**Assignment Questions**

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1. How would you balance the share of effort and responsibility for mitigating climate change between government, industry, and consumers? Assign a percentage to each and justify your answer.

* Government (40%): Governments can enforce regulations, provide incentives for green technologies, and fund research. They play a crucial role in setting legal standards and frameworks that guide both industry and consumer behavior. They need to make critical decisions to both mitigate emissions and also invest in resilience [HBR Chapter]
* Industry (40%): Businesses have the resources to innovate and implement changes at scale. They can reduce emissions through operational improvements, investing in sustainable technologies, and changing supply chain practices. Companies need to ask the question of what generates value while also cutting emissions, which can include renewable energy, reducing waste, minimizing resource use [HBR Chapter]
* Consumers (20%): Individual lifestyle choices and demand for sustainable products drive market trends and can influence corporate behavior. Consumers can also advocate for policy changes and support environmentally friendly businesses.

2. How do industry-wide consortia and standards for climate change mitigation play a role in driving down the carbon intensity of business? Provide some examples, or as an alternative, an assessment of the pros and cons as you see them.

* Driving Innovation and Efficiency: Consortia can pool resources for research and development, leading to breakthroughs that no single company could achieve on its own. Standards ensure interoperability and efficiency, reducing waste.
* Setting Industry Benchmarks: Standards create a level playing field, pushing laggards to catch up and enabling leaders to differentiate themselves. They help in defining what constitutes 'green' or 'sustainable' practices, guiding both industry and consumer expectations.
* Pros and Cons: While consortia and standards can accelerate the adoption of best practices and drive collective action, they may also stifle competition or innovation if they become too rigid or are dominated by a few large players.

3. Discuss to what extent driving down the carbon intensity of a business can be used as a marketing differentiator.

* Increasing Consumer Demand for Green Products: As awareness of climate change grows, consumers are increasingly seeking out businesses that align with their values. Lower carbon intensity can attract environmentally conscious customers.
* Enhancing Brand Value and Reputation: Companies leading in sustainability can gain a competitive edge in their market, enhancing their brand reputation and customer loyalty. [HBR Paper]
* Limitations and Authenticity Challenges: The effectiveness of this strategy depends on genuine efforts and transparent reporting. Greenwashing, or falsely advertising products as environmentally friendly, can backfire and damage a company's reputation.

4. Realistically, can driving down the carbon intensity of a business cut operating costs? Provide some examples.

* Energy Efficiency Savings: Investing in energy-efficient technologies and practices can significantly reduce utility costs. For example, retrofitting buildings with energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems can lead to substantial savings.
* Supply Chain Optimization: Reducing waste, improving logistics, and using sustainable materials can lower production costs. Sustainable supply chain practices often lead to efficiencies that reduce overall operating expenses.
* Long-Term Financial Benefits versus Short-Term Costs: While initial investments in green technologies or processes may be high, the long-term savings in energy costs, coupled with potential tax incentives and avoidance of carbon taxes, can result in net positive financial outcomes.