

# SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES –

*An essay contest sponsored by BusinessWeek and the Texas Woman's University School of Management*

## GUIDELINES

The School of Management at Texas Woman's University announces an essay contest on Sustainable Business Practices. This contest is sponsored by BusinessWeek.

## ESSAY TOPIC

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Concern for the natural environment has become one of the most critical issues of our time. News sources such as BusinessWeek have devoted significant space to examining the role of business in environmental sustainability. Business strategies that lead to economic success while minimizing ecological harm are considered "sustainable business practices."

Write an essay, following the given guidelines, that addresses the following issues:

1. What are some ways that businesses are successfully incorporating environmentally sustainable practices?
2. What are the primary obstacles that are preventing more businesses from practicing environmentally sustainable practices?
3. What solutions can help more businesses move toward better sustainable practices?

You should integrate these issues in a cohesive essay (not numbered) that uses appropriate research to support your conclusions.

## ELIGIBILITY

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The contest is open to currently enrolled TWU graduate or undergraduate students who fit the following criteria:

- Business and Fashion & Merchandising majors
- Students with Business as a minor
- Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) students with a business concentration
- MBA, EMBA, MHSM students

## DEADLINE

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- The deadline for essay submission is 5 p.m. March 30, 2009. All entries must be submitted by e-mail to the School of Management, Texas Woman's University, Denton TX. Late entries will not be accepted. The e-mail address for essay submissions is [som@twu.edu](mailto:som@twu.edu).
- E-mail your submission, along with the completed registration form, to the School of Management ([som@twu.edu](mailto:som@twu.edu)) on or before 5 p.m. March 30, 2009. Your essay and the form should be attached to your e-mail as MS-Word files. Your file should be named in the form <Lastname>.doc. Files with any other names will not be accepted.
- **Contact person:** The contact person at the School of Management for the essay contest will be Dr. Shweta Singh. Dr. Singh can be reached by e-mail at [SSingh2@twu.edu](mailto:SSingh2@twu.edu).

## AWARDS

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- There will be separate awards for graduate and undergraduate students.
- The winner for the undergraduate essay contest will receive \$ 500.
- The winner for the graduate essay contest will receive \$500.
- The winning essays will be featured on *businessweek.com*.
- All winners will be notified by e-mail and will receive their awards in April 2009.

## REQUIREMENTS

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- The essay must be written in English and all parts of the topic should be addressed. Essays on other topics will be disqualified.
- Only one entry per person will be allowed.
- The essay should be typed in 12 point Calibri or equivalent font, double-spaced, with left and right margins set at 1 inch each.
- You must complete the registration form that can be found at this link and submit it along with your entry.
- Number your pages.
- The essay should be limited to 1,200 words. Points will be deducted from essays exceeding the 1,200-word limit. The word count includes articles (the, and, a) and quotations. Only the body of the essay (not references) will be counted. You must include the exact word count in your student registration form.
- Include standardized citations and a bibliography in APA format. (These are not included in the 1,200-word count.) Essays without these elements will be disqualified.

## ESSAY FORMAT

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Your entry should be written as a position in response to the essay contest question. In writing your essay, make sure to include research of current events to support your position.

Your essay should contain the following:

An **introduction**, which introduces the subject and contains an explanation of your position. The objective is to demonstrate that you understand the essay contest question and have formed a response to it.

A **body**, which develops your argument using research and analysis. The process of analysis may include comparing and contrasting, differentiating among several ideas or events, critiquing a variety of perspectives, interpreting results, or drawing inferences. In this section, you should cite supporting research. You should have at least one Business week article in your citation list. Also, your references should reflect recent research. Be sure to identify the sources of your information or ideas. Essays that use a variety of sources—academic journals, news magazines,

newspapers, books, government documents, publications from research organizations—fare better in the contest.

A **conclusion**, which summarizes the research and analysis presented in the essay and sets forth your conclusions. Drawing on ideas already presented, you should demonstrate that your conclusions support the position you put forward in the opening paragraphs. Your aim is to convince the reader that your position is reasonable and valid.

A **bibliography** which is a list of the works that you have referred to in your essay or have consulted in order to write it. Use APA format for all references. Citations in the reference notes or bibliography should follow the APA format. Typically an entry will have **at least** the name of the author or editor, title of the work, and date and place of publication. The bibliography should be arranged alphabetically by the last names of the authors. Do not use footnotes. Gather all your notes at the end of the text as endnotes.

**Encyclopedias and Wikipedia are not acceptable as sources.** Essays citing encyclopedias or Wikipedia in notes or bibliography may be disqualified.

**The Internet or World Wide Web should not be the only source for your essay.** Be aware that you may encounter "republished" or "third generation" information on the Internet that is inaccurate or improperly attributed. When citing Internet sources, you must include the following information: author(s), title of work, Internet address, and date information was accessed. Follow the APA format for web citations also. For the purposes of this essay, Internet sources should be listed separately from non-electronic sources, such as books, magazines, and newspapers.

#### **YOUR ESSAY WILL BE DISQUALIFIED IF:**

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- It is not on the topic.
- It does not include at least one reference from a BusinessWeek article.
- Registration forms are not complete or contain incorrect information
- It does not have reference notes and a bibliography.
- It uses encyclopedia citations in the bibliography, or relies solely on Internet research.
- It plagiarizes—that is, uses someone else's statements or ideas as your own.

## HOW WILL YOUR ESSAY BE JUDGED?

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Essays will be judged by professors from the School of Management. The decisions of the judges are final. The School of Management reserves the right to present no awards, or to reduce the number of awards if an insufficient number of deserving entries is received. Participants will be notified in April 2009 of their essay's status. Please do not call the School of Management or Dr. Singh for information about the status of your essay.

**Your essay will be judged based on the seven criteria outlined below.**

**Focus:** Examines how well your essay responds to the questions and/or tasks presented. Does the essay provide specific and thorough responses to all of the questions and/or tasks presented? An excellent essay provides specific and thorough responses to all of the questions and/or tasks presented.

**Organization:** Looks at the structure of your essay and the strength of your thesis statement. Does the essay have an organized structure? An excellent essay has an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The organization includes an excellent thesis and moves the reader through the text.

**Analysis:** Considers how well your arguments are supported. Are the discussion points argued coherently and supported with research? In an excellent essay all of the arguments are strong, well detailed and extremely well supported by convincing and accurate evidence from recent publications. Your research should include at least one article from BusinessWeek.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** Examines how well conclusions and recommendations are expressed and how closely they follow from the analysis. Conclusions and recommendations should not present new information that is not a part of the analysis: Does the essay provide sound conclusions and recommendations that follow from the analysis? An excellent essay provides a coherent and comprehensive summary based on the analysis. All of the solutions to the problems presented are specific and well thought out.

**Originality:** Looks for creativity in writing. Does the writer use develop ideas creatively? In an excellent essay, the writer proposes and develops creative ideas, through the selection of cases and/or examples, to present novel analysis and alternatives throughout the entire essay.

**Voice:** Considers how well your writing engages the reader. Is the essay compelling and/or engaging? An excellent essay fully captures the reader's attention. The flow of the essay keeps the reader engaged throughout the entire text.

**Style and Mechanics:** Examines how well the essay is written in terms of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as word choice and sentence construction. Is the essay well written? An excellent essay uses standard writing conventions correctly, e.g. grammar, spelling, and punctuation, with no errors. There are no errors in word choice and all sentences are well constructed.