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2024

ESSEC SCIENCE & SOCIÉTÉ

ENTREPRISES ET TERRITOIRES FACE AUX TRANSITIONS

ACTE DE CONFÉRENCE

INTRODUCTION

La deuxième édition de la journée ESSEC Science & Société s'est déroulée le jeudi 4 avril sur le campus de Cergy. Organisé par le Centre de Recherche de l'ESSEC, cet événement est dédié au partage des connaissances et des recherches des professeurs. Cette journée a rassemblé des professeurs ESSEC et des professeurs invités, des étudiants, des experts et des acteurs locaux.

Le thème de cette année fut « **Entreprises et territoires face aux transitions** ».

Vincenzo Vinzi, directeur général de l'ESSEC, a ouvert cette journée avec un discours d'accueil chaleureux. Il a notamment rappelé l'impact de la recherche à l'ESSEC et de l'importance de son partage, grâce à l'organisation d'événements ou encore à la plateforme en ligne ESSEC Knowledge.



INTERVENTION D'EXPERTS

La première partie de la matinée fut animée par Gilbert Azoulay, directeur de News Tank Education, et a accueilli trois experts et alumni de l'ESSEC, venus partager leur expérience en matière de transition.



William Arkwright, directeur général d'Engie Green

Diplômé de l'ENS et de l'ESSEC, William a intégré le groupe Engie en 2012 à la direction de la stratégie avant d'occuper la fonction de directeur de cabinet auprès du directeur général délégué du Groupe. Il a évolué au sein de GEM (Global Energy Management), plateforme de trading du groupe, avant de devenir directeur des énergies renouvelables d'Engie Entreprises et Collectivités. Il a notamment contribué à créer Réservoir Sun, filiale dédiée au solaire décentralisé, ainsi qu'au développement de la commercialisation du biogaz.

William est directeur général d'Engie Green depuis 2020, filiale du groupe ENGIE pour le solaire et l'éolien en France, qui exploite et maintient le plus d'installations éoliennes et solaires en France.

COMMENT FAIRE DE LA FRANCE UNE TERRE D'ACCUEIL DES RENOUVELABLES ?

La France a reçu le bonnet d'âne de la classe européenne de la part de l'UE en ce qui concerne le déploiement des énergies renouvelables. En effet, alors qu'en France nous avons les ressources nécessaires en termes d'espace, de finance et d'ensoleillement (comparaison avec les Pays-Bas, la Pologne ou encore l'Espagne), le développement des énergies éoliennes ou solaires manque de rapidité en France.

Ce sujet fait débat en France et montre que l'urgence climatique est mal perçue. Ce sujet touche beaucoup les discussions politiques autour de l'urgence climatique : notre gouvernement actuel se concentre beaucoup sur l'énergie nucléaire. Il en faut aussi mais dans le monde actuel en pleine transition, la répartition de notre production d'énergie est indispensable.

Françoise Carle, directrice générale adjointe en charge du développement du département du Val-d'Oise

Diplômée de l'ESSEC, Françoise Carle est directrice générale adjointe en charge du développement au conseil départemental du Val d'Oise, après avoir exercé des fonctions de consultante associée et de direction générale dans différents contextes publics.



LES ENJEUX DE TRANSITIONS POUR LE VAL-D'OISE

Le département du Val-d'Oise est une collectivité aux atouts considérables et dont les trajectoires et enjeux territoriaux sont multiples, à l'image de son territoire jeune, dynamique et diversifié, à la fois très rural à l'ouest et très urbain à l'est.

Ces dynamiques valdoisiennes, impulsées par la puissance publique locale, sont aujourd'hui traversées par l'urgence des enjeux écologiques, sociologiques, numériques et environnementaux.

Françoise Carle nous a présenté toute une série de leviers en faveur de la durabilité et des transitions, mis en place par le conseil départemental du Val-d'Oise.

- Premièrement, une offre d'ingénierie de smart services à destination des entreprises et des établissements du territoire pour les accompagner dans leur transition (écosystèmes agroalimentaires, tourisme durable, sécurité des biens, des personnes et de l'environnement).
- Deuxièmement, un accompagnement de proximité des habitants pour faire face à l'évolution démographique du territoire. Cela passe par le développement d'un territoire « santé » favorisant l'accès aux soins mais aussi par la lutte contre les auto-censures et les continuum formation-emploi.
- Enfin, faire naître une culture de la transition et le partage des valeurs éco-responsables au cœur des politiques publiques : formation des agents, aménagement du territoire.

