

## **Chapter 3**

*Employee engagement in managing environmental performance: a case study of the Planet Champion initiative, McDonalds, UK and Sweden*

6,527 words

Chandana Sanyal and Dr. Julie Haddock-Millar

### **Introduction**

This chapter examines an employee involvement initiative in two McDonald's subsidiaries in the United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden, and the relationship with human resource development (HRD) factors such as employee engagement and leadership with environmental performance. The case study explores: 1) a specific green initiative used to involve and engage employees; and 2) employee perceptions of the key levers necessary to achieve positive environmental impact. The case study organisation was chosen because of its existing commitment to environmental responsibility and strategic aim to improve environmental sustainability, in addition to the recent development of initiatives which seeks to involve, empower and engage staff. The organisation's global environmental vision is to maximise positive environmental impact through key stakeholder groups: suppliers, employees and customers. The central initiative focuses primarily on the relationship between the organisation, employees and related human resource development outcomes in the context of environmental sustainability.

The relationship between employee involvement and environmental management is well researched and grounded in theory (Renwick, Redman and Maguire, 2013) and why

organisations choose to engage the workforce in environmental management is well documented too (Aragon-Correa, Martin-Tapia and Hurtado-Torres, 2013; Boiral, 2009; Brio, Fernandez and Junquera, 2007). Hiring new employees that are willing to engage in positive environment activities, alongside working with current employees to develop green training and involvement initiatives are growing trends (Guerci, Longoni and Luzzini, 2016; Haddock-Millar, Sanyal and Muller-Camen, 2016; Ramus and Steger, 2000). Recognising that green training has the ability to develop an employees' awareness and understanding of green issues, it is no surprise that "*green training is also shown to be the most adopted practice in HRM practices*" (Guerci, Longoni and Luzzini, 2016, p. 267). Of significant importance is the relationship between the proactive adoption of green practices and firm performance (O'Donohue and Torugsa, 2016). The concept of performance has broad connotations, incorporating revenue flows and reduced costs (O'Donohue and Torugsa, 2016; Torugsa, O'Donohue and Hecker, 2012; 2013). A recent empirical study in two Australian-based organisations highlighted that participation in environmental initiatives was directly associated with higher levels of employee engagement within the organisation and its green performance, reducing staff intentions to leave the organisation (Benn, Teo and Martin, 2015). More recently, O'Donohue and Torugsa's (2016) quantitative study of 1,278 small firms in the Australian machinery and equipment manufacturing sector reported a positive association between proactive environmental management, Green HRM and financial performance. Furthermore, a shared understanding of the organisation's strategic and operational goals, employee involvement in relevant business processes and the opportunity to contribute are all regarded as essential to secure the benefits of investing in Green Human Resource Management (HRM). The following section explores specific aspects of Green HRM activities theory connected to the case study.

## **Theoretical Background**

### *Green employee engagement and environmental management*

The meaning of employee engagement is ambiguous among both academic researchers and practitioners. Research shows that the term is used at different times to refer to psychological states, behavioural engagement and trait engagement (Macey and Schneider 2008). Employee involvement can be described as cultivating employee interest and dedication for greater employee participation in the workplace (Cotton 1993). Kahn (1990) argues that employee engagement is different from other employee role constructs such as job involvement. Similarly, Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) highlight that work engagement, job involvement, and organisational commitments are empirically distinct constructs and, thus, reflect different aspects of work attachment. However, in the context of Green HRM, the terms employee involvement and employee engagement appear to be used interchangeably.

There is wide recognition that employees are one, if not, the most important source of knowledge, expertise and innovation in the area of Green HRM (Brio et al., 2007; Perron, Côté and Duffy, 2006; Renwick et al., 2013). The literature identifies several key levers to involve and engage the workforce in environmental management. In the context of this research study, the authors focused on the practice of involving employees in Green HRM policies and processes, which led to, or was aimed at, maximising employee engagement. A recent development is the emphasis on the 'green work-life balance' of the employee which proposes that organisations should consider employees in their two-fold role – for the organisation and their family. The 'green work-life balance concept' is suggested to facilitate environmentally friendly behaviour in both life domains; eco-friendly behaviour as an employee and a consumer (Muster and Schrader, 2011). This in turn can increase staff motivation, commitment and job retention (Frank, Finnegan and Taylor, 2004; Jackson, Renwick, Jabbour and Muller-Camen, 2011). Organisations will, therefore, need to consider

both the ‘what’ (outcomes) and ‘how’ (processes) to achieve effective employee engagement (Muster and Schrader, 2011; Yusoff, Othman, Fernando, Amran, Surlenty and Ramayah, 2015).

