on a casual basis amongst other more ‘urgent’ day to day tasks and discussions.

The frequency of use of the strategising components was measured. Practitioners were asked how often they used the presented strategising components in their company for embedding sustainability. Practitioners on average rated the most frequently used strategising component to be informal discussions pertaining to sustainability followed by reports on sustainability and sustainability related workshops. The least frequently used strategising component for embedding sustainability was leadership. Growthpoint practitioners rated leadership least utilised along with policy documents and intranet projects.

Two seemingly contradictory findings emerged from reviewing the rating responses from the first two questions (importance and frequency). Leadership was rated the most important strategising component for embedding sustainability and was rated the least frequently used in the case company. Similarly, informal discussions was

rated the least important component for strategising for sustainability and yet, it was rated the most frequently used practice.

The final question asked to practitioners was a request to observe all the activities presented to them (10 strategising components) and rank them according to their importance. Through the rank exercise, practitioners reconsidered the importance of certain activities and the rank findings confirm that leadership is the most important strategising component. Practitioners also supported workshops for sustainability as highly important, also the incorporation of sustainability into corporate goals, policy documents and project teams.

Practitioners supported all ten strategising components lending support to the components and answering the 'what' part of the question. They also rated the elements' importance which emphasises their suitability as components describing the practices and praxis in strategising. The practitioners also rated the frequency of use of the components and as such, described how they are applied in strategising for sustainability.

The findings were sufficient to answer all the propositions in the studies and the research questions. The implementation gap between the official declarations of companies (the talk) and actual organisational behaviour through execution (the walk) – has been addressed. Sustainability claims that were made on corporate websites and in reports have been tested for their embeddedness in sustainability and have been compared to the internal strategising for sustainability of a case company. The research also studied the practices and praxis carried out by strategists when embedding sustainability into strategising and thereby contributing to improving the process of embedding sustainability in strategising.

7.2 SUMMARY OF PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The strategising for sustainability status determined and described in this research through application of SSI tool to the JSE ALSI 40 companies' external communication offers value in the following ways:

- **Addressing strategising gaps and better informed decision making:** knowledge of the communicated level of embeddedness in strategising affords management the opportunity to evaluate the strategising for sustainability process internally and ensure it is aligned with what is communicated. The findings afford management the chance to make future informed decision making on strategising and on the communication to stakeholders.
- **Improvement of communication strategy:** Awareness of the status of one's company offers a basis to improve or redesign the existing communication, reporting processes, marketing and corporate website design to project sustainability embeddedness as opposed to ad hoc sustainability claims and implementation efforts.
- **Company benchmarking:** The Top 40 leading companies on the JSE were benchmarked on the embeddedness of strategising. The information the company was measured on, was their external communication that is relayed to investors. With this information, management is able to model a framework for

the company to address the elements that the company does not achieve on. Their motivation to be aware of weak areas is so that improvements can be made to attract the socially responsible investor.

- **Sustainability investing:** the benchmarking quality of the SSI tool affords investors comparability and the ability to discriminate between companies to invest in. Investors who want to ensure the sustainability embeddedness and longevity of a company' strategising can interpret the level with this SSI tool.
- **Holistic sustainability measurement:** the SSI tool was formulated on literature on the topic as well as an incorporation of best practice for sustainability. Measurement criteria included these and as such, the level of sustainability embeddedness of a company that was determined provides management with a holistic picture and measurement of sustainability in strategising.
- **Quick access to information:** This SSI tool can be used without internal investigation and access to restricted strategies and policies. It can be used with easily accessible publicly available communication. It doesn't require confidential information. Managers who want the year on year results of their level of sustainability embeddedness in public communication can acquire outside skills for application of the SSI tool without disruption of day to day activities.
- **Discriminating quality of SSI tool:** the SSI tool contextualises sustainability within strategising and provides a level of embeddedness. This offers management the ability to determine the sustainability embeddedness level of their company in a way that is different to the current indexes and market capitalisation rankings.

Having gained support for the SSI tool in practice, the research findings attest to practitioners enjoying the following benefits from the application of the SSI tool to the case company:

- **Resource and time allocation:** the results highlight the embeddedness ratings of the case company according to practitioners in the company. These have also been compared to the publically available communication. Knowledge of company embeddedness allows for improvement and heightened awareness of shortfalls for resources to be allocated accurately towards. The results also show those elements that practitioners find most important in determining sustainability embeddedness allowing more attention to be paid towards those indicators.
- **Knowledge:** results show management the opinions, views and experience of staff towards strategising for sustainability. Few companies are informed of their staff perceptions. This knowledge can transcend into informed organisational restructuring and management knowhow.
- **Legitimacy:** the findings also compared the embeddedness rating of the SSI tool on public communication to the ratings by practitioners. The results indicated the alignment of claims with actions. This SSI tool can aid them to monitor this result to uphold legitimacy.

The process of determining the practices and praxis applied when strategising for sustainability not only provided findings to answer the research question and propositions but to also offer valuable insight for the case company and general business. The value is determined as:

- **Prioritising efforts:** Practitioners can become acquainted with those strategising components considered most important to the process of embedding sustainability into strategising. They therefore can prioritize their time and resources towards these important elements.
- **Effective embeddedness implementation:** The knowledge of those important strategising components also yields the opportunity for businesses to devise internal measurement standards whereby they do not consider themselves to be embedding sustainability effectively unless the top three most important strategising components are met.
- **Aligning importance and frequency:** Practitioners are now also aware of the strategising components most and least utilised by practitioners and can steer corporate behaviour away from frequent application of strategising components that are considered less important towards frequent use of those that are rated as most important.

7.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

7.3.1 Case study and practice theory limitations:

Critics of case study methodology challenge its ability to be generalised. This is also the case with micro strategy. Micro strategy studies are said to not be generalisable. It has been said that micro strategy studies do not contribute to the strategy agenda (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007:6). Simons (2009) reiterates that a major limitation of a single case study is the lack of statistical generalisation. This research, however, did not have a goal of generalisability but one of understanding a complex phenomenon. Stake, (1995) promotes that case studies invite modification of the generalisation. An exemplary case study is likely neither to establish a generalization nor to modify one but to increase the confidence that readers have in the researcher's generalisation. Stake (1995) emphasises that the real business of a case study is particularisation and not generalization. That it is the process of taking a particular case and setting out to understand the problem better, not to just know how it is different from others but also to understand what the case is and what it does. The purpose is to understand the uniqueness of the case. The researchers attest to researching the uniqueness of the case company in terms of embedding sustainability in strategising. Furthermore, insofar as the specific case company may be a revelatory case of strategising for sustainability, it was possible to abstract or distil important conclusions and learning from the research from a holistic perspective. These conclusions describe the particular case and setting for further learning.

7.3.2 Accounting for researcher's experience and knowledge:

The researcher began this research with experience with the case company and its development process of embedding sustainability in strategising. As an employee of the case company, the researcher had pre-existing knowledge and experience. Qualitative research promotes that the researcher enter a study with openness to finding out what the phenomenon is about. Pre-existing concepts and assumptions can blind the researcher and act as a filter that inhibits him/her from seeing important and salient details in the phenomenon. Such researcher bias threatens the credibility

of the data and the overall trustworthiness of the research. Researchers should strive for neutrality in the research. The researcher acknowledges these potential limitations applicable and has addressed them by attempting to accommodate the past experience and take a stance of neutrality. The development of a suitable research tool reflects the benefits of a level of understanding and experience at the onset of the research. Furthermore, the past experience can be considered less of a limitation when considering Patton's (1990:473) points. He points towards the factors related to the researcher and the distorting of the findings of a study. Those applicable are 1) the effects of the research on the phenomenon, 2) the effects of the phenomenon on the researcher and 3) researcher competence.

With reference to the 'effects of the phenomenon on the researcher', the past experience of the researcher with the case company helped minimize these effects. Qualitative research assumes the researcher will be affected by what is being studied and this was actually mitigated by the creation of a primary measurement instrument and an understanding of the problem from a practice perspective at the on sought of the research.

7.3.3 Potential influencing factors:

This research included the researcher, the measurement SSI tool and the interpretation of the English language to judge the strategising claims in sources of external communication. One researcher was positioned to interpret the information and then judge it according to a descriptive scale. In its current form, the research was therefore subject to several biases. With this type of descriptive research, come the following research limitations and biases;

Researcher bias: deriving from one of the researchers being an employee of the case company. She had access to the inside happenings of the business and has adopted elements of corporate culture and loyalty. It made judging the company on the basis of only external communication and not internal knowhow a challenge

Forced bias: the SSI tool is an interpretive model that leans heavily on the researcher's assimilation. Judgement was made according to the scale and the researcher's assessment of the communicated pieces of information. In some cases a sustainability claim may have been applicable to two different ratings out of 5. Out of necessity, the researcher had to rate the claim which resulted in a level of forced bias.

Distraction and noise interruptions when researching: A stylish and modern website that was user friendly also served as a limitation as the researcher needed to avoid getting distracted by these visual factors when ascertaining how the company has strategised for sustainability.

Unachieved scores: A company that may truly integrate sustainability into strategising but fail to create an effective communication strategy will not appear in good light with this SSI tool as they would have not be awarded a score for embeddedness in the elements of strategising.

During the facilitation session on the case company there were these limitations and biases:

Noise and Distraction: The sample of practitioners involved colleagues resulting in conversations sometimes started amongst colleagues. Also, on occasion sample practitioners left the room to take a phone call. Other noise disturbances occurred when people arrived late or left early. The facilitator tried to minimise break out discussion or attention to the distraction through mechanisms of engagement.

One senior management practitioner got aggressive and did not support the methodology of the evaluation and facilitation process used by the facilitator. This caused him to make verbal outbursts and leave half way through the session. Other participants were surprised at this colleague's behaviour. This served as a distraction before continuing with the process. The results obtained were considered for skewness of results however, it was found to have no drastic impact on the research.

Time Constraints: In light of needing to get through the necessary questions during the period allocated, questions were asked directly with a short explanation. Little time was provided for discussion or in depth thinking and practitioners needed to respond quickly as their first thoughts were important to the study.

7.4 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethics, the subjective societal norms accepted by a group of people that guide a specific society's perception of acceptable behaviour, has been considered in this research. The following codes of ethics that were identified and addressed (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:31-53):

Objectivity, Integrity and Honesty: At all times the researcher strived to avoid bias in data analysis, data interpretation and other aspects of research where objectivity was expected or required. The researcher avoided or minimized bias or self-deception and act with sincerity.

Carefulness: A point was made to avoid careless errors and negligence by carefully and critically examining the research. Care was taken to insure good records of research activities, such as data collection and research design.

