

# Become a Sustainability Champion: At Any Career Level

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## SUMMARY

This paper will provide an overview of what employees at any business can do to work toward sustainability. Examples are given for employees starting from the general office associate, to middle management, and lastly, CEOs and company heads. It will also help you understand sustainability efforts that you can take and help to create ideas for developing a sustainability goal for your business. Lastly, it will provide you with the resources needed to make sustainability part of the main business plan for your company.

The paper provides information on:

- Forming a green team
- Proper communication of sustainability issues
- Working to improve office and energy waste
- Sustainable purchasing
- Taking on personal and business sustainability goals
- Rewarding sustainability
- Sustainable buildings





# Introduction

The business world is an ever-changing entity that is constantly being fueled by new ideas and initiatives. One of the latest initiatives is no longer just “going green” but becoming sustainable. This means that simple recycling efforts aren’t going to be enough. The old, traditional business plans that result in harmful emissions and wasteful outputs needs to be scrapped for an entirely new model. It is important for companies to enact sustainability changes in the workplace since most Americans spend a great deal of their day at the office consuming energy. The business sector can be the first major American entity to enact strategic sustainability changes to help build toward a sustainable future. Tom Delay, Chief Executive of The Carbon Trust stated, “Only business can build a low-carbon economy. Business is all about seeing ideas and growing them. Businesses have the resources, the people, the technical skills to make things happen—and they have the channels to market.”<sup>1</sup>

It is time for businesses to begin implementing sustainability policies at the corporate level. Company employees should be making their own daily

changes and making them heard to managers. And managers need to be the ones to listen to their ideas and taking heed of the opportunities for improvement they are being given. We are currently facing an economic crisis and businesses are tightening their belts. But sustainability improvements are not a place to cut back on—they are an opportunity to see incredible growth.<sup>2</sup>

*Every economic threat also represents an inspiring challenge to those who are bold and creative enough to rise up to it. Investment in the technologies and products and the new energy infrastructure that will shape the low carbon future offers a huge opportunity to businesses large and small around the world.*  
- Nancy Skinner, Director, The Climate Group

By choosing the opportunity to improve, companies that work toward sustainability are becoming leaders in business and finding prosperous financial gain.

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1 Delay, Tom. “Low-Carbon Economy.” University of Wisconsin. <<http://sustain.wisconsin.edu/quotes/quote17.htm>>.

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2 “Governor Schwarzenegger Announces Targets for California.” The Climate Group, 1 June 2005. <[http://www.theclimategroup.org/news\\_and\\_events/governor\\_schwarzenegger\\_announces\\_targets\\_for\\_california/](http://www.theclimategroup.org/news_and_events/governor_schwarzenegger_announces_targets_for_california/)>.



# Chapter 1: Working from the Bottom of the Ladder

Going green at a business does not have to mean a top-down change in business procedures. In fact, taking the initiative to present ideas to your superiors and your peers could be just what your company needs to take its first steps toward sustainability. At many companies, CEOs and boards are concerned about the overall financial state of the company. They can often miss everyday, money-saving issues that could be fixed with a little greening. If no one speaks up about problems that occur regularly in the office, how are they to know how to change it? It is important for you and everyone in your company to feel like you have a voice and know you will be heard. Speaking with your peers and superiors about changes you think would help advance your office or changes that could make everyone in the office a bit happier are important to register. They may have important impacts on the company, your comfort, and your job.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPLAINING

Many employees believe that it is up to the CEOs and business managers to work on the sustainability of a company when really, it is up to everyone at every level. But what can you do as a general associate of the company? Imagine you found a large accounting error and you reported it to your boss. As it turns out, this helped to save the company hundreds or even thousands of dollars. This is something that is part of your job and you are expected to report such issues. But why don't we feel compelled to report a sustainability issue we come across? More often than not, it is because you do not recognize the sustainability issue when you see it. This is why you should always report general office nuisances to

your boss by "complaining" about your work environment. So just as you would report the accounting error, it is important to look at your everyday working environment and report discrepancies you find there. They could turn out to be sustainability issues.

