**Discussion**

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To gain competitive advantages in a circular economy, firms have to invest in supply chain processes and operations that will reduce resource consumption by as much as possible. Operations and processes need to include practices such as recycling and reuse where possible to maximize the use of existing resources. Key aspects of the downstream supply chain where sustainable practices can be implemented for competitive advantage include the management of the product life cycle, engagement with customers as relates to sustainability, the use of innovative business models that reduce resource use, and collaboration within the supply chain to minimize costs and maximize value. Product life cycle management enables firms to gain competitive advantages in a sustainable way by ensuring products made and sold by a company are designed to be durable, repairable, and able to be recycled where possible (Hazen et al., 2021). Firms also put in place deliberate measures that can ensure the product is recycled at the end of its life or is disposed of in ways that do not harm the environment.

Engagement with customers on sustainability as it relates to the use and disposal of a firm's products can also support a firm's initiatives on sustainability. Initiatives that focus on the repair or recycling of a company’s products largely depend on the participation of the final consumer (Hervani et al., 2020). Consumers should be aware of the fact that a specific product they have purchased can be repaired or recycled. Collaboration within the supply chain can also aid a business in having sustainable operations by reducing the cost of implementing certain sustainable initiatives. Networks within the supply chain can aid in the development of innovative ways of reducing resource use and ensuring there is a uniform set of practices within the supply chain as it relates to sustainability. Firms can therefore implement a number of strategies in the downstream supply chain to gain sustainable competitive advantages.

**References**

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