### *Team formation*

Involving employees in environmental management has been proven to positively correlate with environmental outcome measures (Brio et al., 2007). Empirical studies have identified the development of team formation (Hanna, Newman and Johnson 2000; Robertson and Barling, 2013) and employee training (Alberti, Marzluff, Shulenberger, Bradley, Ryan and Zumbunnen, 2000; Teixeira, Jabbour, and Jabbour, 2012), as key initiatives for increasing employee involvement in green activities. Many commentators recommend the use of green teams to involve the workforce in green management practices (Jabbour, 2011; Jabbour, Santos, Fonseca and Negano, 2013), which can be defined as a team of people who work together to solve environmental problems that can be used to generate ideas, resolve environmental management conflicts and foster environmental learning. Green teams have been classified into different categories. On one hand, green teams can be either functional or cross-functional distinguished by membership from the same or different organisational units (Daily, Bishop and Govindarajulu, 2009). On the other hand, green teams can comprise of top management, focusing on environmental policy formation; action-orientated, analysing opportunities and improving environmental performance; or, teams responsible for specific processes to bring about improvement (Anderson Strachan, 1996). However, whatever the shape or orientation of the green teams, they can play a key role in engaging wider employees and support the process of environmental management.

### *Employee training*

Employee education and training is a core element of most, if not all, environmental management systems (Perron et al., 2006). Industry standards such as BS7750 and ISO14001 incorporate training at all levels of the organisation, for the purpose of understanding the goals of the environmental management system. Here, the goal is to train employees to develop environmental organisational citizen behaviours and green competences (Boiral, 2009; Subramanian, Abdulrahman, Wu, and Nath, 2016) and environmental action (Daily and Huang, 2001; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). In addition, a key outcome of education and training is first, to raise employee alertness and commitments towards going green and second, to equip employees with the knowledge and skills to make a positive contribution to the long-term performance of the business. Relevant employee environmental training, increasing awareness, together with a heightened level of motivation make it possible for companies to improve their environmental performance (Alberti et al., 2000). Green training and development educate employees about the value of environmental management, train them in working methods that conserve energy, reduce waste, diffuse environmental consciousness inside the organisation, and offer an opportunity to engage employees in environmental problem-solving (Pande, 2016). Training programmes tailored to addressing environmental concerns should involve a three-stage planning process beginning with establishing the need and rationale for the training, defining the training programme objectives, and developing content which aligns with the corporate objectives (Fernandez, Junquera and Ordiz, 2003). Likewise, Teixeira, Jabbour, de Sousa Jabbour, Latan and de Oliveira (2016) suggest that when focusing on 'green training', organisations should invest in systematic analysis of training gaps and needs, the content of training and opportunities for employers to apply green knowledge. Jackson and Seo (2010) identify three Green HRM training perspectives, from the basic premise of compliance, enabling the conformance in the areas of regulations and technicality, to raising employee awareness in relation to the

corporate agenda and finally, creating a shift in organisational culture. More recently, Jabbour et al's (2013) empirical study links environmental training positively and significantly to the level of maturity in environmental management in companies. Similarly, Teixeira et al's (2016) recent study has shown that alignment of green training, organisational learning and green human resource practices are crucial to the greening of firms.

### *Green leadership and management*

The development of Green leadership and commitment from top management is seen by many as a pre-requisite for employee engagement (Egri and Herman, 2000; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004; Robertson and Barling, 2013). Organisational structural changes, such as the creation of a specialist management role/department are being increasingly implemented by companies to raise the importance of environmental issues. Renwick et al., (2013) classify a number of different roles that HR managers may take-up in Environmental Management (EM) these range from 'light green' to 'dark green' based on environmental competencies and business experience. This variation in the green capabilities of managers could also have an impact on the level of staff green engagement. Research suggests that employees are more willing to undertake environmental initiatives when their supervisors embrace a democratic and open style of communication in regards to environmental ideas (Ramus, 2001; Ramus and Steger, 2000), and when managers and supervisors actively involve employees at all levels towards improving environmental goals (Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). Aragon-Correa and Rubio-Lopez (2007) suggest that a lack of expertise will probably lead to wasted time and inefficiencies, tending to limit any major financial returns from environmental progress. A 'passive approach' of managers to environment sustainability as lead to managerial reluctance to champion sustainability initiatives (Harris and Tregidga, 2012). Here, position, status and power are important levers within the context of management and

leadership roles (Robertson and Barling, 2013). To win the ‘hearts and minds’ of employees, and keep them motivated and engaged in environmental initiatives, the role of the manager is crucial. Therefore, encouraging employees to make suggestions and engage in activities that improve the environment is imperative for employee engagement (Renwick et al., 2013).