An example of a general nuisance for employees may be something as simple as a leaky roof. In early 2007, ConAgra – producer of Peter Pan peanut butter – was forced to recall "millions of jars [of peanut butter] coded 2111 from a single facility in Sylvester, Georgia, [that] had been contaminated with salmonella, a group of bacteria that can cause a common foodborne illness."<sup>3</sup> Investigations immediately began at the facility to find the reason behind the salmonella:<sup>4</sup>

*The actual culprit turned out to be nothing more exotic than poor sanitation, a leaky roof and a faulty sprinkler system. Most likely, water had simply seeped into the vats of peanut butter, allowing bacteria to grow. But the problem went deeper than that. Dozens, maybe hundreds of workers and managers walked past this leaky roof every day and never cared enough nor felt empowered enough to say or do anything about it.*

ConAgra refunded the money of concerned purchasers and even sent out coupons to customers for new jars of peanut butter when Peter Pan peanut butter was put back on the shelves. All of this could have been avoided if just one employee had complained about the leaky roof.

3 Werbach, Adam. *Strategy for Sustainability: A business manifesto*. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2009.

4 Ibid.

But the problem didn't stop there. Just two years later there was a second peanut butter salmonella outbreak, this time less than one-hundred miles from the first outbreak in 2007:<sup>5</sup>

*According to the New York Times, "Raw peanuts were stored next to the finished peanut butter. The roaster was not calibrated to kill deadly germs. Dispirited workers on minimum wage, supplied by temp agencies, donned their uniforms at home, potentially dragging contaminants into the plant, which also had rodents."  
It's enough to make you want to skip the peanut butter.*

Both of these outbreaks could have been avoided if just one employee had taken the time to complain to a supervisor about the problems they came across.

Not only are these problems expensive for the companies to fix and hazardous to their reputation but they are also a sustainability issue. The 2007 dilemma "cost ConAgra more than \$66 million in the recall" but more importantly, thousands of jars of peanut butter had to be destroyed that should have been fine.<sup>6</sup> While most general office blunders will not cost your company millions of dollars, it is important to be an engaged employee. This means you should be noting areas of concern, such as your comfort in the office. For instance, do you notice that one area of your office or building is always cold while another area is always too warm? Discomforts like this could mean that the heating or cooling system in your office is malfunctioning or that the building is leaking the hot or cold air.

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5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

This could be from a crack in the building or outdated windows. If your employer is not aware of such an issue, reporting a small issue like this one could mean saving your company hundreds of dollars each year on energy costs. It costs far more to pay for the extra heating and cooling over the years than it will for the company to fix a crack or reinstall new windows. These will do a better job of locking in the office heating and cooling.

By offering constructive criticism of your work environment to your superiors, you are offering your company the ability to achieve more. Often, many people in the office are too embarrassed or are afraid to present these criticisms to their boss for fear of being ignored. However, if you continue to present these ideas and backup your complaints with sound reasoning, most companies will appreciate that opportunity to look into a problem that could save them money. Becoming an engaged employee at work could help your company do better business, save money and make you a more valued part of the work team.

### Share Your Ideas

Remember that complaining is not enough – you also need to share ideas that could help advance your company. If you believe that something could be done better, you have a new idea for marketing a product or have a new product concept altogether, talk about your idea with your superiors. A customer of Starbucks did this when he created an instant coffee at home. An avid camper, the man wanted his wife to join him on his trips but she "refused to go, though, unless she could get a good cup of coffee."<sup>7</sup> After many trials of hauling fresh brew necessities along, the man decided to brew the coffee before the trip. He would then de-

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7 Ibid.

hydrate and freeze it and finally scrape the coffee off and pack it up for the trip. “One day, he shared his invention with a local Starbucks manager, who took it all the way to Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz. Schultz hired the inventor as the head of R&D.”<sup>8</sup> In this case, not only did this bring something to the company, but it resulted in an immediate advancement for the customer. The same opportunity is available to employees like you who are willing to share their ideas with their own company.