Ces actions, structurées autour d'une stratégie d'attractivité à destination des habitants, des investisseurs et des acteurs socio-économiques du territoire, sont les preuves que le Département est une composante active et cheffe de file dans les transformations à engager.



Philippe Brochard, ancien directeur général d'Auchan France, entrepreneur, administrateur indépendant, conseil auprès de fondateurs et dirigeants.

Diplômé de l'ESSEC, Philippe Brochard est un dirigeant engagé, spécialisé dans la remise en performance durable d'organisation dans le monde de l'industrie et du retail avec une expérience internationale acquise chez Renault, Alstom et Auchan.

Philippe est passionné d'agriculture, d'impact positif et d'accompagnement des transitions indispensables en entreprises, qu'elles soient économiques, humaines, technologiques ou climatiques. Il s'engage particulièrement sur des enjeux de souveraineté alimentaire et industrielle, d'inclusion et d'égalité des chances. Philippe a une approche globale des sujets, adressant simultanément les enjeux liés aux évolutions de la société, la culture d'entreprise, la data et la technologie, la performance des organisations et de ses talents, les fondations SI et Supply-Chain.

ÉVEIL DU CONSOMMATEUR ET INFLATION : CE GRAND PARADOXE ACCÉLÉRATEUR DES TRANSITIONS ÉCONOMIQUES, SOCIALES ET CLIMATIQUES DE NOS ZONES COMMERCIALES ET DE NOS MODES DE CONSOMMATION

Le citoyen n'a jamais été aussi conscient de l'impact associé à son mode de consommation et de ses achats sur les transitions économiques, sociales et climatiques.

Il en est ainsi pour sa santé, ses besoins personnels mais également son empreinte carbone, le développement des entreprises et de l'emploi et la maîtrise des ressources (alimentaires et énergétiques) de plus en plus limitées.

Mais le citoyen est également de plus en plus limité par son budget personnel : en 2023, le prix est le premier critère d'importance d'acte d'achat (décisif à 67 %), ce qui est 7 places devant l'engagement écologique (décisif à 12 %).

Pour répondre à ces enjeux et réconcilier le pouvoir d'agir et le pouvoir d'achat, des transitions majeures s'organisent dans la grande distribution :

- la transformation des zones commerciales en quartiers de vie ;
- le développement d'entreprises engagées comme des plateformes pour désintermédier la relation entre les producteurs et les commerçants, pour développer le cotransportage des livraisons entre particuliers et consommateurs ou encore pour construire un monde sans gaspillage en alliant impact positif et performance économique ;
- Philippe Brochard a pris l'exemple d'Auchan qui a renouvelé le concept du retail alimentaire en créant de nouveaux lieux de vie uniques sur le marché, sous forme d'écosystèmes locaux durables où chacun trouve sa place et apporte sa contribution.

Finalement, avoir un impact positif c'est comprendre que sa consommation est un choix et une action pour l'économie, les hommes et la planète.

TABLE RONDE

Lors de la table ronde animée par Gilbert Azoulay, des experts ont échangé sur la manière dont les entités privées et publiques relèvent les défis du développement durable et comment elles travaillent ensemble. Ils ont également pu partager les solutions que proposent leurs organisations, les coalitions à mettre en œuvre ou encore les innovations à développer. Cinq personnes ont participé à cette table ronde :



Mikaël Lemarchand, ancien directeur de l'Engagement social, territorial et environnemental de la SNCF.

Après une première expérience professionnelle en Allemagne, Mikaël Lemarchand a intégré le groupe SNCF en 2001. Il occupe d'abord des postes orientés développement et marketing au sein de Voyages SNCF, avant de devenir chef de cabinet de Guillaume Pepy, de 2005 à 2008. Son parcours professionnel l'amène ensuite à occuper différents postes au sein des activités voyageurs : il est chargé du développement des activités ferroviaires de Keolis, puis travaille durant cinq ans chez Eurostar, notamment en tant que directeur général France. De 2017 à 2019, il est directeur commercial, marketing et services de Transilien. Mikaël Lemarchand est directeur du projet d'entreprise Tous SNCF depuis janvier 2020.

Élisabeth Gaillarde, directrice RSE au sein du cabinet de conseil Transition & Growth.