#### *Integration of green performance measures*

Another lever for engaging employees in environmental practices is the integration of corporate Green HRM strategy into the performance management system (Lämsiluoto and Jarvenpää, 2010). Incorporating green management into the everyday language and fabric of the organisation is a growing phenomenon. The ‘Greening’ of the Balanced Score Card has received growing attention, focusing on the relationship between environmental management, financial performance and stakeholder interests (Marcus and Fremeth, 2009; Sharma, 2000). Performance evaluation and regular review of goals and accountabilities can instil a sense of shared responsibility for environmental outcomes amongst key stakeholders, including employees (Ones and Dilchert, 2013; Ramus, 2001). More recently, an empirical study has highlighted that there is strong relationship between the practices of Green HRM within organisational systems – where environmental performance is correlated to employee involvement and empowerment; culture and supportive climate is related to pay and reward systems; and recruitment, training, development and union role is correlated to employee involvement and environmental management (Gholami, Rezaei, Saman, Sharif, and Zakuan, 2016). Here, leaders and managers have a responsibility to apply strategic and operational tools to engage employees and encourage participation in environmental management.

Overall, the human factor is a key success factor in organisational environmental activities (Brio et al., 2007), and now almost a first step when organisations introduce new environmental initiatives to involve the wider workforce (Renwick et al., 2013). Although

employee engagement is a well-researched area; what appears to be lacking is the rich insight and narrative accounts of the individual employee experience in the field of Green HRM when developing and implementing new environmental initiatives, to which we now turn.

### **McDonald's Business Model**

McDonald's is the leading global brand in the "informal eating out" market, with a presence in over 100 countries and 35,000 restaurants. McDonald's global system is comprised of both Company-owned and franchised restaurants, owned or operated via conventional franchise, developmental licence or affiliate. Over 80% of McDonald's restaurants globally are currently franchised, over 90% in the United States (US); the goal is to shift to 95% franchisee in the longer term. Franchise restaurants are owned and operated by approximately 5,000 independent, small- and mid-sized businessmen and women. Their business relationship is supported by an agreement that requires adherence to standards and policies regarded as essential to protect the McDonald's brand. Company-owned restaurants allow McDonald's to improve the operations and success of all restaurants. Innovations from franchisees can be tested and, when viable, implemented across the globe where appropriate. Furthermore, company-owned restaurants provide a location for restaurant operations training experience. Company-owned restaurants employ more than 420,000 people. Four pillars of strategic focus include: food, sourcing, people and planet. The next section focuses on the strategic pillar of *planet*.

### *McDonald's and the Environment*

McDonald's aspiration is to develop and operate the most environmentally efficient restaurants, delivering value to the business and the communities in which their restaurants operate. The regulatory environment worldwide causes complex compliance risks that can



affect McDonald's operations. New, potential or changing regulations constantly influence business plans which need to be responsive to the legal and regulatory environment. Furthermore, the increased public focus, including by governmental and nongovernmental organisations on environmental sustainability matters (e.g., packaging and waste, animal health and welfare, deforestation and land use) and the increased pressure to make commitments, set targets or establish additional goals and take actions to meet them, adds an ever-growing layer of complexity. McDonald's 'Good Planet' aspirational goals for 2020 include:

- 20% increase in energy efficiency of Company-owned restaurants.
- Increase energy efficiency through restaurant standards.
- Increase amount of in-restaurant recycling to 50% and minimize waste.

Moving toward 2020 and beyond, McDonald's will continue to focus on energy management, waste minimization and recycling and water efficiency. The environmental management strategic focus and organisational culture in previous years meant doing less harm; today McDonald's focuses on opportunities and innovations to do good. Success depends on a number of factors including the independent franchisees' willingness and ability to implement major initiatives, the leadership and management needed to drive innovation and progress, in addition to the need to involve and engage the workforce. The Planet Champion initiative is one example of the way in which McDonald's is attempting to engage and leverage the commitment of the workforce.