### Help to Create a Green Team

If you are passionate about your company working toward sustainability, one item you could put on the table to interest your office is creating a green team. This is a team together that has a common interest in bringing out the best in a company by moving toward sustainability. It can have a great improvement on the company’s triple-bottom-line:<sup>9</sup>

*Green teams develop in any number of ways...common are self-started groups that build momentum and are incorporated into a company’s structure. However they come together, these groups offer many benefits to their companies. By uniting like-minded folks who are passionate about the environment, employees can increase the sense of community as well as employee engagement in the company. When employees get excited about something at the workplace—even something not directly related to their jobs, this passion can spill over to existing projects, infusing more productivity.*

8 Ibid.

9 Nguyen, Quynh. “Corporate Green Teams: Sustainable Business from the Bottom Up.” Green Biz, 7 June 2008. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/feature/2008/06/08/corporate-green-teams-sustainable-business-bottom-up?page=0%2C0>>.

In all, creating a green team with your company could give you and your company the opportunity to work toward sustainability together. It also gives your company the chance to make sustainability one of the foundations of your company’s future plans. By helping initialize the team, you help secure yourself as a valuable member of your company.

Now that you have an interest in creating a team, you may be wondering what the role of a green team at a sustainable business is:<sup>10</sup>

*The goal of a sustainability department is to make the company more sustainable—that is, to help the company ensure its long-term future by protecting communities, restoring and conserving ecosystems, and creating competitive profit....A company’s sustainability department may start projects of its own, but much of its work will be through partnering with other departments and business units. This is because sustainability is not an isolated competency, like marketing or operations can be. Instead, it’s a business mindset applicable to all areas of business activity.*

Keeping these goals in mind, it is important to begin finding other employees that have an interest in sustainability in other departments in your office. Keeping the team diverse by having multiple departments represented is vital to finding sustainability issues in all areas of the office.

10 Winokur, Daniel. “My Company Just Started a Sustainability Department -- What Do I Do Now?” Green Biz, 17 Aug. 2008. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2008/08/18/my-company-just-started-a-sustainability-department-what-do-i-do-now>>.

## CORPORATE GREEN TEAMS: SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS FROM THE BOTTOM UP

By: Quynh Nguyen, formed the Adobe Sustainability Catalyst employee group

### Easy Tips for Successful Teamwork

No matter the differences between these teams or their companies or the challenges they encounter, several ideas emerged that are applicable to almost any situation:<sup>1</sup>

**Be inclusive.** Green team leaders stressed that involving stakeholders who may be directly affected by green initiatives (e.g. facilities or purchasing) in the early planning phases is very important for success of any initiative.

**Choose projects wisely.** It's important to tackle projects that are most impactful and whose success can be quantitatively measured.

**Make green goals part of the job.** Participating in Green Team efforts is often an opportunity for the employee to develop and enhance leadership and teamwork skills. Having Green Team goals written into team member's quarterly goals will help support the employee in their development process.

**Bigger is better for green teams.** Since teams are mostly voluntary and time availability will vary with members depending on what work projects are going on, engaging a wider network of people to do activities is a key factor in keeping the momentum going.

11 Nguyen, Quynh. "Corporate Green Teams: Sustainable Business from the Bottom Up." Green Biz, 7 June 2008. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/feature/2008/06/08/corporate-green-teams-sustainable-business-bottom-up?page=0%2C0>>.

**Make sure communication channels are appropriate.** As teams grow in size, email distribution lists may become unmanageable and teams should consider using other communication technologies such as blogs, digital dashboards, wikis and other tech tools to share information.

**Small-scale focus can lead to more productivity.** Having a single group when your company is dispersed nationally or internationally is unwieldy. Local issues will vary (for instance, water conservation for the Southwest) and different countries will have different practices. It's good to have local teams for each region and then an overarching team structure that unites local teams together for company wide initiatives.

**Making it fun works to engage people in green team initiatives.** Among the successful goals some teams have used to energize their companies include: Giving away fun incentives like CFL bulbs, free mugs, or gift certificates is an effective way to recruit new members and keep the energy fun amongst existing members; Sustainability Movie Nights; Funky Mug Contests; Office competitions to spur impact, for instance measuring how much each project team is actually recycling vs. throwing away trash with a free BBQ party reward for the winning team.