Fabrication / Falsification of data: The researcher did not at any time fabricate or falsify any information or data obtained.

7.5 SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH

Literature and industry conversation has raised concern regarding the alignment of implementation efforts with core business. Businesses have been found to show inconsistency between the purposes, existence and positioning of the business and implementation efforts. Further research can explore the question: Are implementation efforts in line with the core business of the company or merely fashion projects?

The present scope of research included the Top 40 companies on the JSE ALSI ranked by market capitalisation. The research distinguished those companies who had embedded sustainability in strategising from those who held their position due to market capitalisation or by impressive sustainability claims. Further research could investigate the sustainability performance or levels of embeddedness of these Top 40 companies and judge the performance of the industries within which companies fall into. The research could compare the strategising for sustainability performance of industry sectors to identify industry influences and highlight market leaders. The research could be through application of the SSI tool to both external and internal strategising. Practice theory classifies research applications to industry sectors as a meso perspective.

Future research could also expand the scope of research to further explore the gap between what is said and what is done with other Top 40 JSE companies. The internal investigation with a practice approach utilising case study methodology yielded much insight and value. This same insight could be of great interest to other companies on the JSE. Specifically those that were measured by the SSI tool on the external communication.

Through this research process, it was found that practitioners have an ability to identify, rate and rank strategising for sustainability in their every day strategising activities. This research has investigated the gap between what is said and what is done but whilst the exact forces impeding sustainability embeddedness are unclear, this research has provided insight into those strategising components (practitioners, praxis and practices) considered important and which are being utilised frequently. Future research could delve deeper into this implementation gap and identify or classify the forces affecting sustainability embeddedness.

The research on case company to determine the practices and praxis applied in strategising for sustainability provided much insight into what practitioners are doing to embed sustainability into strategising. Similar studies on other case companies could attribute to the body of literature on the topic and yield much practical value for another case company.

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies.
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

8. REFERENCES

8.1 REFERENCES FOR INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Adams, C.A. & Frost, G.R, 2008. Integrating sustainability reporting into management practices. *Accounting Forum*, 32(4):288-302.

Bonn, I. & Fisher, J. 2011. Sustainability: the missing ingredient in strategy. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 32(1):5-14.

Bowers, T. 2010. From Image to economic value: the genre of sustainability reporting. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):249-262.

Business Dictionary, 2012. Definition of sustainable competitive advantage. [Online] Available from: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/sustainable-competitive-advantage.html#ixzz23L1rQNcR>. [Accessed: 2011-05-23]

Carpenter, M.A. & W.G. Sanders. 2007. *Strategy Management: A Dynamic Perspective*. NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Capriotti, P & Moreno, A. 2007. Communicating corporate responsibility through corporate web sites in Spain. *Corporate Communications. An International Journal*, 12(3): 221-237.

Collins, E., Lawrence, S., Pavlovich, K. & Ryan, C. 2007. Business networks and the uptake of sustainability practices: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(8-9):729-740.

Coupland, C. 2005. Corporate Social Responsibility as Argument on the Web. *Journal of Business Ethics* 62(1):355–366

Cowan, D.M., Dopart, P., Ferracini, T., Sahmel, J., Merryman, K., Gaffney, S. & D.J. Paustenbach, 2010. A cross-sectional analysis of reported corporate environmental sustainability practices. *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 58(1):524-538.

Cooper, D.R. & Schindler, P.S. 2008. *Business research methods*. 10th ed. New York, New York, United States of America: McGraw-Hill/Irwin

Crews, D.E. 2010. Strategies for Implementing Sustainability: Five Leadership Challenges. *Advanced Management Journal*, 75(2):15-21.

Elmualim A, Shockley, D, Valle, R, Ludlowb, G & Shah, S. 2010. Barriers and commitment of facilities management profession to the sustainability agenda. *Building and Environment*. 45(1):58–64.

Gill, D.L, Dickinson, S.J & Scharl, A. 2008. Communicating sustainability. *Journal of communication management*, 12(3):243-262.

Hallstedt, S., Ny, H., Rovert, K. & Broman, G. 2010. An approach to assessing sustainability integration in strategic decision systems for product development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(8):703-712.

Haanaes, K, Reeves, M, Von Streng Velken, I, Audretsch, M, Kiron, D & Kruschwitz, N. 2012. Sustainability Nears a Tipping Point: Full Report. MIT Sloan Management Review, Spring 53(3):1-17.

Hillestad, T., Xie, C. & Haugland, S.A. 2010. Innovative corporate social responsibility; the founder's role in creating trustworthy corporate brand through 'green innovation'. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6):440-451.

Holton, I., Glass, J. & Price, A.D.F. 2010. Managing for Sustainability: Findings from four cases studies in the UK precast concrete industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(1):152-160.

Hodgekinson, G.P & Clarke, I. 2007. Conceptual note: Exploring the cognitive significance of organizational strategising: A dual-process framework and research agenda. *Human Relations*, 60(1): 243-255.

Idemudia, U. 2011. Corporate social responsibility and developing countries: Moving the critical CSR research agenda in Africa forward. *Progress in Development Studies*, 11(1):1-18.

Jarzabkowski, P. & Spee, A.P. 2009. Strategy-as-practise: a review and future directions for the field. *Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(1):69-95.

Klaine, A. & Von Hauff, M, 2009. Sustainability-Driven Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility: Application of the Integrative Sustainability Triangle. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (2009) 85:517–533.

Lacy, P., Arnott, J. & Lowitt, E. 2009. The challenge of integrating sustainability into talent and organisation strategies: investigating into the knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve high performance. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):484-494.

Laszlo, C & Zhexembayeva, N. 2011. *Embedded sustainability: the next big competitive advantage*. UK: Greenleaf Publishing.

Leon-Soriana,R, Munoz-Tirress, M.J. & Chalmeta-Rosalen, R. 2010. Methodology for sustainability strategic planning and management. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 110(2): 249-268.

Lee, M.J. Fairhurst, A. & Wesley, S. 2009. Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of the Top 100 US Retailers. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(2):140–158.

Lubin, D.A & Esty, D. C. 2010. The Sustainability Imperative. [Online] Available from: <http://hbr.org/2010/05/the-sustainability-imperative/>. [Accessed: 2012-05-19]

Owen, D. 2008. Chronicles of wasted time? A personal reflection on the current state of, and future prospects for, social and environmental accounting research. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 21(2):240-267.

Patton, M. Q. 1990. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Quinn, L & Dalton, M. 2009. Leading for sustainability: implementing the tasks of leadership. *Corporate Governance*, 9(1):21-38.

Riccaboni, A. & Leone, E.L. 2010. Implementing strategies through management control systems: a case of sustainability. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. 59(2):130-144.

Reilly, A.H. 2009. Communicating Sustainability Initiatives in Corporate Reports: Linking Implications to Organisational Change. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 74(3):33-43.

Rolland, D & Bazzoni, J.O. 2009. Greening corporate identity: CSR online corporate identity reporting. Corporate Communications. *An International Journal*, 14(3), 249-263.

Searcy, C. 2009. Setting the course in corporate sustainability performance measurement. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 13(3):49-57.

Smith, P.A.C & Sharicz, C. 2011. The shift needed for sustainability. *The Learning Organisation*, 18(1):73-86.

Simons, H. 2009. *Case Study Research in Practice*. UK: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Trendwatching, 2010. 10 Crucial Consumer Trends of 2012. Available from: <http://trendwatching.com/trends/10trends2010/> [Accessed: 2012-04-19].

UNCTAD, 2011. Definition of Sustainability Claims. Available from: <http://193.194.138.42/en/Sustainability-Claims-Portal/> [Accessed: 2011-05-21]

Uusi-Rauva, C & Nurkka, J. 2010. Effective internal environment-related communication: An employee perspective. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):299-314.

Velazquez, L.E., Esquer, J. & Munguia, N.E. 2011. Sustainable learning organisations. *The Learning Organisation*, 18(1):36-44.

Whittington, R. 2007. Strategy practise and strategy process: family differences and the sociological eye. *Organisation Studies*, 28(10):1575-1586.

WBCSD, 2012. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development. [Online] Available from: <http://www.wbcsd.org/> 2012. [Accessed: 2011-05-22]

8.2 REFERENCES FOR LITERATURE REVIEWS

- Accenture (2007), "End-consumer survey on climate change", available at: www.accenture.com/NR/rdonlyres/E213172C-A792-499C-84F8-058BE70D213E/0/ClimateChangeConsumerSurveyKeyfindings.pdf [Downloaded: 15 March 2011]
- Adams, C.A. 2004. The ethical, social and environmental reporting-performance portrayal gap, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 17(5):731-57.
- Adams, C.A. & Frost, G.R, 2008. Integrating sustainability reporting into management practices. *Accounting Forum*, 32(4):288-302.
- Adams, C.A. & Larrinaga-Gonzalez, C. 2007. Engaging with organizations in pursuit of improved sustainability accounting and performance, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 20(3):333-355.
- Aldama, L.R.P, Amar, P.A & Trostianki, 2009. Embedding corporate responsibility through effective organizational structures. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):506-516.
- Balogun, J., Huff, A.S. & Johnson, P. 2003. Three responses to the methodological challenges of studying strategising. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(1):197-224.
- Barney, J.B. 1986. Organisational culture: can it be a source of sustained competitive advantage? *Academy of Management Review*, 11(3):656-665.
- Barney, J.B. 1991. Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 7:41-56.
- Bonn, I. & Fisher, J. 2011. Sustainability: the missing ingredient in strategy. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 32(1):5-14.
- Bowman, E.H. & Helfat, C.E. 2001. "Does corporate strategy matter?" *Strategic Management Journal*, 22(1):1-24.
- Bowers, T. 2010. From Image to economic value: the genre of sustainability reporting. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):249-262.
- Brews, P.J. & Hunt, M.R, 1999. Planning to learn: Resolving the planning school/learning School debate. *Strategic Management Journal*. 20(1): 889–913
- Bromiley, P. & Papenhausen, C. 2003. Assumptions of rationality and equilibrium in strategy research: the limits of traditional economic analysis. *Strategic Organization*, 1(4): 413-437.
- Carter, C., Clegg, S.R. & Kornberger, M. 2008. Strategy as practice? *Strategic Organisation*, 6(1): 83–99
- Carpenter, M.A. & W.G. Sanders. 2007. *Strategy Management: A Dynamic Perspective*. NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Capriotti, P & Moreno, A. 2007. Communicating corporate responsibility through corporate web sites in Spain. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 12(3) 2007: 221-237

Chia, R. & MacKay, B. 2007. Post-processual challenges for the emerging strategy-as-practise perspective: discovering strategy in the logic of practise. *Human Relations*, 60(1):217-242.