### *Planet Champions*

Planet Champions is a voluntary McDonald's programme, which began in the UK aimed at leveraging the environmental enthusiasm of restaurant teams. Helen McFarlane,

Environmental Consultant, McDonald's UK explained *"McDonald's UK asks staff members to be the environmental voice in the restaurant, to help business managers with existing environmental initiatives and to generate new ideas. The volunteers receive a day of training on broad environmental issues, the company's activities and how they can contribute. They have a year-long calendar of activities focusing on the key issues of litter, recycling and energy. A regular newsletter keeps them up-to-date, informs them about competitions and gives them a forum to share ideas."* So far, approximately 1,100 restaurant staff in the UK have volunteered to be Planet Champions in over 650 restaurants. As a network group, Planet Champions have increased cardboard recycling and realised energy savings. This initiative has also helped to increase awareness of environmental initiatives among non-champion crew in pilot restaurants. The Planet Champions programme won the Green Apple awarded for employee engagement. The Green Award was launched in 1994 by The Green Organisation. The Green Apple awards take place annually to recognise, reward and promote environmental best practice around the world. The initiative and was shortlisted for the PEER Awards, recognising commitment to community, customers and people. In 2011, the programme was extended to Ireland, Norway and Sweden.

## **Research Approach**

The case study research was conducted in the UK and Swedish subsidiary of McDonald's. Herein, we refer to them as UK Ltd and Sweden Ltd. The authors adopted an interview-based multi-case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Multiple cases provide the opportunity to gain a fuller picture of the subject of study by having different contexts to compare and contrast and, to identify patterns and underlying relationships through the close examination of themes and evidence (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2013). The study involved 10 one-to-one semi-structured interviews

with a sample of employees from different levels in the organisational hierarchy (Drever, 1995). This included directors and managers, and 5 focus groups with 23 managers and frontline workers (see **Table 3.1**).

< TABLE 3.1 HERE >

The hierarchical structure varied across the two countries and table shows this by identifying the role as not applicable where this position is not within the structure (N/A) and where the authors were not able to interview a participant this is acknowledged as a dash (-). As convenience dictated the sample size, the composition of the sample has a degree of homogeneity in the sense that all participants had been involved in a Green initiative, had experience of Green initiatives at head office or restaurant level, or had a general awareness of the organisation's current approach to environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the participants were drawn from both company-owned and franchised restaurants. The overarching interview questions were drawn from a review of the recent literature on Green employee involvement and engagement.

### *Data Analysis*

There were three inter-related phases in the data analysis. The first phase involved within-case study analysis, building individual write-ups of each national location (Byrne and Ragin, 2009; Eisenhardt, 1989). Collecting data from secondary and primary sources and drawing on different methods, including one-to-one interviews and focus groups facilitated a degree of methodological triangulation, insofar as it enabled the authors to develop a more detailed picture of the UK and Sweden subsidiary. Next, the authors read through the transcripts independently, following a descriptive coding process. Once the descriptive codes were agreed, the next stage involved interpretative coding which identified a smaller number of

codes. The authors followed a manual coding and thematic process. This process allowed for preliminary themes to be developed embedded in the Green employee involvement and engagement literature. Following this, the authors conducted cross-case analysis to identify consistent themes across the subsidiaries (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Reviewing the transcripts again for recurrent themes, comparisons, to understand the degree of convergence across different national, regional and local contexts.

### **Planet Champions and Employee Engagement**

At the time of our interviews, the key initiative in UK Ltd and Sweden Ltd was the launch of 'Planet Champions'. In UK Ltd, the Planet Champion pilot was tested in a small number of restaurants from July to September 2010 before the decision was made to roll it out nationally. The UK initiative was rolled out in January 2011 on a voluntary basis, and over 279 members of staff attended training working shop in eight regional locations throughout the country. Building on this pilot, the training gave Planet Champions the opportunity to understand the role requirements and expectations, participate in a range of practical activities to encourage engagement and enhance knowledge, and form a community of practice within their local region, creating a reflective structure to encourage and foster a learning and innovative culture (Brown and Duguid, 1991). By 2013, 1,100 staff members had volunteered to be Planet Champions in 674 restaurants. In October 2012, Sweden Ltd launched their Planet Champion initiative, based on the UK model. At the initial stage, 15 volunteers attended the first Sweden Ltd training session, which was regarded as a pilot, in order to 'test' the training materials. In 2013, four further training sessions were held with 50 Planet Champions. The Planet Champions were a combination of managers and frontline restaurant staff.