## GREENING YOURSELF

Creating a green team is one way you can send a message of your need to improve up the chain-of-command. But reflect on your personal habits that you could change for sustainability. Consider taking on a “Personal Sustainability Project” or PSP that could help you achieve sustainability in your office. Encourage others to do the same! The idea behind a PSP has been explored by Mr. Adam Werbach, former Sierra Club President, in order to engage Wal-Mart workers in sustainability. His hope was “that if we could learn how to help individuals become personally sustainable, then we might also learn how to affect the two hundred million people who shop regularly at Wal-Mart.”<sup>12</sup> While you may not be working on the scale of affecting two hundred million people, your work toward sustainability may convince others in your company to take on a PSP.

Establishing your PSP means taking on a small project that is something you really believe you can do. Do not try to take on a task that seems impossible. Rather, take on something you know may be a little difficult but something that you can make a habit over time:<sup>13</sup>

*Instead of overhauling someone’s lifestyle, we started by finding daily or recurring practices that can express an individual’s values.... What are the qualities of a PSP? It is repeatable, inspirational, sustainable, and enjoyable (RISE). At its most basic level, it is a healthy habit. People learn to spot PSPs through self-reflection or through a group session where they can talk about their routines and identify changes they would like to make.*

12 Werbach, Adam. Strategy for Sustainability: A business manifesto. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2009.

13 Ibid.

In a business case, a PSP should be something you can achieve that not only helps you but can also help your company work on sustainability. A great example would be to ride your bike to work instead of driving your car. While this may not seem like a way to help your business think of all the areas biking to work can have an influence on:<sup>14</sup>

- Reducing CO2 emissions (environmental)
- Getting a great workout (social)
- Potentially cutting health-care costs and health-club fees (economic)

Another example would be making a better effort to eat right:<sup>15</sup>

*...an example of an employee...who was overweight, ate fast food regularly and led a sedentary lifestyle. By gradually eliminating fast food from his diet, he saw the positive impact on his physical wellbeing. He eventually saw the environmental aspect, too: Eating less fast food meant less packaging and waste headed to the landfill, as well as fewer greenhouse gas emissions from the delivery and manufacture of the food or from waiting in the drive-thru lane to pick it up.*

By eating right, you could help your company by cutting down your health-care costs. Your business will be happy to be able to pay less for the health care awarded to you. Other areas that will help you and your business would be to start recycling more, re-using more, begin composting at work, etc.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

## 10 GREAT BUT SIMPLE PERSONAL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT IDEAS

1. Reuse your misprinted papers and other unusable prints as scratch paper.
2. Bring your lunch from home more frequently and avoid eating out.
3. Compost your leftover food after each meal.
4. Avoid overusing office supplies by ordering only what you need.
5. Reuse a washable coffee or water cup each day instead of plastic/Styrofoam.
6. Send more emails and straight-to-computer faxes in lieu of paper letters.
7. Commit to recycling more of everyday items such as paper and glass/plastic bottles.
8. Use a water purifying faucet head instead of a water cooler or bottled water.
9. Carpool with fellow coworkers and cut down on your fuel use.
10. Make sustainability a family or household goal so that your efforts reach others.

Finally, a main area that could save your company money is cutting down on waste. When computers were introduced into the office, people thought it would be the beginning of the paperless age. However, quite the contrary has occurred – employees are now more likely to use and waste paper than ever before. Examine your paper use as an employee and find areas where you can improve. Also, be sure to cut down on excessive office supply use. Stick to the basics and keep good track of your supplies so that you aren't in constant need of another pen or a new pad of post-its.



## Chapter 2: Meeting in the Middle

Middle management is very important to the sustainability of a company. This is the position in the company that receives the highest level of direct feedback from general employees at the company. You will also often work with customer relations when something has gone wrong. It is imperative to the company to have individuals in these positions that are aware of and open to employee and customer complaints about company practices. Because this position level often has the authority to make decisions and encourage employee involvement, middle management has a significant influence on the sustainability of a company.

### ARE YOU LISTENING?

As visited in Chapter One, employees and even customers should feel like they can offer constructive criticism to a company. Criticism and/or complaints should be encouraged by management in order to encourage growth in the company. Never avoid or ignore complaints—they could be saving you money! Consider this commercial aired by Nationwide Insurance during the summer of 2009 by one of their Customer Care Representatives, Michael Piccerello:<sup>16</sup>

*“I see complaints as opportunities to do things better. If people aren’t complaining, we don’t know that there’s something going on out there that we can fix. There are so many different types of complaints, that one complaint isn’t the same as the other. Every complaint is an opportunity,” states Piccerello.*

16 Piccerello, Michael. Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. Advertisement. Nationwide: Featured Ads. Nationwide, 2009. Web. 5 July 2009. <<http://www.nationwide.com/about-us/featured-ads.jsp#>>.

