

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

DEAR READER,

Bringing a new journal into existence is, in a small way, similar to doing the same for a child. There already exists an established environment into which it will come and a set of rules (whether genetic or journalistic) for it to follow along the way; consequently, there are expectations. Upbringing could be strict or liberal or anything in between and progenitors hopefully will seek the right balance so as to develop responsibility and cultivate imagination. There also are many outside influences. In spite of the presence of all these paths and walls, each will develop as a unique individual.

The rules and “upbringing” style of this journal are to a significant extent influenced by the nature of its focus. As evidenced in this issue in the article by [Kiss](#), the concept of “sustainability” has many interpretations with widely varying intended applications and claims, and indeed still remains well within its “developmental” stage. Conceptual terms that draw a wide audience, due either to favor or fear, are quickly adopted for exploitation. The essence of continuity embedded in this concept of sustainability has such broad appeal as to make it vulnerable to an almost equally broad range of exploiters, every one with an arguable rationale for its use.

In response, an increasing number of constituent groups have developed and set forth meanings held in common for the concept of sustainability, incrementally defining the broader

term and delineating boundaries for its use. In each case, there exists an identifying prefix to the word sustainability, e.g. “ecological,” “economic,” or “social.” It is an objective of the Journal to support development of a common meaning for the term “environmental sustainability” among a constituent group of environmental managers and [Morelli](#) puts forth such a proposal within this issue.

Another objective of the Journal is to encourage and provide opportunities for us to periodically question underlying assumptions and to revisit status quo situations in view of new information. In this issue, [Kerekes](#) raises questions about responsibility in the face of extraordinary natural phenomena, highlights long-term risks and damages that are obscured by more immediate concerns, addresses action in the face of theoretical uncertainty, and illuminates a commonly missed dimension in the analysis of environmental risk. [Pogutz, Micale and Winn](#) identify critical constraints inherent in corporate sustainability efforts and here again bring to these light as missing profiles on the horizon of environmental management scholarship. Both papers emphasize the critical importance of taking a more expansive view of the corporate world.

The Journal also seeks meaningful and credible measures of environmental sustainability. [Windolph](#) reveals that problems exist in various rating systems, including a lack of standardization, credibility of information, transparency and

independence, and a presence of bias and tradeoff imbalances, and suggests strategies for improving reliability. [Reichel and Seeberg](#) propose defining and applying global ecological allowances, e.g., CO2 emissions, to specific industrial sectors as a measure against which environmental performance could be calculated.

Recognizing that no one single socio-economic model will bring about environmental sustainability, the Journal welcomes reports on experimental efforts to meet societal and ecological needs in unique situations. In this issue, [Luda](#) presents a case study of the efforts of a small city in Austria to become more economically and environmentally sustainable, and examines the efforts and outcomes of a very small intentional agricultural community in Hungary dedicated to biodynamic farming.

Over the past quarter century, the role of the environmental manager has been shifting from reactive to proactive. Along with this shift has been an evolution of tools to help us move toward a more environmentally sustainable future. These tools are used toward that end by environmental managers and increasingly by others in the organization. [Winnebeck](#) presents an effective set of tools for environmental managers to use in their work with product design teams. In this same time frame, the boundaries of environmental responsibility have expanded beyond the organization's environmental experts to include other functional units. As a first step in developing a framework for integrated, cross-functional transfer of sustainability related knowledge within an organization, [Harms](#) explores how environmental sustainability related knowledge now moves among functional units in an internal sustainable supply chain. The Journal encourages papers that introduce and evaluate effective tools for environmental sustainability.

To accommodate a broad range of contributions and ideas, the Journal will accept

papers in four categorical styles, including: Original Research, Synthesis, Insights, and Visions. Additionally, commentaries or opinions on specific timely issues may be invited.

I sincerely hope you will find the information presented in this and future issues helpful in moving us all toward a more environmentally sustainable future.

Best regards,

John Morelli