The implementation of 'Planet Champions' in UK Ltd and Sweden Ltd is a strong indicator of the commitment to employee engagement to environmental sustainability in these McDonald's subsidiaries. The literature highlights the use of green teams to address environmental issues, generate new ideas and foster environmental learning (Hartman and Stafford, 1997; Jabbour, 2011). UK Ltd and Sweden Ltd have implemented 'Planet Champions'. The purpose of the Planet Champion was to:

“... raise awareness of environment initiatives within restaurants feeding new ideas and insights back to head office and – hopefully - improve our (environmental) performance against some key measures” (Head Office respondent, UK Ltd)

The overall aim of this initiative was to raise the profile of the environment within restaurants and encourage staff to think – and act – in a way which is better for the restaurant and the planet. This initiative was perceived by leadership of the team as a key lever to enhance the level of staff commitment and engagement, and reinforcing the behaviours that drive environmental performance.

Both UK Ltd and Sweden Ltd pitched the Planet Champion position as a voluntary role and recruited individuals with drive and passion to maximise employee engagement. However, the hierarchical level varied across the two subsidiaries; in UK Ltd, the role was undertaken primarily by Shift Managers who had responsibility for staff training. In Sweden, Ltd the roles were more inclusive of frontline workers, with less focus on hierarchical position. All respondents felt that Planet Champions should demonstrate a bias for action through their behaviour and positive attitude, and have sound operational knowledge of the business, as time served in the organisation was less important. Specific comments included: “*Need*

*people with energy, passion, persistence, the right attitude. Knowledge can be learnt, anyone can pick up a book.”*

In Sweden Ltd, where the implementation of the Planet Champion initiative was at the developmental stage, there was concern about ownership and accountability. The research team were able to obtain staff views concerning the appropriateness of the initiative in relation to the tackling of environmental concerns. Consistency and uniformity is present across many aspects of the business, however in respect of environmental routines and practices this is not the case. Three participants in the focus group discussed the importance of accountability and ownership in relation to routines and operational practices. One participant claimed that there was a *'lack of ownership in restaurants – no dedicated person, therefore no one accountable and responsible'*. This theme was reinforced by the response from a Restaurant Manager in Sweden Ltd that:

*“You can have a Planet Champion within the restaurant when you have the routines in place, when you have made sure that this is the way we are doing it, this is how we train people, this is how we follow up, this is how the management team is responsible, then you have a Champion, otherwise it is just a title.”* (Head Office respondent, Sweden Ltd)

*“To take the first step we need to have that awareness not only at the restaurant level but also at the operational level.”* (Head Office respondent, Sweden Ltd)

Another theme which emerged was the need to embed the green initiatives and practices in the operations function and restaurant routines. All Restaurant Managers and a senior head office management participant identified the importance of embedding environmental

practices into the operations function and restaurants routines. Connections were made between practice and behaviours: *“Environment is about people and people behaviour, so it needs to be grounded in operations, otherwise it will not happen; hamburgers are made by people not machines, operations are about people”*.

The commitment to invest in staff development and training at all levels of the hierarchical structure is consistent across both subsidiaries. Respondents also highlighted the role of managers as a key factor in staff engagement with environmental initiatives. Frontline respondents in UK Ltd and Sweden Ltd highlighted the importance of having the ‘right leader’ to face the current challenges and provide clear direction in the future. Leadership was seen by the respondents as a key lever in achieving positive environmental impact. In UK Ltd, senior manager commitment was clearly evidenced as green initiatives were championed at all levels of the hierarchy. Role modelling was identified as a way of demonstrating the ‘right thing to do’. Focus group respondents referred to the *‘shadow of the leader – people will do what I do not what I say’* and confirmed that this message is communicated in their basic shift management training.

Addressing environmental concerns through employee engagement and behavioural change were discussed with respondents from both countries. In UK Ltd, over half of the respondents felt that engaging and embedding environmental practices were the greatest HRM challenges, with employees facing ever increasing targets and heightened expectations around the core fundamentals, such as service and quality. As yet, environmental performance indicators are not perceived by the majority of respondents as a core requirement. In both countries, the performance indicators consist of four quadrants, focusing on the customer experience, staff, finance and leadership. In the majority of respondent’s views these indicators drive the key priorities and performance outcomes, are therefore are perceived as levers to achieve both

involvement and engagement. The majority of respondents also acknowledge that the challenge is to raise the importance of environmental impact reduction. This might be achieved through the alignment of the organisation's strategic aim to improve environmental sustainability, operationalised in environmental practices and translated into key performance indicators. Respondents from both locations understand the need to measure performance in a results-orientated business: *'If we can't measure it doesn't exist ... we are competitive; if we can't measure it is not important... performance is mainly about bottom lines, targets and goals'* (Business Manager, Sweden Ltd). This strength of feeling was reflected in the UK Ltd and Sweden Ltd by the majority of respondents. Other than financial key performance indicators, such as waste reduction and recycling, respondents did not recognise the integration of environmental indicators into the performance measures at restaurant level. The importance of transparency and visibility in relation to restaurant environmental performance was cited by respondents across both countries.