Après 9 ans à travailler sur la prise en compte des enjeux environnementaux par le monde agricole, Élisabeth Gaillarde rejoint l'ADEME (Agence de l'environnement et de la maîtrise de l'énergie) où elle développe le Bilan Carbone, premier outil de mesure de l'impact des entreprises sur le changement climatique. Elle passe ensuite 15 ans au sein de grands groupes privés, où elle construit des offres de produits et de services en faveur du développement durable, tant sur des sujets environnementaux que sociétaux. Depuis 2021, comme directrice RSE/ESG, elle construit avec l'entreprise sa stratégie et sa trajectoire de durabilité ; elle coordonne son déploiement opérationnel et l'engagement des collaborateurs ; elle pilote la mesure de sa performance à travers son reporting extra-financier ; elle valorise l'impact de l'entreprise avec son écosystème. Élisabeth est titulaire d'un Executive Master de l'ESSEC, d'un doctorat de socio-économie et est ingénieur agronome.

Laurence Daures, professeure ESSEC.

Laurence Daures est professeure associée de finance. Ses recherches portent sur la microstructure des marchés financiers. Laurence a reçu le Prix de thèse en 2004 de l'Association française de la finance et de la Fondation nationale pour l'enseignement académique de la gestion des entreprises (FNEGE), le « Prix Joseph de la Vega » en 2013 et le prix IFSID du meilleur article sur les produits dérivés en 2015. Elle a reçu plusieurs bourses de recherche d'Euronext Paris (2007), du FEI (2008, 2010, 2020), de l'Agence nationale de la recherche (JCJC, 2011) et de l'INEX (Initiative d'Excellence, 2018).

Elle siège au conseil d'administration de Dassault Systèmes et de LCL (Le Crédit Lyonnais). Elle siège également au comité d'audit de Dassault Systèmes (DS) et préside le comité des rémunérations et des nominations de DS. Elle siège au comité des risques de LCL et préside le comité d'audit de LCL.

Laurence est titulaire d'un doctorat en finance d'HEC Paris.

Guillaume Placé, directeur général adjoint de la communauté d'agglomération Cergy-Pontoise.

Guillaume Placé est, depuis 2020, directeur général adjoint de la communauté d'agglomération de Cergy-Pontoise qui réunit 13 communes et 215 000 habitants. Il dirige notamment les équipes en charge de la stratégie territoriale, de l'aménagement urbain, du patrimoine bâti, du développement économique, des solidarités et de l'emploi.

Urbaniste, administrateur territorial formé à Sciences Po, il a alterné un parcours en collectivités locales et des expériences outre-mer et à l'étranger (Cameroun, Kenya). Il a notamment été directeur de l'aménagement à Rennes Métropole, directeur général adjoint du département de la Guyane, directeur général des services de la ville d'Anglet, sur la Côte Basque, et de la ville de Trappes, dans les Yvelines.

Pascal Trideau, directeur ESG et excellence opérationnelle de Sofiproteol.

Membre du directoire d'Efin Gestion depuis 2012; titulaire d'une maîtrise d'économie, d'un MBA de l'ESSEC et diplômé de l'IAE de Paris, Pascal a commencé sa carrière en 1991 au Crédit Agricole; il intègre ensuite le fonds Unigrains en 1999 en tant que directeur de participations et occupe parallèlement le poste de directeur du service des études économiques pendant trois ans; il a ensuite rejoint la Confédération générale des Scop de 2007 à 2011 en tant que directeur des outils financiers, puis directeur général.

Afin que les entreprises et collectivités puissent répondre aux défis de transition qu'elles rencontrent, il est nécessaire de mettre en place un accompagnement. Pascal Trideau précise l'importance de leur proposer des solutions de financements adaptés aux ESG dans cet accompagnement. Selon lui, les entreprises sont souvent impactées par le E de ESG (Environnemental, Social et Gouvernance), notamment dans le secteur agricole et alimentaire qu'il accompagne. Laurence Daures rebondit en expliquant que les normes financières et les critères ESG évoluent. Avant, seulement les dimensions purement financières étaient étudiées alors qu'aujourd'hui, l'empreinte carbone, la biodiversité, l'environnement social, ..., sont pris en compte.