Christensen, C.M., Johnson, C.W & Horn, I.B. 2008. *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*: 1st Edition. USA: McGraw-Hill

Collis, D. J. 1991. A resource-based analysis of global competition: the case of the bearings industry. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12(winter): 49-68.

Collins, E., Lawrence, S., Pavlovich, K. & Ryan, C. 2007. Business networks and the uptake of sustainability practices: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(8-9):729-740.

Coupland, C. 2005. Corporate Social Responsibility as Argument on the Web. *Journal of Business Ethics* 62(1):355–366

Cowan, D.M., Dopart, P., Ferracini, T., Sahmel, J., Merryman, K., Gaffney, S. & D.J. Paustenbach, 2010. A cross-sectional analysis of reported corporate environmental sustainability practices. *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 58(1):524-538.

Crews, D.E. 2010. Strategies for Implementing Sustainability: Five Leadership Challenges. *Advanced Management Journal*, 75(2):15-21.

Dawkins, C & Ngujiri, F.W. 2008. Corporate social responsibility reporting In South Africa. *Journal of business communication*, 45(1):236-259

Elmualim A, Shockley, D, Valle, R, Ludlowb, G & Shah, S. 2010. Barriers and commitment of facilities management profession to the sustainability agenda. *Building and Environment*. 45(1):58–64

Gill, D.L, Dickinson, S.J & Scharl, A. 2008. Communicating sustainability. *Journal of communication management*, 12(3):243-262

Grandy, G. & Mills, A.J. 2004. Strategy as Simularca? A Radical Reflexive Look at the Discipline and Practise of Strategy*. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(7):1153-1170.

Gray, R. 2002. The social accounting project and accounting, organizations and society: privileging engagement, imaginings, new accountings and pragmatism over critique?, *Accounting Organisations and Society*, 27(7):687-708.

Hallstedt, S., Ny, H., Rovert, K. & Broman, G. 2010. An approach to assessing sustainability integration in strategic decision systems for product development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(8):703-712.

Haugstad, B. 1999. *Strategy Theory: a short review of literature*. Netherlands: SINTEF Industrial Management.

Hillestad, T., Xie, C. & Haugland, S.A. 2010. Innovative corporate social responsibility; the founder's role in creating trustworthy corporate brand through "green innovation". *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6):440-451.

Holton, I., Glass, J. & Price, A.D.F. 2010. Managing for Sustainability: Findings from four cases studies in the UK precast concrete industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(1):152-160.

Hughes, E.C. 1971. *The sociological eye: selected papers*. Chicago, Washington, United States of America: Aldine-Atherton.

Idemudia, U. 2011. Corporate social responsibility and developing countries: Moving the critical CSR research agenda in Africa forward. *Progress in Development Studies*, 11(1):1-18

Ince.motiv. 2010. Audit of the 2010 Annual Review - King III and best practice guidelines and recommendations for Growthpoint Properties. *Ince.motiv*: 18-23

Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J. & Seidi, D. 2007. Strategising: the challenges of a practise perspective. *Human Relations*, 60(5):5-27.

Jarzabkowski, P. & Whittington, R. 2008. A strategy-as-practise approach to strategy research and education. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(4):282-286.

Jarzabkowski, P. & Spee, A.P. 2009. Strategy-as-practise: a review and future directions for the field. *Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(1):69-95.

Johnson, G., Melin, L. & Whittington, R. 2003. Guest editors' introduction: micro strategy and strategising: towards an activity-based view. *Journal of Management Studies, Guest Editors Edition*, 40(1):3-22.

Kaplan, S. 2006. *Strategy and PowerPoint*: Communication genres and the practice of strategy making. In: Organisation Studies Summer Conference: Re-turn To Practice: Understanding Organisation as it Happens, Mykonos, Greece, 15–16. June 2006.

Kim, W.C & Mauborgne, R. 2005. *Blue Ocean Strategy*. USA: Harvard school press.

Klaine, A. & Von Hauff, M, 2009. Sustainability-Driven Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility: Application of the Integrative Sustainability Triangle. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (2009) 85:517–533.

- KPMG. 2008. A survey into the growth and sustainability issues driving consumer organisations worldwide. *KPMG International*. [Online] Available from: www.kpmg.com.au/Portals/0/KPMG%20CIES%20Survey.pdf, [Accessed: 2011-June-12]
- Lacy, P., Arnott, J. & Lowitt, E. 2009. The challenge of integrating sustainability into talent and organisation strategies: investigating into the knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve high performance. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):484-494.
- Lee, M.J. Fairhurst, A. & Wesley, S. 2009. Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of the Top 100 US Retailers. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(2):140–158
- Leon-Soriana,R, Munoz-Tirress, M.J. & Chalmeta-Rosalen, R. 2010. Methodology for sustainability strategic planning and management. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 110(2): 249-268
- Lynch, R. 2009. *Strategic Management*. 5th ed. Italy: Prentice Hall.
- Miles, R.E, Snow, C.C, Meyer, A.D. & Coleman, H.J. 1978. Organizational Strategy, Structure, and Process, *The Academy of Management Review*, 3(3) 546-562
- Mintzberg, H. 1979. Patterns of strategy formulation. *Management science*, 24(9):934-48.
- Mintzberg. H & Waters, J.A. 1985. Of Strategies, Deliberate and Emergent. *Strategic Management Journal*, 6(1):257-272
- Mintzberg, H. 1998. Strategy formation: schools of thought. In: Fredrickson, J.W. *Perspectives on strategic management*. Frand Rapids, Philadelphia, United States of America: Harper Business.
- McGahan, A. & Porter, M. 1997. "How much does industry matter, really?" *Strategic Management Journal*, 8:15-30.
- Neilson, G.L., Martin, K.L. & Powers, E. 2008. The secrets to successful strategy execution. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(6):60-73
- Orlikowski, W.J. 2000. Using technology and constituting structures: A practice lens for studying technology in organisations. *Organisation Science*, (1)11:404–428.
- Owen, D. 2008. Chronicles of wasted time? A personal reflection on the current state of, and future prospects for, social and environmental accounting research. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 21(2):240-267.
- Parker, L.D. 2005. Social and environmental accountability research: a view from the commentary box, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(6):842-860.
- Pascale, R.T. 1984. Perspective on strategy: The real story behind Honda's success. *California Management Review*, 26(3):47-72.

- Patton, M. Q. 1990. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pettigrew, A., Thomas, H. & Whittington, R. 2002. Strategic management: The strengths and limitations of a field. In: Pettigrew, A., Thomas, H. & Whittington, R. (eds.) *The handbook of strategy and management*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.
- Porter, M. 1980. *Competitive advantage*. New York, New York, United States of America: Free Press.
- Porter, M. 1985. *Competitive strategy*. New York, New York, United States of America: Free Press.
- Porter, M. 1991. Towards a dynamic theory of strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12(Winter): 95-117.
- Porter, M. E. 1996. What is strategy? *Harvard Business Review*, 74(6): 61-78.
- Priem, R. & Butler, J.E. 2001. Is the resource-based "view" a useful perspective for strategic management research? *Academy of Management Review*, 26:22-40.
- Quinn, L & Dalton, M. 2009. Leading for sustainability: implementing the tasks of leadership. *Corporate Governance*, 9(1):21-38.
- Reilly, A.H. 2009. Communicating Sustainability Initiatives in Corporate Reports: Linking Implications to Organisational Change. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 74(3):33-43.
- Riccaboni, A. & Leone, E.L. 2010. Implementing strategies through management control systems: a case of sustainability. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. 59(2):130-144.
- Rolland, D & Bazzoni, J.O. 2009. Greening corporate identity: CSR online corporate identity reporting. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 14(3), 249-263
- Searcy, C. 2009. Setting the course in corporate sustainability performance measurement. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 13(3):49-57.
- Simons, H. 2009. *Case Study Research in Practice*. UK: Sage Publications.
- Scapens, R.W. 2002. Methods of case study research. In Ryan, R.J., Scapens, R.W. & Theobald, M. (Eds), *Research Methods and Methodology in Accounting and Finance*. London: Thomson Learning.
- Sheehan, N.T. & Foss, N.J. 2009. Exploring the roots of Porter's activity-based view, *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 2(3):240 - 260
- Skinner, C & Mersham, G. 2008. Corporate social responsibility in South Africa: *Society and Business Review*. 3(3): 39-255.

Smith, P.A.C & Sharicz, C. 2011. The shift needed for sustainability. *The Learning Organisation*, 18(1):73-86.

Stake, R. 1994. *Case study*. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln. Eds., *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. E. 1995. *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sustainability Dictionary Online, 2012. Definition of Sustainability. [Online] Available from: <http://www.sustainabilitydictionary.com/>

The Guardian. 2010. Death and Devastation- and it's just the start. *The Guardian*. 31 May 2010:1 [Online] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/31/bp-oil-spill-death-impact>

Truijens, O. (2003). A Critical Review of the Resource-based View of the Firm, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands. *Sprouts: Working Papers on Information Systems*, 3(6). [Online] Available from: <http://sprouts.aisnet.org/3-6>

Uusi-Rauva, C & Nurkka, J. 2010. Effective internal environment-related communication: An employee perspective. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):299-314.

Velazquez, L.E., Esquer, J. & Munguia, N.E. 2011. Sustainable learning organisations. *The Learning Organisation*, 18(1):36-44.

WBCSD, 2012. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development. [Online] Available from: <http://www.wbcsd.org/> 2012

Wernerfelt, B. 1984. A Resource-based view of the Firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5:171-180.

White, P. 2009. Building a sustainability strategy into business. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):386-394.

Whittington, R. 2002. *Practise perspective on Strategy: unifying a developing field*. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Proceedings: C1-C6.

Whittington, R. 2006. Completing the Practice Turn in Strategy research. *Organisation Studies*, 27(5):613-632

Whittington, R. 2007. Strategy practise and strategy process: family differences and the sociological eye. *Organisation Studies*, 28(10):1575-1586.

Yin, R. K. 1989. *Case study research: design and methods*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Yin, R.K. 2003. *Case study research. Designs and methods: Applied social research methods*. 3rd ed. Series 5. London: Sage Publications.

