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Book review: Sustainability Reporting for SMEs

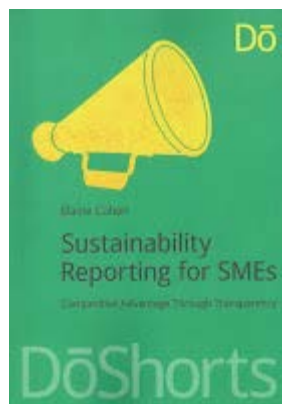
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Debbie Griffiths

Categories:

Sustainability Reporting for SMEs: competitive advantage through transparency by Elaine Cohen was sizzlingly hot off the press when I bought a limited-edition hard copy at the Smarter Sustainability



Reporting conference last week.

Published by **DōSustainability**, the book is intended to be downloaded as a DōShorts 90-minute e-book for your commute

As one half of an ethical micro-enterprise that has been publishing CSR reviews for the past six years, I was instantly attracted to the title. At last, a respected name in the industry was providing advice for people in my position. Also, **Elaine Cohen** runs her own SME, so she knows exactly what she's talking about.

That said, I agree with her assertion that the book would be equally valuable for sustainability managers in larger companies whose success depends on the transparency and accountability of their supply chain – a very hot potato in the UK food chain right now! Anyone wanting to encourage their SME suppliers to report on sustainability issues would do well to start them off with this book. Elaine gives clear descriptions and definitions that would be helpful to SMEs doing this for the first time, along with real-life case studies and practical how-to guidance. One of the things I found most illuminating was the fact that the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework and the UN Global Compact Communication of Progress were tools that could easily and usefully be used by SMEs. I'd always thought they were for large companies, not one of my size.

The 'Roadmap to Transparency' chapter is my favourite and I've gleaned many ideas that I want to put into practice to take our sustainability reporting onto a higher level. I also got a lot out of the 'Guidance for Developing a Sustainability Report' chapter. My only concern is whether the book's title is appealing enough for a more mainstream SME audience? Elaine talks about the importance of giving sustainability reports an eye-catching title and says she wanted to call this book: 'Make More Money: Sustainability Reporting for SMEs'. I think she should have gone with that if she wanted to reach a wider variety of SMEs, way beyond those of us who are already converted to the cause.