Guillaume Placé explique que les collectivités sont de plus en plus accompagnées, avec le développement de dispositifs comme le Fonds Vert ou les primes de rénovation, mais que des challenges perdurent dans les partenariats collectivités-entreprises.

Plus globalement, Mikaël Lemarchand explique qu'aujourd'hui il y a une prise de conscience que l'environnement et le social sont des paramètres à prendre en compte dans la conduite des affaires. Maintenant le travail, difficile mais indispensable, est de prendre la responsabilité d'y intégrer ces dimensions.

Bien qu'il y ait des approches diverses sur les défis de transitions, Élisabeth Gaillaarde conclut en soulignant qu'un travail collectif et le partage d'expériences entre entreprises et collectivités sont nécessaires pour avancer.



AFTERNOON: ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND STUDENT CHALLENGE

After lunch, our attention turned to the “Science” part of the day. We had the privilege of welcoming ESSEC and CYU professors to the stage, and ESSEC students also shared their solutions for contemporary challenges during the finale of the 180 Degrees ESSEC Change Challenge. With research and social impact being an integral part of ESSEC’s mission, this conference provided the opportunity for faculty members to share their work and for the ESSEC community to get a glimpse at the thriving ESSEC research community.

There was a diverse crowd in attendance, with ESSEC faculty, staff, and students alongside external guests and even two classes of high school students!

Academic session #1

The first academic session was chaired by Wilfried Sand, head of the Economics Department, and welcomed professors Edouard Dequeker and Elise Gourier of ESSEC and Geneviève Zembri-Mary of CY Cergy Paris University to the stage to talk about their research.



Geneviève Zembri-Mary, Professor of urban planning and development at CY Cergy-Paris University.

Geneviève Zembri-Mary works on how uncertainty and opportunities can change planning practices and theories in a context of environmental crisis and economic and social changes. Planning is understood as a process of going back and forth between the different phases of a project (planning, programming, design, consultation, etc.). Uncertainties can be environmental, social, political, financial, regulatory, etc. She analyzes concepts such as opportunity, transitions, heritage development, and densification in relation to uncertainty. It is also about working on the way in which uncertainties and resources are identified, perceived, represented and used by public, private, associative and resident actors in the planning process.

This research is intended to provide a proposed theoretical framework for planning that can be re-examined in a context marked by new uncertainties. The case studies concern transport infrastructure, town planning and development projects, sports, leisure, cultural, tourist or commercial equipment projects. The sites studied are varied (urban, peri-urban, rural), located in France or in Europe (Great Britain, Greece). These can be small projects (housing for example) or mega-projects (large transport infrastructures, Olympic equipment).

WHAT IF UNCERTAINTY WASN'T AN OBSTACLE TO LAND-USE PLANNING?

Uncertainty is often considered a handicap, an obstacle. Can we have a positive view of uncertainty?

Territorial planning is carried out through a plan aimed at guiding or framing urban development, the location of facilities, infrastructure, economic activities, and housing. It can be driven by a political project and take the form of an urban project, involving both private and public actors, with the objective of increasing the attractiveness of a city or metropolis. It may also involve infrastructure or mega projects. However, the planning of urban projects and infrastructure projects faces numerous environmental, financial, regulatory, social, political, and demographic uncertainties. We will consider that these uncertainties can be a source of new opportunities for the project if the actors leverage the resources of their “agency,” such as the ability to access and mobilize individual and collective resources. But this agency to act and create opportunities implies freedom and responsibility in decision-making and choices to be made.



Elise Gourier, Professor of Finance, ESSEC Business School.

Elise Gourier received a doctorate in finance from the Swiss Finance Institute at the University of Zurich in 2013. She spent two years as a postdoctoral researcher at Princeton University and then was appointed assistant professor at Queen Mary University of London. She is also a researcher affiliated with CEPR. Elise's research interests include theoretical and empirical asset pricing and financial econometrics. She is currently working on several projects aimed at better understanding the returns of publicly traded indices and stocks, as well as private equity funds. Elise has published in top academic journals in finance, presented at major financial conferences, and taught asset valuation and financial economics. She has supervised theses at the Master and PhD levels.

GREENWASHING: HOW DOES IT IMPACT FINANCIAL MARKETS?

