



# Introduction to ESG management – a brand oriented approach

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## SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION

ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) is a concept made popular in 2014 after the "Who cares Win" initiative. This was about the sustainability-related evaluation of companies from the investor's point of view. Today ESG stands more for a general framework for integrating sustainability into the management of companies and for the evaluation of sustainability by external stakeholders.

Since the topic of "ESG, CSR and sustainability" is too broad and multi-layered for a four weeks course, the course focuses on brand as the focal point. The course is based on a holistic brand understanding and deals with important elements of ESG management. In particular, this includes top management decisions (e.g., purpose, leadership), corporate culture, concrete behaviors in value creation (e.g., supply chain) and product design (e.g., eco-design, circular economy), communication (e.g., transparency, activism) as well as controlling and organization.

The brand perspective helps to understand the relevance of a consistent and company-wide ESG approach. Such an approach is also the basis for a positive ESG rating by various stakeholder groups.

## READING MATERIALS

No textbook is required. All reading materials will be available prior to class in PDF format.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class attendance and participation are fundamental components of learning, so punctual attendance at all classes, for the full class meeting period, is expected of SKKU ISS students. If a student must miss a class or leave early, s/he needs to notify the instructor in advance. The student is responsible for any assignments missed during an absence. A minimum of 80% attendance is required in all classes, including online classes (note: attendance is not part of the grade). An attendance rate under 80% (due to, for example, 3 unexcused absences) will result in failure of the course.

The evaluation of your performance is based on the following elements:

- Online quiz (first week)	20 %
- Individual task I: Stakeholder analysis for one selected ESG brand (second week)	20 %
- Individual task II: Evaluation of products and branding of one selected ESG brand (third week)	20 %
- Final group presentations: Holistic analysis of a ESG brand (last week)	40 %

Total: 100 %

Final Grade:

90-100%	A	PASS	70-73%	C-	PASS
87-89%	B+	PASS	67-69%	D+ -	PASS
84-86%	B	PASS	60-67%	D	PASS
80-83%	B-	PASS	59% or lower (or < 80 %		
77-79%	C+	PASS	attendance rate	F	FAIL
74-76%	C	PASS			

### **Online quiz**

At the end of the first digital week, the student should complete an online quiz consisting of multiple-choice questions and short open questions relating to the content of the first week.

### **Individual task I: Stakeholder analysis for one selected ESG brand**

Each student should select a company/brand with a clear ESG approach. On the basis of a short description of this company/brand, the student conducts and documents a stakeholder analysis. This stakeholder analysis should answer the following questions:

1. Who are the relevant stakeholders of the brand?
2. What are the main needs of the different stakeholder groups?
3. What stakeholder group are the three most critical stakeholder groups for the company/brand?
4. How does the company/brand currently manage the relationships with the three most important stakeholder groups? How do you evaluate this management and how could the company/brand improve the management of the stakeholder groups?

### **Individual task II: Evaluation of products and branding of one selected ESG**

The student selects one product and/or service of the selected company and evaluates the “sustainable” quality of the product. In addition, the student identifies the main branding elements and evaluates the branding quality of these signals.

### **Final group presentations: Holistic analysis of a ESG brand**

Small groups of students select a brand with a an ESG approach. During the four weeks, the student groups use this “project” brand for different in-class activities. At the end of the course, the groups present their findings in a short presentation (18 minutes per group). In this presentation, the student groups should consider tools, frameworks and theories presented during the four weeks course. The presentation should include the following aspects (the list is not complete and should inspire the group work):

1. Description of the brand (e.g., brand canvas)
2. Overall evaluation of the ESG approach of this brand (e.g., CSR brand model)
3. Detailed analysis of top management, corporate culture, behavior and communication
4. Identification of three strengths and three weaknesses of the brand
5. Development of strategies and tactics for the improvement of the ESG brand

Criteria for the evaluation of the presentation are (1) formal aspects (e.g., time management, design of the slides, presentation style), (2) consideration of theory, frameworks, and tools, (3) argumentation quality, (4) creativity, critical thinking and own ideas.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE** (Changes are possible)

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### **– WEEK I –**

#### Monday (26 June)

Opening

“Who cares win”: History & core concepts of ESG (Online, live)

#### Tuesday (27 June)

Sustainability challenges and opportunities (Online, asynchronous via the learning platform)

#### Wednesday (28 June)

The business and brand case of ESG (Online, asynchronous via the learning platform)

#### Thursday (29 June)

“Standing on the shoulders of giants”: Selected ESG & CSR framework and theories: CSR pyramid, triple-bottom-line, ESG (rating), SDGs, Circular economy, Cradle-to-Cradle (Online, asynchronous via the learning platform)

**Assignment I: Online Quiz**

### **– WEEK II –**

#### Monday (3 July)

“A brand is not a logo”: Holistic brand management as the focus of ESG management: Brand Canvas (Class)

#### Tuesday (4 July)

“An ESG-based brand identity”: Integration of ESG in brand management: ESG brand model (Class)

#### Wednesday (5 July)

“We are not alone”: The (Multi-)Stakeholder view: Politics & Society, Investors and shareholder, NGOs, Suppliers, Consumers (Class)

#### Thursday (6 July)

“If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea”: Vision, Mission, Purpose and Positioning & Leadership (Class)

**Assignment II: Individual task: Stakeholder analysis for one selected ESG brand**

– WEEK III –

Monday (10 July)

“Living ESG”: Corporate Culture (Class)

Tuesday (11 July)

“Walk the talk” ESG Behavior I: The value chain (scope 1, 2 and 3; fair trade) (Class)

Wednesday (12 July)

“Walk the talk”: ESG Behavior II: Innovation & Design (cradle-to-cradle, eco design) (Class)

Thursday (13 July)

“Our job is to bring the dead facts to life”: Communication I: Branding, CSR/ESG reporting, certificates and seals (Class)

***Assignment III: Individual task: Evaluation of products and branding of one selected ESG Brand***

– WEEK IV–

Monday (17 July)

“Our job is to bring the dead facts to life”: Communication II: Brand activism, Greenwashing & Co., brand transparency, sufficiency-promoting marketing (Class)

Tuesday (18 July)

“If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it”: Controlling & organizing of ESG brands (change management, networks, and collaborations) (class)

Wednesday (19 July)

***Assignment IV: Final group presentations: Holistic analysis of a ESG brand***  
Course wrap-up (class)