

Interview questions for eliciting core capabilities and the strategy adopted for sustainability in manufacturing companies

Disclaimer: These interview questions have been used within a research study that aimed to develop a methodology to align manufacturing companies to the desired strategy for sustainable manufacturing, based on how these companies articulate their core organizational and manufacturing capabilities. The study was made in collaboration with UNSW Sydney. Ilaria Barletta, PhD student in Chalmers University of Technology, developed the interview questions.

“Company X” represents a generic manufacturing company object of the study.

Ten questions (Q) have been grouped in six thematic areas: Company’s purpose, company’s value proposition, core capabilities, challenges for business sustainability, definition of sustainable manufacturing and sustainability, characterization of the ecosystem that is critical for company's environmental and social sustainability.

1. COMPANY'S PURPOSE

Q1.1: What is the driving purpose of COMPANY X?

Q1.2: In other words, what are the reasons that motivate its existence on the market?

2. COMPANY'S VALUE PROPOSITION

Q2.1: How does COMPANY X provide value to its customers?

Q2.2: What guarantees its competitiveness?

3. CORE CAPABILITIES

Q3.1: From a business and operations standpoint, what are the critical success factors and capabilities that allow COMPANY X to provide such value?

4. CHALLENGES FOR BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

Q4.1: What is the main challenge that COMPANY X has to tackle in order to stay competitive in the near future (e.g., 5 -10 years)?

Q4.2: And in the middle-long term future? (e.g., 50-100 years)

5. DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING and SUSTAINABILITY

Q5.1: How would you define sustainable manufacturing?

Q5.2: Would you recognize and agree on the differentiation of it into economic, environmental, and social sustainability? (pillars of sustainability)

6. CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM THAT IS CRITICAL FOR COMPANY'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Q6.1: While picturing COMPANY X's products life cycle (from cradle to grave), can you characterize within it the key stakeholders that play a major role in COMPANY X's sustainability performances?