



BAYERISCHE MOTOREN WERKE AG (A)

Abstract

For more than a decade, WRI's Sustainable Enterprise Program (SEP) has harnessed the power of business to create profitable solutions to environment and development challenges. BELL, a project of SEP, is focused on working with managers and academics to make companies more competitive by approaching social and environmental challenges as unmet market needs that provide business growth opportunities through entrepreneurship, innovation, and organizational change.

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In the late summer of 1990, the German government invited industry commentary on a proposed policy to make automobile manufacturers responsible for the final disassembly and disposal of their products, as well as for ensuring that most of each vehicle is recycled. Commonly known as product "take-back" requirements, such legislation is potentially revolutionary for manufacturers. The obligation to assume stewardship for a product long after it has been sold necessitates changes in product design, materials use and disassembly techniques that would have been unthinkable even ten years ago. Moreover, establishment of a reverse distribution network to collect discarded products requires a significant investment in apparently non-productive assets.

At BMW AG, it was the task of the recycling group (T-RC) to determine the company's response to the draft legislation, which was called "Draft: The Federal Government's Policy on the Reduction, Minimization, or Utilization of Scrapped Vehicle Wastes." Dr.-Ing. Horst-Henning Wolf and Dr.-Ing. Harald A. Franze would assume primary responsibility for developing BMW's proposals to the German Environment Ministry (BMU, Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit)