The mounting pressure from activists, investors and government agencies to tackle climate change has led some firms to provide misleading information about the environmental soundness of their practices. This phenomenon is often referred to as 'greenwashing'. Does greenwashing have an impact on financial markets? We use artificial intelligence to show that it does. First, we find that the media has been reporting increasingly about greenwashing since 2015. This increase is driven by concerns about green assets, i.e., assets developed by the financial sector to incentivize and help companies to become greener. When the volume of media reports increases, investments into green funds slow down. Firms that are really green therefore suffer from less investments as well. Second, greenwashing induces uncertainty on how exposed firms really are to climate risk. The measurement of this exposure is crucial to guide green investors in their asset allocation. The second part of our project seeks to achieve a more granular understanding of the effects of greenwashing at the firm level. The main challenge to detecting greenwashing, however, lies in the ability to verify firms' claims. The many communication channels that can be used for greenwashing make manual searches extremely resource-intensive. We develop an AI-based detection method which compares the communications of firms, through press releases and their websites, and matches them. Our method raises a red flag when the contents of these communications are related to sustainability, and do not match. The next step will be to analyze whether firms that are greenwashing more, according to our algorithm, are the firms that are the most impacted.



Edouard Dequeker, Professor of Public & Private Policy and Professor of the ESSEC Chair of Urban Economics.

Edouard Dequeker is a graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris-Saclay, of the University of Oxford and of ESSEC (specialization in the Chair of Urban Economics). He has also spent time working with consulting firms in local and urban development (EY, Algoé) and public structures (City of Paris, Conseil départemental des Yvelines). He completed a PhD in geography and economic sociology at Sciences Po Paris, in cooperation with the London School of Economics, on the comparative metropolitan dynamics of Greater Paris and Greater London and their respective economic governances. He is currently Professor for the Chair of Urban Economics of ESSEC Business School and educational manager of the Advanced Master in Urban and Real-Estate Management. His areas of research relate to the drivers for the economic dynamics of cities and territories, as well as of their social and environmental balances, to location choices by firms and households, and of the role of economics (public/private) governance of cities in their dynamics.

COMPANIES AND TERRITORIAL ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Beyond the imperative necessity for mitigating its effects at a global scale, we must collectively start to adapt to its systemic consequences at urban and regional levels that will occur in the next thirty years regardless of any changes we launch now. This process of local adaptation to climate change relates to new economic models and investment strategies, as well as new ways for governing common resources that will increasingly rarefy, for which companies will play a crucial role. This presentation highlights research case studies that are being worked on at the moment, namely the A8 highway over the Brague and the Var Bridge in southern France, rising sea levels in Dunkirk, and water scarcity issues. He argues that in any case, we will have to come up with new forms of public-private coordination for governing our commons in the years to come.

180 Degrees Consulting ESSEC: Student Change Challenge

The 180 DC Change Challenge was a competition organized by the student club, 180 Degrees Consulting ESSEC. Launched in February, eight groups of two to three ESSEC students came up with an idea that could have a positive societal impact related to the conference theme. Students were encouraged to identify a specific issue facing a business, an economic sector, or a geographic area, and conduct research and analysis to propose a strategy for addressing this issue. Their ideas were required to be feasible and in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The ESSEC Research Center team then reviewed their projects and selected three finalists, judging based on their research skills, their presentation, their writing, and if their solution was realistic, creative and pertinent. A full description of each project is available in Appendix 1.

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MINIMIZING WASTE AND OVERCONSUMPTION IN THE FURNITURE RETAIL MARKET: FROM SELF-SERVICE TO A PROJECT-BASED MODEL

By Dorvan Lee Yan Voon, Enzo Jacomelli and Léo Séré de Rivières

Objective: Our initiative aims to reduce waste in the furniture market by transitioning from a traditional sales model focused on goods to a service-oriented approach. This strategy leverages employee expertise alongside advanced technologies, such as 3D modeling and Virtual Reality (VR), to better meet customers' interior design needs and encourage sustainable consumption.

Personalized Project Development: Shifting from a self-service to a personalized project development model, where specialists collaborate closely with customers. This approach fosters a more tailored experience, ensuring customer needs and visions for their interior spaces are accurately captured and realized.

Virtual Design Consultations: Offering both physical and online consultations, our specialists will utilize 3D modeling and VR technologies to create immersive virtual mockups of clients' design projects. This innovative method allows

customers to visualize and adjust their space before making any purchases.