*“Is that true?” states an outside voice. “It is! I think that Nationwide is on your side because we will listen to the complaint and then try to do something about it,” states Piccerello.*

This commercial conveys the idea that Nationwide is not only going to listen to customer complaints, but that they are going to do something about them. While they encourage complaints, they don’t want to just file them away as an observation. Nationwide wants to do something about the complaints. Therefore, that particular complaint is solved for the customer and it will not happen to others.

People or customers that do not work for the company have the unique opportunity to see problems in the company that may not be visible to those on the inside. These areas are sometimes referred to as company “blind spots” as they are easily seen by customers but not so easily by the company itself. By listening and acting on these issues, potential cost-saving and sustainable plans may develop to help the company over the long-haul. For example, in 2006, Greenpeace began protesting European McDonald’s restaurants stating that they “had traced the soybeans used in feed of the chickens used in Chicken McNuggets to the rapid destruction of the Amazon rainforest.”<sup>17</sup> The activists dressed in large chicken suits and loudly protested in front of McDonald’s restaurants in Britain. In this situation, McDonald’s had to choose whether to “put up the barricades and send out the lawyers or

17 Werbach, Adam. Strategy for Sustainability: A business manifesto. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2009.

to let the drawbridge down and start learning.”<sup>18</sup> They chose the latter. Rather than fighting against Greenpeace and flying into “immediate denials in response,” McDonald’s listened to what the organization had to say about the soybeans. They reacted with an investigation on their purchasing. It is important to note McDonald’s two main plans with protests:<sup>19</sup>

*1) McDonald’s had previously established a policy for supply-chain sustainability, which guided its employees in this situation.*

*2) whenever someone uncovers such a problem that McDonald’s has contributed to, whether inadvertently or not, McDonald’s has committed to contributing to its solution.*

Using consumer reactions to your company can result in a more sustainable environment. Whereas, ignoring problems may lead to further issues down the road.

In this same way, it is important to listen to the employees at your company. Are you listening to employee complaints, comments and suggestions? Or do you run from criticism and ignore their suggestions? As a manager, you should be embracing these criticisms as the opportunity to improve. Employees could be saving the company money if they are motivated to be honest about their work and work environment. One such example is how Wal-Mart found new ways to recycle at the suggestion of a general associate:<sup>20</sup>

*Called Super Sandwich Bale, it was created with the help of Rocky Mountain Recycling. The recycler’s idea was simple: use the cardboard baler in the back of the store (which basically crushes cardboard and wraps it with wire) to collect other recyclables in the stores. Associates started collecting and separating plastic hangers, plastic film, aluminum, and other materials, putting them in large plastic bags and then putting them in the center of a cardboard sandwich and crushing them.... Wal-Mart now recycles about one-third of what was formerly thrown into the trash compactor...for which the company has received \$350 per ton, plastic that Wal-Mart once paid to have removed from the store.*

At just one employee’s suggestion, an entire corporation now saves millions of dollars a year in garbage hauling costs and makes additional millions by contributing to recycling.

### **Sustainable Purchasing**

While recycling is one of the first green initiatives most companies begin with, there are many other areas to consider. One other simple area that offers the opportunity for immediate change is sustainable purchasing. This means not only what type of items your company is purchasing but also who is your company purchasing from?

First of all, consider how your office is using supplies. “Sustainability Purchasing can be as simple as choosing office products with recognized green certifications, buying from local suppliers or leasing equipment for temporary needs instead of buying

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18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

it.”<sup>21</sup> Consider options like purchasing environmentally preferred products such as products that “contain recycled content, reduce the amount of toxins disposed, and biodegradable.”<sup>22</sup> Purchasing these types of items can reduce your waste output. Also, purchase items that were previously recycled and can be recycled again such as paper, glass, plastic, aluminum, and cardboard. Other great opportunities lie in ink and toner cartridges that can be sent back to the manufacturer for identical reuse.