8.3 REFERENCES FOR ARTICLE 1:

- ACCA, 2011. ACCA shines spotlight on sustainability. [Online] Available from http://www.skillsportal.co.za/page/training/training_companies/financial_accounting_training/1067340-ACCA-shines-spotlight-on-sustainability [Accessed: 2011-09-10].
- Adams, C.A. & Frost, G.R, 2008. Integrating sustainability reporting into management practices. *Accounting Forum*, 32(4):288-302.
- Anon., 2011. Do sustainable products require sustainable leaders? *Development and Learning in Organisations*. 25(2): 21-24.
- Bonn, I. & Fisher, J. 2011. Sustainability: the missing ingredient in strategy. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 32(1):5-14.
- Bowers, T. 2010. From Image to economic value: the genre of sustainability reporting. *Corporate Communications. An International Journal*, 15(3):249-262.
- Capriotti, P & Moreno, A. 2007. Communicating corporate responsibility through corporate web sites in Spain. *Corporate Communications. An International Journal*, 12(3): 221-237.
- Carpenter, M.A. & W.G. Sanders. 2007. *Strategy Management: A Dynamic Perspective*. NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Collins, E., Lawrence, S., Pavlovich, K. & Ryan, C. 2007. Business networks and the uptake of sustainability practices: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(8&9):729-740.
- Coupland, C. Corporate Social Responsibility as Argument on the Web. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1(62): 355-366.
- Cowan, D.M., Dopart, P., Ferracini, T., Sahmel, J., Merryman, K., Gaffney, S. & D.J. Paustenbach, 2010. A cross-sectional analysis of reported corporate environmental sustainability practices. *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 58(1):524-538.
- Crews, D.E. 2010. Strategies for Implementing Sustainability: Five Leadership Challenges. *Advanced Management Journal*, 75(2):15-21.
- Dawkins, J. 2005. Corporate responsibility: the communication challenge. *Journal of Communication Management*. 9(2):108-19.
- Elmualim A, Shockley, D, Valle, R, Ludlowb, G & Shah, S. 2010. Barriers and commitment of facilities management profession to the sustainability agenda. *Building and Environment*. 45(1):58–64.
- Ernst & Young. 2011. Climate Change and Sustainability Services and Awards. [Online] Available from: <http://www.ey.com/ZA/en/Services/Specialty-Services/Climate-Change-and-Sustainability-Services/2011---ESR---Main-Page> [Accessed: 2011-06-23].

- Gil, Dickinson & Scharl. 2008. Communicating sustainability. *Journal of communication management*, (12):3:243-262.
- Hallstedt, S., Ny, H., Rovert, K. & Broman, G. 2010. An approach to assessing sustainability integration in strategic decision systems for product development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(8):703-712.
- Hillestad, T., Xie, C. & Haugland, S.A. 2010. Innovative corporate social responsibility; the founder's role in creating trustworthy corporate brand through 'green innovation'. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6):440-451.
- Hodgekinson, G.P & Clarke, I. 2007. Conceptual note: Exploring the cognitive significance of organizational strategising: A dual-process framework and research agenda. *Human Relations*, 60(1): 243-255.
- Holton, I., Glass, J. & Price, A.D.F. 2010. Managing for Sustainability: Findings from four cases studies in the UK precast concrete industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(1):152-160.
- Idemudia, U. 2011. Corporate social responsibility and developing countries: Moving the critical CSR research agenda in Africa forward. *Progress in Development Studies*, 11(1): 1-18.
- Ince.motiv. 2010. Audit of the 2010 Annual Review - KING III and best practice guidelines and recommendations for Growthpoint Properties. Ince.motiv: 18-23.
- Integrated Reporting Definition. 2011. What is an Integrated Report. [Online] Available from: <http://www.sustainabilitysa.org/IntegratedReporting/WhatisanIntegratedReport.aspx> [Accessed: 2011-07-12].
- JSE, 2011. The SRI Criteria of the JSE. [Online] Available from: <http://www.jse.co.za/About-Us/SRI/Results/SRI2011Results.aspx>. [Accessed: 2012 - 07- 26].
- Kane, G. 2011. *The Green Executive: Corporate Leadership in a Low Carbon Economy*. UK: Earthscan.
- Klaine, A. & Von Hauff, M, 2009. Sustainability-Driven Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility: Application of the Integrative Sustainability Triangle. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 85:517–533.
- KPMG. 2008. A survey into the growth and sustainability issues driving consumer organizations worldwide. KPMG International. [Online] Available from: www.kpmg.com.au/Portals/0/KPMG%20CIES%20Survey.pdf, [Accessed: 2011-06-12].
- Lacy, P., Arnott, J. & Lowitt, E. 2009. The challenge of integrating sustainability into talent and organisation strategies: investigating into the knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve high performance. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4): 484-494.

Laszlo, C & Zhexembayeva, N. 2011. *Embedded sustainability: the next big competitive advantage*. UK: Greenleaf Publishing

Leon-Soriana, R, Munoz-Tirress, M.J. & Chalmeta-Rosalen, R. 2010. Methodology for sustainability strategic planning and management. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 110(2): 249-268.

Lewis, S. 2003. Reputation and corporate responsibility, *Journal of Communication Management*. 7(4):356-64.

Lynch, R. 2009. *Strategic Management*. 5th ed. Italy: Prentice Hall.

Quinn, L & Dalton, M. 2009. Leading for sustainability: implementing the tasks of leadership. *Corporate Governance*, 9(1):21-38.

Reilly, A.H. 2009. Communicating Sustainability Initiatives in Corporate Reports: Linking Implications to Organisational Change. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 74(3):33-43.

Riccaboni, A. & Leone, E.L. 2010. Implementing strategies through management control systems: a case of sustainability. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. 59(2):130-144.

Rolland, D & Bazzoni, J.O. 2009. Greening corporate identity: CSR online corporate identity reporting. *Corporate Communications. An International Journal*, 14(3), 249-263.

Searcy, C. 2009. Setting the course in corporate sustainability performance measurement. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 13(3):49-57.

Setthasakko, W. 2009. Barriers to Implementing corporate environmental responsibility in Thailand. *International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, 17(3):169-183.

Skinner, C & Mersham, G. 2008. Corporate social responsibility in South Africa. *Society and Business Review*. 3(3): 39-255.

Smith, P.A.C & Sharicz, C. 2011. The shift needed for sustainability. *The Learning Organisation*, 18(1):73-86.

The Guardian. 2010. Death and Devastation- and it's just the start. The Guardian. 31 May 2010. [Online] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/31/bp-oil-spill-death-impact> [Accessed: 2011-05-01].

Trendwatching, 2010. 10 Crucial Consumer Trends of 2012. Available from: <http://trendwatching.com/trends/10trends2010/> [Accessed: 2012-04-19].

UNCTAD, 2011. Definition of Sustainability Claims. Available from: <http://193.194.138.42/en/Sustainability-Claims-Portal/> [Accessed: 2011-05-21]

Uusi-Rauva, C & Nurkka, J. 2010. Effective internal environment-related communication: An employee perspective. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):299-314.

Velazquez, L.E., Esquer, J. & Munguia, N.E. 2011. Sustainable learning organizations. *The Learning Organization*, 18(1):36-44.

White, P. 2009. Building a sustainability strategy into business. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):386-394.

Yin, R.K. 2003. Case study research. *Designs and methods: Applied social research methods*. 3rd ed. Series 5. London: Sage Publications.

8.4 REFERENCES FOR ARTICLE 2:

Adams, C.A. 2004. The ethical, social and environmental reporting-performance portrayal gap. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 17(5):731-57.

Adams, C.A. & Frost, G.R. 2008. Integrating sustainability reporting into management practices. *Accounting Forum*, 32(4):288-302.

Adams, C.A. & Larrinaga-Gonzalez, C. 2007. Engaging with organizations in pursuit of improved sustainability accounting and performance. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 20(3):333-355.

Aldama, L.R.P, Amar, P.A & Trostianki, 2009. Embedding corporate responsibility through effective organizational structures. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):506-516.

Bonn, I. & Fisher, J. 2011. Sustainability: the missing ingredient in strategy. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 32(1):5-14.

Bjornson, F.O., Wang, A.I. & Arisholm, E. 2008. Improving the effectiveness of root cause analysis in post mortem analysis: A controlled experiment. *Information and Software Technology*. 50(4): 280-295

Bowers, T. 2010. From Image to economic value: the genre of sustainability reporting. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):249-262.

Carpenter, M.A. & W.G. Sanders. 2007. *Strategy Management: A Dynamic Perspective*. NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Collins, E., Lawrence, S., Pavlovich, K. & Ryan, C. 2007. Business networks and the uptake of sustainability practices: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(8&9):729-740.

Coupland, C. Corporate Social Responsibility as Argument on the Web. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1(62): 355-366.

Cowan, D.M., Dopart, P., Ferracini, T., Sahmel, J., Merryman, K., Gaffney, S. & D.J. Paustenbach, 2010. A cross-sectional analysis of reported corporate environmental sustainability practices. *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 58(1):524-538.

Crews, D.E. 2010. Strategies for Implementing Sustainability: Five Leadership Challenges. *Advanced Management Journal*, 75(2):15-21.

Elmualim A., Shockley, D, Valle, R, Ludlowb, G & Shah, S. 2010. Barriers and commitment of facilities management profession to the sustainability agenda. *Building and Environment*. 45(1);58–64.

Gray, R. 2002. The social accounting project and accounting, organizations and society: privileging engagement, imaginings, new accountings and pragmatism over critique?, *Accounting Organisations and Society*, 27(7):687-708.

Growthpoint Properties, 2012. *About Growthpoint: Core Values*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.growthpoint.co.za/Pages/AboutGrowthpoint.aspx>

Hallstedt, S., Ny, H., Rovert, K. & Broman, G. 2010. An approach to assessing sustainability integration in strategic decision systems for product development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(8):703-712.

Haanaes, K, Reeves, M, Von Streng Velken, I, Audretsch, M, Kiron, D & Kruschwitz, N. 2012. *Sustainability Nears a Tipping Point: Full Report*. MIT Sloan Management Review, Spring 53(3):1-17.

Hillestad, T., Xie, C. & Haugland, S.A. 2010. Innovative corporate social responsibility; the founder's role in creating trustworthy corporate brand through 'green innovation'. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6):440-451.

Hodgekinson, G.P & Clarke, I. 2007. Conceptual note: Exploring the cognitive significance of organisational strategising: A dual-process framework and research agenda. *Human Relations*, 60(1): 243-255

Holton, I., Glass, J. & Price, A.D.F. 2010. Managing for Sustainability: Findings from four cases studies in the UK precast concrete industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(1):152-160.

Ince.motiv. 2010. Audit of the 2010 Annual Review - KING III and best practice guidelines and recommendations for Growthpoint Properties. *Ince.motiv*. 18-23

Jarzabkowski, P. & Whittington, R. 2008. A strategy-as-practise approach to strategy research and education. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(4):282-286.

Kane, G, 2011. *The Green Executive: Corporate Leadership in a Low Carbon Economy*. UK: Earthscan.