### **Discussion and Concluding Remarks**

This study confirms the need for active involvement and engagement of employees in green management as highlighted in the literature (Brio et al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2011; Renwick et al., 2013). People development strategies such as the Planet Champion initiative and team formation are examples of employee involvement which may lead to greater impact and improvement in the organisation's environmental performance, thereby making a noticeable difference in the business (Ones and Dilchert, 2013). The commitment to invest in staff development and training at all levels of the hierarchical structure is an essential lever in raising awareness of environmental initiatives and encouraging individuals and teams to think – and act – in a way which is better for the restaurant and the planet. Consistent with the literature, training employees can lead to the development of environmental organisational



citizen behaviours and green competencies (Boiral, 2009; Subramanian et al., 2016).

Furthermore, employee environmental training has been shown to increase awareness, heighten levels of motivation and proactive behaviour. This in turn, leads to improved environmental performance (Alberti et al., 2000; Daily and Huang, 2001).

Developing management and leadership behaviours to establish ownership and create accountability and commitment to environmental practices are essential HRD strategies. The role of the Planet Champion in this case study aims to create accountability and ownership at all levels of the hierarchy; many of which are at middle management level. Clearly, there is some degree of convergence with the literature as a number of studies have underscored the importance of managers and leaders actively involving employees at all levels towards improving environmental goals (Ergi and Herman, 2000; Govindarajulu and Daily, 2004). There is widespread recognition that role modelling can be effective in engaging and garnering support for proactive environmental behaviours; as also demonstrated in this case study.

Integration of environmental performance indicators within individual and organisational performance management processes will strengthen and influence employee engagement in environmental practices. In this case study, there was widespread recognition that performance indicators drive priorities and outcomes, therefore are perceived to be a key lever in the development of positive environmental practices. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the degree to which relevant performance indicators are embedded within the performance framework needs further consideration by organisations committed to environmental sustainability. As highlighted in the literature, the 'Greening' of the overall business performance matrix is an area which is growing in interest, largely because of the

potential to positively impact on financial and non-financial performance (Marcus and Fremeth, 2009; Sharma, 2000).

The literature has clearly highlighted the need for active engagement of employees in green management (Aragon-Correa et al., 2013; Boiral, 2009; Ramus and Steger, 2000; Renwick et al., 2013). This study highlights that even with organisational commitment, staff engagement can vary across subsidiaries. Overall, it appears that engaging the workforce and embedding pro-environmental behaviours should be considered as the first step to enhanced environmental management. The success of initiatives such as the Planet Champions requires involvement and engagement of all stakeholders within the organisation and supportive HR people strategies and practices such as developing strong environmental leadership, effective environmental performance management and green learning and development opportunities for employees.

A key implication for management practice from this empirical study is that embedding of routines within operational systems is essential to the successful implementation of any environmental initiative within a global foodservice company. Whether it is the green teams or restaurant managers, their aim should be to embed green activities within the day-to-day routines and practices of the restaurants to embed employee engagement. Our results show that some practices, such as litter patrol and cardboard recycling, are part of everyday McDonald's practice. Here, environmental training can be planned and designed to develop such behavioural competencies. However, to achieve proactive environmental management (Jabbour et al., 2013, Teixeira et al., 2012) the focus has to be on organisational behaviours that support environmental engagement, as in a people-orientated business, employee engagement is fundamental to the organisation's success. At a societal level, this study

highlights the need for ownership and accountability of people and community to support and replicate such behaviours.

There are a number of limitations in this empirical study, some of which provide consideration for further research. First, this study incorporates both company-owned and franchised restaurants. Second, the research was restricted to Europe, and therefore does not include the perspective of the parent organisation, and the extent to which the parent strategy influences the development of subsidiary strategies and practices, including the alignment of the HR and environment functions and the ways in which subsidiaries are able to engage their workforce in the sustainability practices. Third, although the study identifies the introduction of the Planet Champions role as a key employee engagement strategy in UK Ltd and later, at Sweden Ltd, the extent to which this role is effective in demonstrating positive organisational employee outcomes is yet unclear and therefore an area for further research.

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