Some ink manufacturers even offer a discount to offices that return their cartridges. Also, choose to recycle your E-waste:<sup>23</sup>

*Not too many [offices] think about electronics, and as a result a huge amount ends up in our landfills or shipped overseas. The problem of electronic waste, or e-waste, is that it may contain very toxic substances that can harm human health. As a result, make it a priority to reduce electronic waste by first donating it for reuse (you can do this with cellphones and many other electronic items) and then ensuring that the rest is recycled (many manufacturers will take electronics back for recycling or reuse).*

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21 Industry Canada. “10 Ways to start or enhance your sustainability purchasing strategy.” Sustainable Development, 30 Mar. 2009. Web. <<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/sd-dd.nsf/eng/sd00548.html>>.

22 Woofter, Jennifer. “How to Conduct a Waste Audit.” Strategic Sustainability Consulting. Washington, D.C. 16 July 2009. Lecture.

23 Green Irene. “5 Ways to Reduce Waste.” Green Office Makeover. Green Irene, 29 June 2009. Web. <<http://greenoffice makeover.com/index.php?s=green+office+makeover>>.

Choosing to recycle your E-waste as opposed to throwing them away can actually save your company money. Many companies will offer discounts on new items if you return your old items so that they may reuse the old parts.

Next, think about the different office spaces that are producing waste in your office. The kitchen or break room tends to be an area that accumulates a large amount of waste from used cups, plates, plasticware, napkins and discarded food. One simple way to cut back on these items is to encourage the use of washable dishes, cups and flatware. The best way to do this is to take away the old option altogether so that the reusable items are the only option. You can ask employees to pitch in by requesting them to wash their own dishes after each use. Or, if a dishwasher is in the break room, ask employees to start and unload the dishwasher regularly. Remember to lead by example by pitching in with the work too. Additionally, consider composting discarded food items as these add up quickly and contribute to break room odors. If a composting unit is installed outside of the office, there will be no more smelly odors to worry about in the office kitchen.

Then, purchase sustainably by choosing remanufactured items such as furniture, copiers, filing cabinets, computers, carpet, steel and paper. Buy products that are designed for disassembly – meaning items that were built to be reused when they are returned at the end of their life cycle. Many manufacturers already have a recycling infrastructure in place. This means that they often make it easy for buyers to return the products from recycling or remanufacturing. Just because something has reached the end of its life cycle in your office, does not mean it has to be discarded into a landfill. Old furniture, copi-

ers, etc. can often be sent back to manufacturers or donated to other facilities. Then they can be rebuilt or restructured into new items. Donating items can often be tax deductible and shows your customers your company cares about helping others and the environment.

Finally, purchase environmentally friendly cleaning products in your office. Many cleaning products are harmful to humans if used in enclosed areas or without wearing the proper safety equipment. By purchasing eco-friendly cleaning products, you assure that your employees will be safer and your environmental impact will be lessened. Many people believe that natural cleaners could not possibly work as well as traditional cleaners. However, several brands have begun introducing new green lines of cleaners that contradict this myth. Clorox recently began marketing a brand of cleaning products called Green Works that were tested by “consumers in their own homes” and were found to perform “as well as, or sometimes better than normal cleaners.”

<sup>24</sup>If your company does not use cleaning products directly but employs a separate cleaning service, ask your service to only use eco-friendly products. If the service does not have these products, consider switching to a new company that encourages the same environmental concerns as your business.

### Energy Usage and Waste at Your Company

So what can your company do to lower the energy consumption? Many companies and businesses have taken the plunge into green standards as “nearly 4,100 buildings and manufacturing plants have earned the EPA’s Energy Star through the end

of 2007.”<sup>25</sup> Getting started is simple as there are many everyday appliances that almost all offices in the U.S. operate daily, such as: photocopiers, computers, printers, fax machines, and refrigerators. There are money-saving and environmentally responsible solutions to reducing energy use in all of these appliances. Photocopiers that “are switched off at night and on weekends—either manually, or with an automatic time switch” can yield a “savings of 40% to 60% per year [that] can be achieved for each photocopier” in the workplace.<sup>26</sup> Desktop computers can yield an even higher return profit since “a modern desktop computer costs about \$110 a year to run 24-hours a day,” but just by turning them off each night a single computer can reduce its energy use by 70%.<sup>27</sup> Printing smarter is also a great money and energy saver when documents are printed double-sided and by having toner cartridges refilled or remanufactured, “Paper costs can be almost halved simply by printing double-sided, and you can save \$100 on toner and \$30 on ink by refilling your printer and toner cartridges.”<sup>28</sup> The environmental reflec-

25 California Green Solutions. “Energy Savings in Commercial Buildings with Energy Star Strategies.” 2 June 2008. <<http://www.californiagreensolutions.com/cgi-bin/gt/tpl.h,content=2132>>.