Klaine, A. & Von Hauff, M, 2009. Sustainability-Driven Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility: Application of the Integrative Sustainability Triangle. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (2009) 85:517–533

Lacy, P., Arnott, J. & Lowitt, E. 2009. The challenge of integrating sustainability into talent and organisation strategies: investigating into the knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve high performance. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4): 484-494.

Laszlo, C & Zhexembayeva, N. 2011. *Embedded sustainability: the next big competitive advantage*. UK: Greenleaf Publishing

Leon-Soriana,R, Munoz-Tirress, M.J. & Chalmeta-Rosalen, R. 2010. Methodology for sustainability strategic planning and management. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 110(2): 249-268.

Lee, M.J. Fairhurst, A. & Wesley, S. 2009. Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of the Top 100 US Retailers. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(2):140–158

Lynch, R. 2009. *Strategic Management*. 5th ed. Italy: Prentice Hall.

Owen, D. 2008. Chronicles of wasted time? A personal reflection on the current state of, and future prospects for, social and environmental accounting research. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 21(2):240-267.

Mintzberg, H. 1979. Patterns of strategy formulation. *Management science*, 24(9):934-48

Mintzberg, H. 1987. Crafting Strategies. *Harvard Business Review*, 65(4):65-75.

Mintzberg, H. 1998. Strategy formation: schools of thought. In: Fredrickson, J.W. Perspectives on strategic management. Frand Rapids, Philadelphia, United States of America: Harper Business.

Mintzberg, H. & Waters, J.A. 1985. Of strategies, deliberate and emergent. *Strategic Management Journal*, 6:257-272.

Parker, L.D. 2005. Social and environmental accountability research: a view from the commentary box. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(6):842-860.

Patton, M. Q. 1990. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Reilly, A.H. 2009. Communicating Sustainability Initiatives in Corporate Reports: Linking Implications to Organisational Change. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 74(3):33-43.

Riccaboni, A. & Leone, E.L. 2010. Implementing strategies through management control systems: a case of sustainability. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. 59(2):130-144.

Scapens, R.W. 2002. *Methods of case study research*. In Ryan, R.J., Scapens, R.W. & Theobald, M. Eds, Research Methods and Methodology in Accounting and Finance. London: Thomson Learning.

Searcy, C. 2009. Setting the course in corporate sustainability performance measurement. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 13(3):49-57.

Simons, H. 2009. *Case Study Research in Practice*. UK: Sage Publications.

Skinner, C & Mersham, G. 2008. Corporate social responsibility in South Africa: *Society and Business Review*. 3(3): 39-255.

Smith, P.A.C & Sharicz, C. 2011. The shift needed for sustainability. *The Learning Organisation*, 18(1):73-86.

Stake, R. 1994. Case study. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln. Eds., *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. E. 1995. *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sustainable Business, 2012. *Corporate Sustainability Nearing Tipping Point*. Available at: SustainableBusiness.com. [Accessed: 2012-May-15]

Sustainability Services, 2011. KING III AND GRI 2011: A 2011 review of sustainability reporting in South Africa. South Africa: Lawprint

UNCTAD, 2011. *Definition of Sustainability Claims*. Available at <http://193.194.138.42/en/Sustainability-Claims-Portal/> [Accessed: 2011-May-21]

Uusi-Rauva, C & Nurkka, J. 2010. Effective internal environment-related communication: An employee perspective. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):299-314.

Velazquez, L.E., Esquer, J. & Munguia, N.E. 2011. Sustainable learning organizations. *The Learning Organization*, 18(1):36-44.

White, P. 2009. Building a sustainability strategy into business. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):386-394

Yin, R. K. 1989. *Case study research: design and methods*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Yin, R.K. 2003. *Case study research. Designs and methods: Applied social research methods*. 3rd ed. Series 5. London: Sage Publications.

8.5 REFERENCES FOR ARTICLE 3:

- Adams, C.A. & Frost, G.R., 2008. Integrating sustainability reporting into management practices. *Accounting Forum*, 32(4):288-302.
- Adams, C.A. & Frost, G.R. 2008. Integrating sustainability reporting into management practices. *Accounting Forum*, 32(4):288-302.
- Adams, C.A. & Larrinaga-Gonzalez, C. 2007. Engaging with organizations in pursuit of improved sustainability accounting and performance. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 20(3):333-355.
- Bjornson, F.O., Wang, A.I. & Arisholm, E. 2008. Improving the effectiveness of root cause analysis in post mortem analysis: A controlled experiment. *Information and Software Technology*. 50(4): 280-295
- Bonn, I. & Fisher, J. 2011. Sustainability: the missing ingredient in strategy. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 32(1):5-14.
- Bowers, T. 2010. From Image to economic value: the genre of sustainability reporting. Corporate Communications. *An International Journal*, 15(3):249-262.
- Capriotti, P & Moreno, A. 2007. Communicating corporate responsibility through corporate web sites in Spain. Corporate Communications. *An International Journal*, 12(3): 221-237
- Carpenter, M.A. & W.G. Sanders. 2009. Strategy Management: A Dynamic Perspective. NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Carroll, A.B. 1994, Social issues in management research, *Business and Society*, 33(1):5-29.
- Chia, R. & MacKay, B. 2007. Post-processual challenges for the emerging strategy-as-practise perspective: discovering strategy in the logic of practise. *Human Relations*, 60(1):217-242.
- Collins, E., Lawrence, S., Pavlovich, K. & Ryan, C. 2007. Business networks and the uptake of sustainability practices: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(8&9):729-740.
- Coupland, C. Corporate Social Responsibility as Argument on the Web. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1(62): 355-366
- Cowan, D.M., Dopart, P., Ferracini, T., Sahmel, J., Merryman, K., Gaffney, S. & D.J. Paustenbach, 2010. A cross-sectional analysis of reported corporate environmental sustainability practices. *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, 58(1):524-538.
- Crews, D.E. 2010. Strategies for Implementing Sustainability: Five Leadership Challenges. *Advanced Management Journal*, 75(2):15-21.

Elmualim A, Shockley, D, Valle, R, Ludlowb, G & Shah, S. 2010. Barriers and commitment of facilities management profession to the sustainability agenda. *Building and Environment*. 45(1);58–64

Grandy, G. & Mills, A.J. 2004. Strategy as Simularca? A Radical Reflexive Look at the Discipline and Practise of Strategy*. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(7):1153-1170

Gray, R. 2002. The social accounting project and accounting, organizations and society: privileging engagement, imaginings, new accountings and pragmatism over critique?, *Accounting Organisations and Society*, 27(7):687-708.

Hallstedt, S., Ny, H., Rovert, K. & Broman, G. 2010. An approach to assessing sustainability integration in strategic decision systems for product development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(8):703-712.

Hadler, G. 2005. *Solving Problems using a group - advantages and disadvantages*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.tuition.com.hk/groups.htm> [Accessed: 2012-07-20]

Haanaes, K, Reeves, M, Von Streng Velken, I, Audretsch, M, Kiron, D & Kruschwitz, N. 2012. *Sustainability Nears a Tipping Point: Full Report*. MIT Sloan Management Review, Spring 53(3):1-17.

Hillestad, T., Xie, C. & Haugland, S.A. 2010. Innovative corporate social responsibility; the founder's role in creating trustworthy corporate brand through 'green innovation'. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6):440-451.

Haugstad, B. 1999. *Strategy Theory: a short review of literature*. Netherlands: SINTEF Industrial Management.

Hodgekinson, G.P & Clarke, I. 2007. Conceptual note: Exploring the cognitive significance of organizational strategising: A dual-process framework and research agenda. *Human Relations*, 60(1): 243-255

Hughes, E.C. 1971. *The sociological eye: selected papers*. Chicago, Washington , United States of America: Aldine-Atherton.

Holton, I., Glass, J. & Price, A.D.F. 2010. Managing for Sustainability: Findings from four cases studies in the UK precast concrete industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18(1):152-160.

Ince.motiv. 2010. Audit of the 2010 Annual Review - KING III and best practice guidelines and recommendations for Growthpoint Properties. Ince.motiv: 18-23

Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J. & Seidi, D. 2007. Strategising: the challenges of a practise perspective. *Human Relations*, 60(5):5-27.

Jarzabkowski, P. & Whittington, R. 2008. A strategy-as-practise approach to strategy research and education. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(4):282-286.

- Jarzabkowski, P. & Spee, A.P. 2009. Strategy-as-practise: a review and future directions for the field. *Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(1):69-95.
- Johnson, G., Melin, L. & Whittington, R. 2003. Guest editors' introduction: micro strategy and strategising: towards an activity-based view. *Journal of Management Studies*, Guest Editors Edition, 40(1):3-22.
- Kaplan, S. 2006. *Strategy and PowerPoint: Communication genres and the practice of strategy making*. In: Organisation Studies Summer Conference: Re-turn To Practice: Understanding Organisation as it Happens, Mykonos, Greece, 15–16. June 2006.
- Klaine, A. & Von Hauff, M, 2009 Sustainability-Driven Implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility: Application of the Integrative Sustainability Triangle. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 85:517–533.
- Lacy, P., Arnott, J. & Lowitt, E. 2009. The challenge of integrating sustainability into talent and organisation strategies: investigating into the knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve high performance. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4): 484-494.
- Laszlo, C & Zhexembayeva, N. 2011. *Embedded sustainability: the next big competitive advantage*. UK: Greenleaf Publishing
- Leon-Soriana,R, Munoz-Tirress, M.J. & Chalmeta-Rosalen, R. 2010. Methodology for sustainability strategic planning and management. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 110(2): 249-268.
- Lee, M.J. Fairhurst, A. & Wesley, S. 2009. Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of the Top 100 US Retailers. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(2):140–158
- Lynch, R. 2009. *Strategic Management*. 5th ed. Italy: Prentice Hall.
- Myllyaho, M., Salo, O., Kääriäinen, J., Hyysalo, J. & Koskela, J. 2004. A Review of *Small and Large Post-Mortem Analysis Methods*. In ICSSEA 2004: 17th International Conference "Software & Systems Engineering and their Applications", 30 Nov - 02 Dec 2004, Paris, France.
- Orlikowski, W.J. 2000. Using technology and constituting structures: A practice lens for studying technology in organisations. *Organisation Science*, (1)11:404–428.
- Parker, L.D. 2005. Social and environmental accountability research: a view from the commentary box. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(6):842-860.
- Pettigrew, A., Thomas, H. & Whittington, R. 2002. *Strategic management: The strengths and limitations of a field*. In: Pettigrew, A., Thomas, H. & Whittington, R. (eds.) *The handbook of strategy and management*. London, United Kingdom: Sage

Pretorius, M. & Le Roux, C.A. 2012. Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: A comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies. *Journal of Management Sciences* (to be published in 2012).

