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Eco-Business: A Big-Brand Takeover Of Sustainability (MIT Press)

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Synopsis

McDonald’s promises to use only beef, coffee, fish, chicken, and cooking oil obtained from sustainable sources. Coca-Cola promises to achieve water neutrality. Unilever seeks to achieve 100 percent sustainable agricultural sourcing by 2020. Walmart has pledged to become carbon neutral. Big-brand companies seem to be making commitments that go beyond the usual "greenwashing" efforts undertaken largely for public-relations purposes. In Eco-Business, Peter Dauvergne and Jane Lister examine this new corporate embrace of sustainability, its actual accomplishments, and the consequences for the environment. For many leading-brand companies, these corporate sustainability efforts go deep, reorienting central operations and extending through global supply chains. Yet, as Dauvergne and Lister point out, these companies are doing this not for the good of the planet but for their own profits and market share in a volatile, globalized economy. They are using sustainability as a business tool. Dauvergne and Lister show that the eco-efficiencies achieved by big-brand companies limit the potential for finding deeper solutions to pressing environmental problems and reinforce runaway consumption. Eco-business promotes the sustainability of big business, not the sustainability of life on Earth.

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Customer Reviews

Are the authors for eco-business or not? They certainly make it very clear in the beginning that they are not for the big brand takeover of eco-business, but then continue to expound upon the positive

effects of big brand take over of eco-business. Very quick and easy read with nifty facts tucked into each chapter on big brand takeover, but it does leave you feeling hollow and unconvinced of the authors' prognosis.

I have been a follower and even a proponent of corporate sustainability strategy for a number of years. This book provides a cogent and important counterpoint to an increasingly strong line of thinking that we can have win-win solutions to environmental problems. I teach in the business school and have earned a graduate degree in business and I have a background in environmental science. I would say that the authors cautioning of the true motivations of corporations and we can realistically expect them to accomplish is well-founded and we should all keep it closeon the long road ahead. Without a doubt, sustainable future is not possible without corporations and big brands being a critical part of it and integrating sustainability into their business strategy and operations. But we must see that as just one part of a more holistic transformation that must involve nongovernmental organizations, civil society, government, our school systems, etc.I would strongly recommend this book and after having read many corporate sustainability books, I think it stands alone in its critique of sustainability strategy in business. It is a cautionary tale and a very important one.

A well written text, based on data, creating an evidence based point of view!Makes you wonder about the real fundaments fo our society!!

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