26 Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure. Office Equipment. Brochure. Australia, 2001. Government of South Australia. <[http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/15685/officeequipment\\_web.pdf](http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/15685/officeequipment_web.pdf)>.

27 Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure. Office Equipment. Brochure. Australia, 2001. Government of South Australia. <[http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/15685/officeequipment\\_web.pdf](http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/15685/officeequipment_web.pdf)>.

28 Australian and New Zealand Minerals and Energy Council (ANZMEC) and National Appliance and Equipment Energy Efficiency Committee (NAEEEC). Commonwealth, State, and Territory government agencies of Australia and New Zealand. “Green Office Guide: A guide to help you buy and use environmentally friendly office equipment.” Australia, 2001.

24 Werbach, Adam. Strategy for Sustainability: A business manifesto. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2009.

tions are also positive as Office Depot states that “each remanufactured toner cartridge ‘keeps approximately 2.5 pounds of metal and plastic out of landfills...and conserves about a half gallon of oil.’”<sup>29</sup> Purchasing a fax machine can also yield long-term savings when an inkjet machine is chosen over a thermal machine, “Although a thermal fax machine costs less to buy, the thermal paper costs a lot more

National Appliance and Equipment Energy Efficiency Committee, NAEEEC. <[http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/15678/green\\_office\\_guide.pdf](http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/15678/green_office_guide.pdf)>.

29 Hattam, Jennifer. 10 Ways to Go Green at Work. Brochure. San Francisco, CA. Apr. 2007. Sierra Club. <<http://www.sierraclub.org/greenoffice/tips.pdf>>.

than the plain paper used by inkjet fax machines, isn’t recyclable, and needs to be photocopied for long term storage.”<sup>30</sup> Likewise, an Energy Star certified refrigerator can save at least 30% when upgraded from an older, noncertified refrigerator.<sup>31</sup>

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30 Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure. Office Equipment. Brochure. Australia, 2001. Government of South Australia. <[http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/15685/officerequipment\\_web.pdf](http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/15685/officerequipment_web.pdf)>.

31 Nichols, Curt. Green Office Guide: A guide to greening your bottom line through a resource-efficient office environment. City of Portland: Office of Sustainable Development. Ed. Susan Anderson and Dan Saltzman. Nov. 2001. <<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=111253>>.

## GREENING YOUR BUSINESS: A PRIMER FOR SMALLER COMPANIES

By: GreenBiz.com

### Reducing Waste<sup>32</sup>

**Reduce office waste.** Use fewer products and use fewer raw materials in the front office and administrative operations. Start with cutting back on paper: Establish a company-wide policy of photocopying on both sides of the paper, using the blank side of printed material for creating draft documents, and e-mailing reports instead of making printed copies. Use outdated forms and letterheads for in-house memos; post general memos in central locations; and encourage saving documents on disk rather than paper. You'll save money immediately.

**Create a reuse and recycling culture.** Set up a workplace recycling system for paper, plastics, aluminum, and glass. Remember that wasted materials are wasted money. Innovate: Examine manufacturing processes for opportunities to increase materials-use efficiency; rethink product packaging; consider composting food waste; and research recycling programs for unwanted electronic equipment. Encourage employees to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

**Rent or lease equipment instead of buying.** Consider leasing copiers, computers, and other equipment from manufacturers that

will take back and properly recycle their goods at their "end of life." Make it easy on yourself — let the lessor repair and properly dispose of the equipment. You also could buy equipment used and refurbished. Consider renting equipment that is used only occasionally. Alternatively, consider sharing seldom-used machines or equipment with other businesses in your area.