The transition to a project-based model in the furniture retail sector is a transformative step towards sustainability and enhanced consumer engagement. This initiative leverages 3D modeling and VR to minimize waste and promote eco-friendly consumption, addressing environmental concerns while meeting customer needs. Despite facing challenges such as technological adoption and the need for significant initial investments, the outlined mitigation strategies and phased rollout plan provide a clear path forward. This approach not only aims to reduce the environmental impact associated with furniture retail but also offers a novel, customer-focused shopping experience. By embracing this innovative model, the industry can achieve significant environmental benefits and redefine the way consumers interact with furniture brands.

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A RENEWED AMAZON: ENHANCING LIVES THROUGH ESSENTIAL SERVICES

By **Valentina Vatore, Andrea C. Vergara M. and Zoe Szeto**

Our objective is to foster and accelerate the societal and economical progress of the remote villages of the Amazonia Region in Ecuador by making basic services, in particular access to clean water, accessible for everyone. We also aim to raise awareness among the Ecuadorian population to sustainable practices that do not destroy the natural habitat of the region and do not destabilize the fragile equilibrium of the villages. We want to launch the idea of transformative expeditions across the Ecuadorian Amazon that can bring innovative solutions and spread awareness among people from all around the World, as well as bringing the issue to the attention of experts, policy makers and governments.

Specifically, we want to help indigenous communities with projects to meet their needs and guarantee the fulfillment of their human rights. Our first plan is to create a drinking water system for the indigenous community of the Yasuní National Park. In order to do so, we need to raise funds to be able to implement the best technologies and to sustain the work of all the participants that will be involved in our project. In our organization we envision a future in which scientific and societal progress can live in balance with biodiversity and nature. Our mission is to help the indigenous people to accelerate their growth from a scientific and economic perspective while learning from them how coexisting harmoniously with the natural habitat is possible.

BRIDGING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES IN SAINT-DENIS: A FOCUS ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM

By **Ai Linh Tong and Diana Kruglova**

Saint-Denis, located in the northern outskirts of Paris, has long faced a range of socio-economic hurdles, including disparities in employment, crime rates, and housing issues. Despite concerted efforts to rejuvenate the area, such as its integration into the Paris metropolitan framework since the early 2000s and major initiatives like the “Great Paris” and hosting the “2024 Summer Olympics,” the resulting benefits have not been fairly distributed among its residents, thus perpetuating entrenched socio-economic disparities. This discussion highlights the evident mismatch between available economic opportunities and the skill sets of the local populace, exacerbated by insufficient investment in education and limited community engagement (Institut Montaigne, 2020). These circumstances prompt questions

from French authorities about the effectiveness and lasting social impacts of their efforts and investments. This paper delves into the multifaceted challenges faced by Saint-Denis, particularly examining the role of educational reforms in addressing these disparities.

By investigating the impacts of these challenges on Saint-Denis’ social economics and analyzing successful case studies of educational reforms, we aim to propose viable solutions to foster inclusive development, namely:

1. **A focus on the educational environment: investment in educational resources and infrastructure.**
2. **Incentive plan for social educators: a higher pay for an unequal work**
3. **Educating parents**
4. **Practical and innovative education**



Academic session #2

The final keynote address was given by ESSEC professor Felix Papier. He was introduced by Veronica Casarin, Assistant Professor of Accounting and Management Control and spoke about his research on supply chains.

THE ROLE OF OPERATIONS & SUPPLY CHAINS IN TRANSFORMING COMPANIES AND COMMUNITIES

Operations and Supply Chains are among the most important parts of organizations to reduce the impact of companies on the planet, on communities, and on society. We look into three important questions: (1) How can operations help a company improve its own environmental footprint? We consider the example of closed-loop, circular supply chains to reduce waste and carbon emissions? (2) How can companies manage other companies in its supply chain, such as suppliers or partners, to improve its social impact? We discuss supply chain due diligence to combat forced labor in global value chains. Finally, (3) are there supply chains that are truly good? We talk about humanitarian supply chains whose only mission is to improve the well-being of disaster-striken or otherwise affected communities.



Felix Papier, Professor of Supply Chain Management, ESSEC Business School

Felix Papier is a Supply Chain Management Professor in the Operations Management Department at ESSEC Business School since 2011 and Holder of the ESSEC Global Circular Economy Chair. His research and teaching focuses on supply chain and operations strategy, sustainable and socially-responsible operations, circular economy, supply chain due diligence and information sharing in supply chains, and humanitarian operations. He was previously the Academic Director of the ESSEC & Mannheim Executive MBA (2015-2017) and the Dean of ESSEC Pre-Experience Programs (2017-2022).

