

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/the-hidden-gem-of-sustainability>

Materials and emissions were a major focus in his role as the sustainability lead at Ford, says John Viera. But social sustainability was just as critical. He describes how social sustainability efforts within a single company became an industry model.



Transcript

I was actually named to lead our sustainability effort for Ford.. And when we talk about the sustainability efforts, that's our environmental efforts.. So that's all about, as we look at the vehicles that we produce, how do we ensure that the materials that were used in the vehicle are responsible.. That they're having, hopefully, a zero impact on the environment.. And then also, lots of work on emissions.. If its CO2 emissions, or other emissions.. That was a big focus, of how to develop those strategies.. Clearly the plants we build those products in was a big focus.. I would say though that the hidden gem of sustainability, and it's something that I am gonna be touching on I'm thinking throughout this talk, was the social aspect.. And it was something that I wasn't that familiar with, I was an engineer, a technical guy..

But I had this team of social sustainability experts, and they actually, when I was there, developed a policy letter, which is kind of like an amendment in the United States.. Very hard to have them at Ford.. So you have kinda like this constitution, and these amendments are policies that are invaluable.. And this policy letter addressed human rights, working conditions, fair wages, anti-bribery and we added sex trafficking, human trafficking to that.. And it was so awesome because we'd put this together, first in the industry, and not only did we use that to make sure we're behaving correctly at Ford, but we're actually able to drive that into the supply base.. So really, making a difference in the world, that was a piece that, I'll tell you what when I was a first and second year student at Michigan, that wasn't even on my radar screen!..