Porter, M. 1985. *Competitive strategy*. New York, New York, United States of America: Free Press.

Quinn, L & Dalton, M. 2009. Leading for sustainability: implementing the tasks of Leadership. *Corporate Governance*, 9(1):21-38.

Reilly, A.H. 2009. Communicating Sustainability Initiatives in Corporate Reports: Linking Implications to Organisational Change. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 74(3):33-43.

Riccaboni, A. & Leone, E.L. 2010. Implementing strategies through management control systems: a case of sustainability. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. 59(2):130-144.

Rolland, D & Bazzoni, J.O. 2009. Greening corporate identity: CSR online corporate identity reporting. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 14(3), 249-263.

Searcy, C. 2009. Setting the course in corporate sustainability performance measurement. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 13(3):49-57.

Setthasakko, W. 2009. Barriers to Implementing corporate environmental responsibility in Thailand. *International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, 17(3):169-183.

Scapens, R.W. 2002. Methods of case study research. In Ryan, R.J., Scapens, R.W. & Theobald, M. Eds, *Research Methods and Methodology in Accounting and Finance*. London: Thomson Learning.

Simons, H. 2009. *Case Study Research in Practice*. UK: Sage Publications.

Skinner, C & Mersham, G. 2008. Corporate social responsibility in South Africa. *Society and Business Review*. 3(3): 39-255.

Smith, P.A.C & Sharicz, C. 2011. The shift needed for sustainability. *The Learning Organisation*, 18(1):73-86.

Stake, R. 1994. Case study. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln. Eds., *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.

Sustainable Business, 2012. *Corporate Sustainability Nearing Tipping Point*. Available at: SustainableBusiness.com. [Accessed: 2012-May-15]

Sustainability Services, 2011. KING III AND GRI 2011: A 2011 review of sustainability reporting in South Africa. South Africa: Lawprint

Sustainability SA. 2011. What is an Integrated Report. [Online] Available from: <http://www.sustainabilitysa.org/IntegratedReporting/WhatisanIntegratedReport.aspx> [Accessed: 2011-07-12]

Trendwatching, 2010. 10 Crucial Consumer Trends of 2012. Available from: <http://trendwatching.com/trends/10trends2010/> [Accessed: 2012-04-19].

UNCTAD, 2011. Definition of Sustainability Claims. Available from: <http://193.194.138.42/en/Sustainability-Claims-Portal/> [Accessed: 2011-05-21]

Uusi-Rauva, C & Nurkka, J. 2010. Effective internal environment-related communication: An employee perspective. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3):299-314.

Velazquez, L.E., Esquer, J. & Munguia, N.E. 2011. Sustainable learning organizations. *The Learning Organization*, 18(1):36-44.

White, P. 2009. Building a sustainability strategy into business. *Corporate Governance*, 9(4):386-394.

Whittington, R. 2002. Practise perspective on Strategy: unifying a developing field. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Proceedings: C1-C6.

Whittington, R. 2006. Completing the Practice Turn in Strategy research. *Organisation Studies*, 27(5):613-632.

Whittington, R. 2007. Strategy practise and strategy process: family differences and the sociological eye. *Organisation Studies*, 28(10):1575-1586.

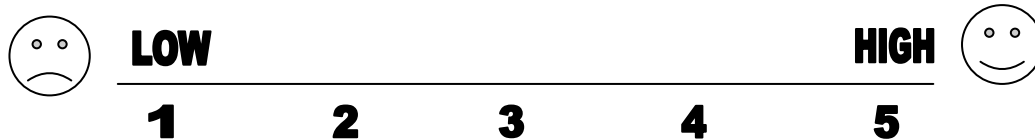
Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research. Designs and methods: Applied social research methods*. (3rd ed.). Series Volume 5. London: Sage Publications.

Chapter 1	INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON STRATEGISING
Chapter 3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY
Chapter 4	ARTICLE 1: Determining the embeddedness of sustainability claims in strategising: a comparative study of the ALSI 40 companies.
Chapter 5	ARTICLE 2: Strategising for sustainability: measurement and validation through applied case research
Chapter 6	ARTICLE 3: Praxis and practices for embedding sustainability in practice
Chapter 7	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Chapter 8	REFERENCES
Chapter 9	ANNEXURES

9. ANNEXURES

9.1 Annexure A: Strategising for Sustainability Measurement Criteria

This the supplementary document used by the researcher to guide the scoring of the JSE ALSI 40 companies. It was used in conjunction with the SSI scoring card. The researcher used the following measuring criteria to determine a score for embeddedness out of 5 (refer to scale demonstration below). Definitions were applied when necessary.



Primary Definitions (KING III AND GRI 2011 Sustainability services):

Annual report (noun): a statutory requirement to disclose financial performance that is historical in nature and does little to define how well a company prepares itself to hedge against socio-political and or environmental pressures

Sustainability report (noun): frequently referred to as the Triple Bottom Line Report or an accounting of the social, environmental and economic performance of a company. A mixture of disclosure on matters ranging from health and safety to environmental impacts. Often a marketing material.

Integrated Report (noun): A product of a process or system of processes that seeks to inform stakeholders of an organisations ability to heed to stakeholder and or societal concerns and to provide meaningful performance information to support assertions suggesting effective management. To demonstrate how well an organisation has embedded a comprehensive view of sustainability into the strategic fabric of the organisation that leads the reader to understand whether the organisation is well placed to adapt to economic, social and environmental factors.

Combined Report (noun): Commonly confused for the integrated report. A combined report is an 'all in one document' set of reports that include all of the above documents. Mervyn King refers to it as the 'one report'

Integrated Reporting (verb): A process or system of processes that seeks to guide an organisation through the challenges of understanding what stakeholders expect of them as well as what the myriad of societal pressures are on the business and to ensure that business strategy is adapted to accommodate evolving changes.

Compliance: Companies need not comply or 'apply' if they can explain why not (King III). Most companies will produce reports that adhere to the principles of integrated reporting and demonstrate that the relevant boxes have been 'complied.'

GRI: The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a network-based organization that produces a comprehensive sustainability reporting framework that is widely used around the world

JSE SRI: The JSE's Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Index was launched in response to the burgeoning debate around sustainability globally and particularly in the South African context. The JSE launched the first Socially Responsible Investment ('SRI') Index in May 2004 recognising the strides listed companies are making in this regard. Reviews take place annually.

ISO 26000: ISO, the International Organization for Standardization, has launched an International Standard providing guidelines for social responsibility (SR). The guidance standard ISO 26000 is voluntary to use. It does not include requirements and is not a certification standard.

UN global impact: The United Nations Global Compact presents a unique strategic platform for participants to advance their commitments to sustainability and corporate citizenship. Structured as a public-private initiative, the Global Compact offers a policy framework for the development, implementation and disclosure of sustainability principles and practices related to its four core areas: human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

Assurance Engagement:

An Assurance engagement is an engagement performed by a practitioner to enable himself to express an opinion about the measurement of subject matter against a criteria. Practitioner's expression of opinion raise the confidence of the users over the measurement as to whether measurement of subject matter is a fair statement keeping the criteria applicable under consideration.

Type 1 vs Type 2 assurance:

A Type I report is a report on the controls placed in operation as at a specific date. A Type II report is a report on the controls placed in operation and tests of the operating effectiveness of controls during a specified period of time. The period of time for a Type II report is generally 6 months or 1 year. Since the Type II report is an extension of the Type I report, if you chose to do a Type I report and opted to switch to Type II, the difference is the application of tests of the operating effectiveness of specific controls for the audit period.

Some clients have opted for a Type I report for the first year and a Type II report in subsequent years. This has the advantage of allowing you to review and improve your controls before undergoing the testing in the Type II. (Sarbanes Oxley 404 and MI 52-109 have created time pressures which make this approach less of an option)

1. INTEGRATED REPORTING

The integrated report demonstrating integrative reporting. The report is of a high standard and demonstrates paths to ensure accountability.

- 1) No report visible
- 2) The following is visible:
 - A policy to address sustainability or a sustainability report that acknowledges sustainability
 - A document that is separate from the financial and other reports such as the annual report and not easy to find
 - An indication that the sustainability document is secondary in priority to other reports.
- 3) A visible report demonstrates:
 - Compliance with one voluntary standard or guidance criteria such as: GRI/JSE SRI/ISO 2600
 - Phrases such as: 'we are on a journey to KING III' or 'KING III suggests integrative reporting' and indication of their intention to comply in the near future.
 - More than just an acknowledgement of sustainability. They are showing an effort to disclose information, yet the language is leaning towards CSR rather than Sustainability.
 - A level of integration with other reports but remains disjointed on the website from other primary communication e.g. financials
 - An indication that the company has produced a combined report.
 - That it has been made somewhat accessible to users on the organisation's website
- 4) The report is
 - Made very accessible to users on the organisation's website
 - Comprehensive in nature, and described as an integrated report, but sustainability is still primarily addressed on a separate page/another link
 - Not scarce on details on disclosure and represents more than mere compliance
 - Indicative that the company has used numerous voluntary standards eg: GRI Standards or attempted to align their reporting with one, or with the UN Global Compact, JSE SRI Index, and ISO 2600 sustainability reporting and performance frameworks
- 5) A comprehensive report is
 - Fully integrated with the other reports, i.e. an integrated report demonstrating integrative reporting (verb)
 - Communicates a balance between TBL elements.
 - Able to demonstrate through the use of strategic language that the company is not merely complying with sustainability but it is embedded.
 - Refers to both disclosure and performance of sustainability.
 - Of a high standard (impressive and value adding) and makes reference to using the GRI framework, including the GRI Index, or the UN Global Compact, JSE SRI Index, and ISO 2600 sustainability reporting and performance frameworks.
 - Supported by evidence of accountability, such as internal and external assurance processes.

2. SUSTAINABILITY RECOGNITION AND AFFILIATION:

The company has third part recognition for sustainability efforts and are affiliated with genuine organisations with similar goals pertaining to sustainability

- 1) This company has
 - done nothing over and above their choice of reporting method
 - they have not sought the support of 3rd parties, affiliations or endorsements
- 2) There are
 - names of other companies as endorsement or support (ie: striving for authenticity)
 - but it appears they are just dropping names
- 3) The company
 - Has gone above meeting the legal and voluntary requirements necessary/advised for an annual review
 - Indicates overall good compliance efforts and there are affiliations evident from reputable reporting organisations.
- 4) The company has
 - Gone further than anything legally required/voluntarily suggested
 - May do additional voluntary reporting and auditing/assurance either TYPE 1 or TYPE 2
 - They may have some recognition on some elements of TBL sustainability
 - They have formed strong alliances/partnerships with corporations, governments and stakeholders.
- 5) This company has
 - Gone over and above what is expected in terms of reporting and voluntary efforts.
 - They are acknowledged externally by 3rd parties and
 - Have received awards such as 'responsible retailer of year.' That reflect sustainability and not just one element of it
 - There is both internal and external assurance
 - The company uses standards to improve legitimacy

3. VISION & MISSION INCLUDES SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is incorporated into the vision, mission and core values of the company in that it gives guidance to actions taken this is clear from the first page of the website.