He has published in several academic and professional journals such as Operations Research (OR),

Manufacturing & Service Operations Management (MSOM), Production and Operations Management (POM), Transportation Science, European Journal of Operational Research (EJOR), and Harvard Business Review Germany/France and presented his research at international conferences in Europe, Asia, and the United States (INFORMS, EURO, MSOM, POMS). In 2001, he completed part of his graduate studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and in 2006, he visited the Hong Kong University of Science & Technology as a Research Scholar. In 2022/23, he was Visiting Faculty at the Anderson School of Management at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Before joining ESSEC, he worked for several years as a strategy and operations management consultant for McKinsey & Company. He has performed numerous assignments in strategy formulation, purchasing management, and supply chain management, serving international clients from the automotive, pharmaceutical, and agricultural industries.

CLOSING REMARKS

by **Anne-Claire Pache**, Associate Dean of Strategy and Sustainability.

To cap off the day's events, ESSEC professor of social innovation and Associate Dean of Strategy and Sustainability Anne-Claire Pache took the stage. She noted ESSEC's commitment to driving social change and sustainable development, sharing some of ESSEC's initiatives such as the work of Together, the Fresque de la Diversité, and our partnership with the Cergy-Pontoise agglomeration. Dr. Pache also highlighted the importance of events like ESSEC Science & Society in building a better future by working together.

With ESSEC Science & Society being an annual event, stay tuned for more information on next year's edition coming soon, and take a look at more photos and videos of the day on our website!



Organizing Committee

"Academic research is a key part of ESSEC's mission, and our goal is to produce knowledge that will address 21st century challenges. We believe that it is our responsibility to share this knowledge. Our guiding principle is "science with and for society", and that's why we created the ESSEC Science & Society conference", explains Roméo Tédongap, Associate Dean for Research at ESSEC.

180 DEGREES CONSULTING ESSEC STUDENT CHANGE CHALLENGE

BEHIND THE SEAMS: ZARA'S ROAD TO SUSTAINABILITY

Ipsita Chatterjee, Abhay Mehta and Sai Pravallika Chenchala

The fashion industry has been under a microscope for its unsustainable practices, with Zara, a major player in fast fashion, drawing significant attention. This paper dives into the environmental and social impacts of rapid fashion cycles, including emissions, pollution, and labour exploitation. It also delves into the growing scepticism among consumers towards sustainability claims made by fashion brands, highlighting an opportunity for companies committed to ethical practices.

We examine Zara's recent efforts to become more sustainable, alongside the challenges it faces in ensuring transparency and responsible sourcing. To address these issues, we propose the integration of blockchain technology

into Zara's supply chain. Blockchain offers a decentralised and secure tracking system, enhancing transparency and traceability from raw materials to finished products. Smart contracts automate agreements, simplifying processes and encouraging sustainable practices.

Additionally, we suggest the implementation of a blockchain-supported resale platform to promote circularity and prolong the life of garments. However, we acknowledge challenges such as governance, scalability, and the need for technical training. By embracing blockchain technology, Zara can position itself as a leader in sustainability, rebuilding consumer trust and fostering a more transparent and efficient business model.

UNLOCKING BUSINESS HYPERTRANSFORMATION WITH GEN AI: STRATEGICALLY NAVIGATING EMPLOYEE PROFILES FOR SUCCESS

Visakh R., Mammen Varghese and Akshara S.

In today's fast-paced world, employees' attitudes toward new technologies like GenAI can make or break a company's success. Building on Ulrich Lichtenhaller's research, we delve deep into understanding how employees perceive GenAI. Understanding why employees feel the way they do, with practical examples, is crucial for shaping their attitudes. Through a structured approach, we identify different types of employees based on their rationality and emotions, considering factors like age, position, and familiarity with GenAI. Using surveys and interviews, we uncover valuable insights: from cultural influences to the impact of organizational size.

