EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Even as organizations have adopted environmental sustainability, they have been criticized for the inadequate scope of their initiatives. Unfortunately, the most popular definition of “sustainability” combines a large responsibility with little guidance on adequate implementation. We extend the Competing Values Framework to map four types of environmental initiative onto already existing conceptions of organizational effectiveness. Initiatives can thus be placed in context and the entire portfolio can be evaluated for completeness. This also encourages managers to accept the paradoxical coexistence of apparently opposed approaches to effectiveness, a stance that is helpful in grappling with a deeper “embedded” understanding of sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainability, Competing values, Innovation, Efficiency, Natural environment