Sustainability: Lessons from Iberia

A Three-Hour International Study Opportunity

Sustainability is garnering ever-greater public attention and debate. The subject ranks high on the legislative agendas of most governments; media coverage of the topic has proliferated; and sustainability issues are of increasing concern to humankind. However, the business implications of sustainability merit greater scrutiny – scrutiny beyond the more common “green”-oriented focus. Will sustainability change the competitive landscape and reshape the opportunities and threats that organizations face? If so, how? How worried or excited are executives and other stakeholders about the impact of sustainability efforts on the corporate bottom line? What – if anything – are organizations doing now to capitalize on sustainability-driven changes? And what strategies are they pursuing to position themselves competitively for the future?

We address these questions by talking directly to executives of some of the leading companies in Spain and Portugal. The Iberian Peninsula has been at the vanguard of the sustainability movement and this course offers a unique opportunity to witness, first-hand, effective sustainability initiatives by firms such as El Corte Ingles, Grupo Siro, Acciona, Grupo Amorim, Grupo Sonae, Taylor Fladgate, and others.

Students also enjoy the contrast of the Spanish and Portuguese cultures. Spain is a rich tapestry of imagination and beauty. The creative spirit, which inspired masters like Picasso and El Greco, flows like Rioja wine. In Portugal, from food to music to the general temperament of the gentle nation, the comparison will offer the perfect complement to the Spanish travels. For example, students will see the famous Port Wine houses, the centuries-old monuments celebrating Portugal’s long tradition of seafaring exploration, as well as the epicenter of the world’s cork industry.

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