We classify every employee in a company into one of five personas: the futurist advocate, the apprehensive rationalist, the cautious visionary, the executive novice, and the insightful sage. To enhance the effectiveness of this tool, we could explore Organizational Network Theory. This theory suggests that despite traditional hierarchies, certain individuals within an organization are trusted and influential, impacting information flow and decision-making. By identifying these key influencers and encouraging them to support GenAI, we could improve employee reception of GenAI in the workplace. This idea invites further investigation and strategic actions for better integrating GenAI technologies into work environments.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN BFSI

Samruddhi Dhavale, Elise Anton and Dejan Dibra

"Digital transformation is the fundamental rewiring of how an organization operates. The goal of a digital transformation is to build a competitive advantage by continuously deploying tech at scale to improve customer experience and lower costs." Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming industries, and the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector is no exception. While

AI adoption in financial services is still in its early stages, its potential to address key challenges like data overload, manual processes, and fierce competition is undeniable. We explore how AI can be used across the BFSI industry to enhance customer experience, streamline operations, and improve risk management. We propose a three-step approach:

Assess

- Understanding the existing conditions, including identifying bottlenecks, pain points, and ongoing issues.
- Identifying the primary transformation objectives and future aspirations for the business area.

Reimagine

- Redefining Value Chain via effective Human-Machine Interplay
- Selecting Appropriate «Fit-To-Purpose» AI Technologies

- Evaluating Feasibility and business impact to create a transformation roadmap with incremental milestones.

Implement

- Conducting Proofs of Concept to validate the efficacy of the chosen technologies
- Establishing a robust business case
- Executing AI transformations to drive tangible business outcomes

GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN CHINA'S WORKPLACE

Wei Cao, Jinyi Yang and Biying Zhang

Gender equality in China's workplace is a complex issue deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and structural factors. Despite progress over the years, persistent challenges remain, including a gender pay gap, underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, and workplace discrimination. While women make up a significant portion of the workforce and are increasingly involved in entrepreneurship, they face barriers to career advancement and encounter structural differences in various industries. To address these issues, comprehensive strategies are needed at both organizational and individual levels. Companies can promote gender equality through improvements in human resources systems, implementation of flexible work arrangements, and provision of supporting resources such as parental leave and nursing rooms.

Individually, women are encouraged to assert themselves, defend their rights, pursue continued education and self-improvement, and seek support when needed. Men are urged to share domestic responsibilities, become advocates for gender equality, and support female colleagues.

Looking ahead, there are opportunities for progress through education, policy support, shifts in attitudes, and increased female participation in the workforce. However, challenges such as work-family balance, superficial equality, and entrenched workplace cultures must be addressed. By implementing solutions proposed at both organizational and individual levels and fostering collaborative efforts across borders, gender equality can be promoted, leading to more inclusive and equitable workplaces and societies.

VYTAL

Jaahnavi Narahari, Purbita Datta Majumder and Sulagna Bhattacharyya

Vytal, a medium-sized German enterprise, was founded in 2019 by Sven Witthöft and Dr. Tim Breker with the mission to provide reusable packaging solutions in the food and beverage industry. We aim to identify and analyze the expansion challenges of Vytal in France and Germany, and offer tailored recommendations in order to realize the full potential of its value proposition. It is evident that building a stable and loyal customer base is important for Vytal's growth, particularly in France where rate of adoption of reusable packaging solutions is still at an early stage. By targeting areas with high foot traffic and focusing on eco-conscious segments, Vytal can enhance its adoption rates and create a positive word-of-mouth effect within communities.

Furthermore, to improve network efficiency in Germany, Vytal can explore innovative partnerships with businesses sharing similar values, thereby expanding its customer base and promoting its reusable packaging solutions while enabling local ethical businesses, fostering a win-win situation. This approach will not just encourage sustainable practices but also diversify Vytal's revenue streams, paving the way for sustainable success.

Additionally, solving operational pain points such as container cleaning for restaurants and enhancing the user experience through the mobile app interface are significant steps towards improving overall customer satisfaction. By incentivizing customers to return clean containers and making the app more user-friendly, Vytal can streamline its operations and ensure convenience for both customers and partners.

Lastly, building brand awareness and utilizing effective marketing strategies, especially in the French market, will be pivotal in driving adoption and establishing Vytal as a leader in the reusable packaging industry. Leveraging social media platforms, partnering with influencers, and highlighting the unique selling points of Vytal's offerings can significantly boost brand recognition and attract a wider audience.

By addressing these pain points and implementing the recommended strategies, Vytal can overcome existing challenges, strengthen its position in the French market, and ultimately achieve its mission of promoting sustainability through innovative solutions.

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