- 1) There is no sustainability incorporated into Vision or Mission or core values and the company's publicised strategic priorities at any place on the website
- 2) There is a sustainability
 - Philosophy but no clear sustainability vision/value statement that articulates the company's desire towards achieving sustainability elements
 - Communication does not address all elements of sustainability and the concept itself
 - This is conveyed only in the sustainability section of the website/ report as eg: 'our values are to respect the environment'

3) Sustainability

- Is described as the organisation's commitment, more than just a belief, and this is clear from an established policy.
- There is broad description of the organization's commitment to incorporate sustainability.
- Sustainability is more a slogan commitment that is addressed by the CEO in the sustainability report than a strategic priority
- The commitment description is mentioned under an isolated element in the vision and mission on the main page but not as 'sustainability' but rather as 'environment' and 'social' elements.

4) There is a clear sustainability focus

- In the vision, mission and core values on the primary pages of the website
- That communicates to stakeholders and society that sustainability is integral.
- Their sustainability statements are business-orientated statements that describe the organization's commitment, stakeholder focus, activities, and business makeup.
- It is demonstrated that sustainability is connected to bottom line results.
- This is apparent throughout the website and not only in the sustainability report.

5) There is clarity that sustainability (all 3 elements of it) :

- Is a strategic priority, core value and the company has adjusted their statement of purpose to include it.
- Is evident in the by the vision and it is the company's intention to achieve TBL sustainability.
- Is found on the primary pages of the corporate communication.
- Is in the vision/value/mission statement that is realistic, believable and attractive and looks into the future.
- Is giving guidance on the actions of the organization, it spells out its overall sustainable future, providing a sense of direction towards bottom lines results and sustainability
- Is embedded into strategic frameworks and forms part of the business's understanding of value and it is verbally connected to financial aspirations
- Is not only limited to the sustainability report but throughout the website.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT: MACROECONOMIC IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The identification of macroeconomic risks and opportunities by the company within their industry and business. The demonstration of acknowledgement and action planning.

- 1) The company does not acknowledge the
 - Impact of climate and social change and the role the company plays in achieving sustainability elements
 - They have not identified risks and opportunities based on a review of financial, social, environmental and economic and governance issues and trends.
 - No opportunity or risk management endeavours.
- 2) Some
 - Factors of climate and social changes and sustainability implications are mentioned and discussed as part of Risk management
 - It cannot be demonstrated that they are connected to the company or that the company has reviewed financial, social, environmental, economic and governance issues and trends.
 - The risk factors are more 'popular' or typical ones than those specific to the organisation
- 3) The organisations identify
 - The macroeconomic impact of climate change and understands their role in it and how they are affected by it
 - They are able to identify Risks and Opportunities in the industry context and able to ascertain the risks and opportunities posed to the specific company and its operations.
 - efforts to mitigate risk that are maybe described in a broad sense
 - There is mention of a risk management process model
- 4) The organisations identify
 - the macroeconomic impact of climate change and they are able to identify themselves in the industry context and are able to ascertain the risks and opportunities posed to the company .
 - The company is able to give examples of how they **plan** to grasp these understood risks and opportunities.
 - There is a visible model/process/system to manage the risk (workable model)
- 5) The organisations identify
 - the macroeconomic impact of climate change and identifies them in the industry context and specific to the company
 - They are able to ascertain the risks and opportunities posed to the company.
 - The company is able to give examples of how they **plan** to grasp these understood risks and opportunities.
 - There is a visible system to manage the risk and a model it includes performance and targets
 - Actions, Measurements of impact and performance indicators of risks and opportunities are disclosed/mentioned and even depicted.
 - Demonstration of a risk management process model that mitigates elements as part of sustainability strategy.

5. PROGRAMMES & STAFF LEARNING

There have been formal efforts to educate staff on sustainability and there is evidence of learning and outcomes

- 1) There is no evidence of any employee awareness programmes or learning for staff on the topic sustainability or sustainable operations.
- 2) The company mentions
 - that they have made efforts to educate and train staff on the environment or social impacts
 - but there are no examples of programmes given and
 - If mentioned, then the training is isolated to certain elements of sustainability eg: social and not the concept of broad sustainability.
- 3) It is demonstrated that there
 - May have been ad-hoc 'green' learning or social development staff programmes to facilitate staff awareness of sustainability elements
 - are programmes and the efforts and their outcomes are describes as part of implementation
 - is mainly informal training such as the passing on of strategic sustainability through leadership engagement
- 4) The awareness programmes are
 - demonstrated as incorporated into the overall training on strategy and sustainability.
 - Teaching the sustainability concept of embeddedness in processes and they are not just training efforts on the elements of sustainability.
 - To engage staff to focus beyond the financial elements of sustainability
 - Through formal training
 - Have described the aims and outcomes of programmes
 - There are no photos of training
- 5) There is/are
 - Formal efforts to educate staff on sustainability to achieve the goals and objectives.
 - There is a balance in sustainability education. That social, economic and environmental training are visibly balanced and described
 - The programmes fall under the topic of sustainability
 - There is a name given to their educational programme and there is evidence from the initiatives
 - Outcomes of the programmes are discussed.
 - Feedback and Communication on the outcome of the programmes and their success in achieving the programmes' goals are described. There are photos and case studies.
 - The programmes are of nature that they appear to be attributing to a change the culture such that employees are contributing to a sustainable business and future.

6. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY:

Definition of Goals and objectives:

'The goal is where we want to be. The objectives are the steps needed to get there.'

- *Goal: Broad spectrum, complex, organizational, indication of programme intentions.*
- *Objectives: Measurable, defined, operational, simple steps, and specific. Objectives contribute to the fulfilment of specified goals. Complete with a beginning and an end.*

There are specific objectives and goals set to achieve the sustainability vision. These are recognisable and realistic

- 1) There are no
 - Specific goals or objectives that demonstrate the company's determination to achieve the sustainability broadly or for elements of it.
- 2) The company describes
 - Broad objectives that are not specific to achieving sustainability goals but cover some elements/topics of it.
 - These are only found in a separate place on the website eg: only in the CSR/sustainability report
 - They are merely compliance inspired. Eg: 'we have an obligation to manage social and environmental impact'
- 3) The company
 - Makes mention of broad goals and objectives to achieve the elements of sustainability eg: 'we are committed to preserve our environment'
 - Shows no example or elaboration on these goals.
 - Mentions indicators but none are visible
 - They communicate that they are 'striving to achieve integrated sustainability' which demonstrates progression from compliance
 - Their goals and objectives are still limited to sustainability sections
- 4) The company mentions
 - that they have set goals and objectives in place to achieve the sustainability vision and mission
 - There are indicators or steps described briefly towards goals
 - They make more strategy focussed statements like: 'we are committed to integrating sustainability into our strategy'
 - The performance they desire to achieve is for sustainability and not just an element eg: environment
 - These goals are only in the sustainability report/section of communication
- 5) There are
 - Specific goals and objectives set to achieve the sustainability vision that are so clear that anyone who checks the documents finds sustainability much more recognisable and realistic.
 - The company's future declarations (objectives) overlap with corporate mission and the company discloses and incorporates how they will measure sustainability performance.

- Future performance objectives are clearly informed by assessment of trends stakeholder expectations.
- The organisational competencies to realise the strategic objectives are listed
- There is a 'definition of victory' for the company and an indicator for it.
- This is clear throughout the website, in statements and documents and not just in sustainability report.

7. CLEAR SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES

There are sustainability programmes and initiatives that demonstrate engagement with stakeholders to achieve the goals of sustainability

- 1) There are
 - No actions, initiatives or sustainability programmes evident for stakeholders.
- 2) The company put forward
 - That they have embarked on some programmes and 'green' initiatives or 'social development' with external stakeholders / stakeholder engagement
 - These have little connection to the overall sustainability vision or goals/positioning of the business.
 - These actions incorporate sustainability elements but do not demonstrate them as being part of something bigger.
 - They are not necessarily industry related
 - The initiatives are on broad and 'commercialized' topics often just for the sake of 'saying they are doing something' and are often CSR donations or charity involvement instead of sustainable initiatives.
 - These stakeholder engagement actions are merely listed in bullet form and the engagement includes simple 'media' and 'meetings'
- 3) The company put forward that
 - They have embarked on some broad sustainability programmes to engage with external stakeholders and these appear to be 'flag ship' sustainability programmes but with little elaboration.
 - These actions demonstrate stakeholder involvement and are industry related but there isn't a fair proportion of initiatives for all TBL elements of sustainability
 - Their communication includes more than bullet points but a brief paragraph on the actions and objectives of programmes.
- 4) There is evidence of
 - Capital outlay for these sustainability programmes to engage with stakeholders but are not always a balanced representation of TBL sustainability
 - The capital outlay disclosure demonstrates commitment and the direction of decision making and resource distribution.
 - Demonstrated are the actions to reduce the industry and company specific initiatives such as carbon emissions
 - The company does not seem to be distracted by popular social and green topics.
 - Their initiatives are also in line with company vision and mission and are industry related.

- The programmes have names and some description of their purpose/outcomes
- 5) Initiatives reveal
- Capital outlay for these sustainability programmes to engage with stakeholders and there are initiatives for each element of sustainability and not slanted to eg: social
 - This demonstrates commitment and the direction of decision making.
 - Actions and programmes are company and industry relevant, in line with vision and mission,
 - And demonstrate that the programmes form part of a bigger strategy.
 - Pictures and communication messages support the impact of actions as well as the outcomes. This is clear in the Case study of sustainability programmes.
 - The company portrays integration with stakeholders through requests for pledges and suggestions.

8. DEDICATED STAFF FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Evidence of dedicated staff for sustainability on both top management and operational levels who are held accountable for their roles in sustainability in strategising

- 1) Dedicated teams and staff for the achievement of sustainability goals and implement actions are not evident
- 2) The company mentioned that
 - actions are being taken by the company or there is mention of positioned staff to achieve the elements of sustainability
 - the staff are actually just the risk management committee not specifically sustainability focused
 - And mentioned staff are not identified to be in specific positions or having any specific roles for sustainability.
- 3) Indicated is that
 - actions are being taken by the company and there is mention of dedicated staff to achieve sustainability integration and to carry out the initiatives but
 - However, they are only on top executive committee level (eg Risk management Committee or other)
 - Mention is given to implementation and operational staff but there are no names or titles given (could be a side function to another 'core' business function)
- 4) There are
 - Dedicated staff on both management and operational level positions
 - Staff come from various line management/division
 - The dedicated staff may form part of an environmental and safety committee.
 - With specific roles to achieve sustainability integration.
 - This is clear from the structure diagram.
 - Evident titles of where the committee is formulated from eg: marketing and HR are provided.
- 5) There are
 - Dedicated staff on both top management and operational level positions

- This can be depicted from a structure diagram
- Staff form part of a sustainability committee or forum and have specific roles to achieve sustainability integration.
- There is a specific SBU set up with the specific task of sustainability integration
- There are budgets for staff to achieve their goals and they are rewarded according to sustainability and not other functions.
- Names of key members are used, a title to an SBU
- There is clarity that managing sustainability does not take place in isolation.
- Staff are held accountable and measured.
- There are photos of dedicated committee

9. SPECIFIC MEASURES AND TARGETS:

There are specific measures for actions taken (quantitative and qualitative) and there is evidence of performance towards achieving the company sustainability objectives

- 1) The company has no measures and qualitative or quantitative performance indicators to measure the success of initiatives. There is no benchmarking done and no systems are demonstrated to ensure progress is made.
- 2) The company mentions that
 - They are making progress or have achieved their sustainability goals but
 - no evidence is demonstrated, no quantitative or qualitative descriptions or measures of targets
- 3) There are
 - broad targets and overall indicators of performance for the company and their aspirations
 - When specific indicators/measures are mentioned they are only pertaining to an aspect of sustainability and mostly because of compliance. Eg: BEE indicators for transformation.
 - They are mostly described verbally with limited quantitative descriptions
- 4) The
 - Specific sustainability actions have targets and they are reported on.
 - There are specific measures for actions taken and performance towards achieving the company sustainability objectives is evident
 - They are expressed more qualitatively yet still quantitatively.
 - Mention is given to the use of management control systems as a form of measure but broadly.
 - There is a balance in the measures and not slanted to only financial indicators or compliance ones.
 - Year on year performance is disclosed but there aren't targets or measures that are future looking.
- 5) The organisation has
 - Specific sustainability actions with clear targets and they are reported on.
 - There are specific measures for actions taken and performance towards achieving the company sustainability objectives
 - These are expressed qualitatively and quantitatively.

- Targets and measures are for specific year on year performance with a baseline
- The disclosed results on targets serve to disclosure variations or successes on sustainability actions.
- They also mention the explicit systems and processes such as environmental management systems, management control systems and processes of performance evaluation.
- KPIs and KRIs that will track performance for staff against the strategic objectives may be mentioned
- There is a balance in the measures and not slanted to only financial indicators.
- The measures and targets are also produced for the future and there are time frames
- The top 10 efforts to be sustainable are aligned with business plans and in the BSC

10. SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION: sustainability informs strategising

The company has integrated the goals of sustainability into those of the organisation and sustainability is informing strategising decisions. There are innovative processes, solutions, models and sometimes products that have arisen from redefining the way business as usual is done.

- 1) The company has not used their experience and industry opportunities to harness sustainability into an income generating stream.
- 2) There is mention of
 - new 'green' products or 'fair trade products' or 'energy saving efficiencies' in the pipeline or that they have offered them as part of product offering/stakeholder engagement efforts
 - It appears these efforts are more of a side offering than a core product or service.
 - It doesn't appear to feature as core strategy to achieve sustainability as part of strategy but more for reputational purposes.
- 3) Demonstrated is that firm understands
 - TBL sustainability and its opportunities and risks in such a way that it informs the processes and decision making.
 - They mention their new findings of methods and tools and processes to be efficient and eg: reduce wastage which is in line with their sustainability goals.
 - It is their intention to 'develop innovative solutions'
 - The company's products and services, whilst demonstrating a degree of sustainability integration lack originality and innovativeness and are more responses than inspired solutions
 - It appears that sustainability follows/lags behind strategy
- 4) Demonstrated is that firm understands
 - TBL sustainability and its opportunities and risks in such a way that it informs the processes, and decision making, products, services and is an evolving learning process eg 'green products'.
 - The company has invested time and resources into innovative sustainable solutions. The products and services demonstrate a degree of sustainability integration innovativeness

- They are specific to their business, industry and goals
 - The business is able to verbally connect strategic concepts to sustainability and address it as such. They have made a connection between sustainability, strategy and value.
 - The emerging stage of sustainability embeddedness in strategising
- 5) The company has
- Invested technical resources and information resources into a business model that has lead to the creation of sustainability inspired efficient processes, new products or service offerings.
 - The outputs give evidence of long and short sustainable decision making at the highest level.
 - There is internal integration of sustainability into the strategy on strategic, tactical and operational levels (interpreted)
 - Companies are in the managed and integrated stages of strategising for sustainability
 - Examples of frameworks and business models are used to describe the integration.
 - Sustainability embeddedness in strategic formulation and implementation is mentioned and is clear.
 - The company identified a space in their specific industry and harvested the opportunities by **redefining the process of strategising** and offering value to stakeholders through the innovative offerings.
 - A business case for sustainability is clearly understood and interpreted as a reader.
 - Statements such as; 'sustainability elements are built into how we do business and our decision making'

9.2 Annexure B: Strategising for Sustainability Workshop Plan

Proposed date: 5 September 2011

Proposed time: 11:00

Proposed Venue: Growthpoint Properties meeting room

Attendees: Managerial staff involved in strategising. A sample of 17 people required. This should range from various management positions including top, middle and lower and other functional staff. The sample will include members from across divisions and staff in line functions as well as utilities/sustainability and the sustainability coordinator.

Purpose of the workshop: To investigate and evaluate the Strategising for Sustainability Index (SSI) allocated to the company. Secondly to evaluate strategising actions currently used. The workshop will engage with staff on the elements of strategising and integration of sustainability. The information from the session will give immediate feedback to decision makers and eventually form part of a master's thesis.

Strategy Facilitator: Dr Marius Pretorius (UP Professor in Strategy)

Proposed Programme for workshop:

1. Introduction of strategy consultant and workshop facilitator
2. Brief introduction of the tool and strategising components of the study and the research process
3. Discussion on the topic
4. Collect input from staff on their views and opinions
5. Feedback on session

Outcome for Growthpoint:

An opportunity for staff to give their thoughts and input on the concept of strategising for sustainability. Staff will be able to judge the measurement tool that was used in earlier research on Growthpoint's corporate website. Previous research assessed Growthpoint's efforts towards sustainability integration on strategic principles. An executive summary of the research and the findings will be provided to Growthpoint.

9.3 Annexure C: Biographic Form

Thank you for joining us today. By completing this Biographic Form you are giving permission to be a participant in this workshop.

Please kindly fill in the following information:

Number _____

Name: _____

Division: _____

Level of management (top/middle/lower):

Role/function: _____

Age: _____

Highest level of Education:

Have you been involved in sustainability/CSR or any environmental efforts in Growthpoint to date? Yes/No

9.4 Annexure D: Case company's score on SSI tool*

*based on study of external communication

STRATEGISING FOR SUSTAINABILITY INDEX (SSI) TOOL		RATING
1	Integrated Reporting	3
2	Sustainability recognition and affiliation	4
3	Vision and mission includes sustainability	3
4	Risk Management: Macroeconomic identification of risks and opportunities	3
5	Programmes and staff learning	3
6	Specific goals and objectives to achieve sustainability	4
7	Clear sustainability initiatives and programmes	4
8	Dedicated staff for sustainability	4
9	Specific Measures and Targets.	3
10	Sustainability Innovation: sustainability informs strategising	3
		TOTAL 34/50

9.5 Annexure E: Data collected for case study

Table describing the types of information, data sources, data collection techniques, data recording methods and type of data collected through this study of a case company.

Type of information	Data source	Date collection technique	Data recording	Type of Data
Approval and consent	CEO and practitioners	Verbal request and written response	Written document	Qualitative
Biographic information	Practitioners in sample	Handing out of questionnaires	Questionnaire	Qualitative and Quantitative
Support for the SSI elements as measures/indicators to determine sustainability strategising in a company on a 5 point scale.	Sample practitioners on top, middle and lower management across functional and line divisions and including the sustainability coordinator	Facilitated focus group session with instructor and prepared questions	Post it stickers with responses on 5 point scale. a modified process described by Bjornson, Wang and Arisholm (2008)	Quantitative
The extent of embeddedness of each element on the SSI tool in Growthpoint's strategising on a 5 point scale	Sample practitioners on top, middle and lower management across functional and line divisions and including the sustainability coordinator	Facilitated focus group session with instructor and prepared questions	Post it stickers with responses on 5 point scale. a modified process described by Bjornson, Wang and Arisholm (2008)	Quantitative
The extent of agreement with the researcher's rating score of Growthpoint for each element. On a 5 point scale	Sample practitioners on top, middle and lower management across functional and line divisions and including the sustainability coordinator	Facilitated focus group session with instructor and prepared questions	Post it stickers with responses on 5 point scale. a modified process described by Bjornson, Wang and Arisholm (2008)	Quantitative
The rank of all 10 SSI tool elements by importance	Sample practitioners on top, middle and lower management across functional and line divisions and including the sustainability coordinator	Facilitated focus group session with instructor and prepared questions	Post it stickers with responses on 5 point scale. a modified process described by Bjornson, Wang and Arisholm (2008)	Quantitative

9.6 Annexure F: Letter of permission

23 August 2011

To Catherine le Roux

I, Norbert Sasse give permission to you and Marius Pretorius to conduct research on Growthpoint as a whole and with a convenience sample of staff.

I acknowledge that you have provided me with the programme layout and the purposes and outcomes of the workshop.

For any further queries please contact my PA Vanessa Pereira on vpereira@growthpoint.co.za or myself nsasse@growthpoint.co.za

Yours sincerely

Norbert Sasse

Catherine Kirkwood

From: Norbert Sasse
Sent: 23 August 2011 05:45 PM
To: Catherine Kirkwood
Cc: Vanessa Pereira; George Muchanya
Subject: RE: Strategising for Sustainability Workshop

Hi Catherine

Sorry for taking so long to get back to you!

I am OK with your proposed workshop!

Please proceed!!

Regards.

Norbert

This dissertation was printed double sided instead of the conventional single sided method. This was done for economical, practical and ecological reasons. It is my hope that it will not be the norm to print single sided dissertations in the future.

Tread lightly :