### Energy Efficiency

**Conduct an energy audit.** An audit can be free or relatively inexpensive, but can yield considerable energy and financial savings. Contact your energy utility or an energy services company to arrange an energy audit. They're usually offered for free. Consider using energy service companies, which can arrange to make upgrades at no net cost to your company; they earn their money on utility rebates and in sharing a portion of your monthly energy savings.

**Lower your energy needs.** Encourage employees and maintenance crews to turn off lights, computers, and other devices when they are not in use, especially after hours and on weekends. Consider installing timers to cut the power after hours.

**Equip with efficiency.** Buy energy-efficient equipment. According to the Energy Cost Savings Council, the average building owner

32 Green Biz. "Greening Your Business: A Primer for Smaller Companies." 17 July 2007. Web. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/resources/resource/greening-your-business-a-primer-smaller-companies>>.

can cut energy costs up to 60% by replacing outdated, inefficient electrical equipment with new, high-tech electro-technologies, a potential savings of \$1 per square foot. Use energy-efficient lighting. There are thousands of lighting products available, many of which offer significant energy savings and improved lighting. Examples include occupancy sensors for frequently vacant rooms; ballast upgrades and reflectors for fluorescent fixtures; compact fluorescent lights in place of incandescent bulbs; timers to turn off lighting; and energy-efficient exit signs. Many of these can pay for themselves in as little as a few months.

***Be smart with heating and cooling.*** Is your building properly insulated? Are the windows double-paned? Are there air leaks? By maintaining your heating and cooling systems, you can reduce your heating and cooling bills. A poorly maintained heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system uses more energy and wastes money. Systems that are checked annually and kept in good condition use less energy and last longer.

***Keep equipment running smoothly.*** Your equipment comes with maintenance schedules; follow them rigorously. You'll keep your company's equipment running smoothly and at rated energy efficiency. This means replacing filters, cleaning compressor coils, tuning up burners, lubricating pumps and motors, and keeping your motor fleet tuned and ready for work. As standard

operations, recycle your waste oil and solvents, and use biodegradable lubricants and hydraulic fluids. Your equipment will run more efficiently and reliably, and you'll save time, energy, and money.

Green your energy sources. Contact local power providers to see if they offer electricity from renewable-energy sources such as solar and wind power.

### **Water Efficiency**

***Reduce and conserve water.*** Locate and fix water leaks routinely. Conduct a water audit to find faucets and toilets that leak and have them fixed as soon as possible. Promote water-efficient landscaping, called xeriscaping. Other outdoor water-saving practices include mulching, timed irrigation, and nighttime irrigation.

***Install water-efficient fixtures.*** Consider low-flow aerators for faucets, and "dams" or other devices for toilets. On toilets that use a spring-loaded lever instead of a handle, install water-saving diaphragms. When building or remodeling, seek out low-flow appliances and devices.

***Reuse water.*** Collect rain water for irrigating and other non-potable uses. Reuse water in manufacturing and rinsing procedures: recirculate cooling water; eliminate plenum flushes; convert from continuous flow to intermittent flow; improve control of the use of deionized water.

## Travel

**Encourage alternative transportation.** Your people have to travel, but they don't have to pollute. Support an employee vanpool or car pool program, and offer those who don't drive incentives to take mass transit. Also, provide environmentally friendly options for those who drive, such as transit subsidies, preferred parking for carpoolers, and racks or lockers for bicyclists' gear.

**Green your fleet.** Purchase or lease vehicles with the highest-possible fuel economy, or those that use alternative-fuel sources, such as electric, hybrid, or fuel-cell vehicles. Whatever vehicles you use, have them tuned regularly. Keep tire pressures at recommended levels in order to increase fuel efficiency. When having vehicles serviced, make sure mechanics dispose of used oil, brake fluid, and other substances properly.

**Make your meetings matter.** Try to teleconference, rather than travel to a meeting; if you absolutely need the face time, stay in ecologically sensitive hotels. Another way to offset the eco-ills of business travel: invest in a program that will plant trees to absorb the carbon dioxide created by your trips. Host environmentally aware meetings and events. While you're at it, reduce your travel and conference budget, and impress on clients and stakeholders your widespread commitment to sustainability. Reduce employees' commutes. Give your employees the option of telecommuting,

putting in a reduced workweek, or working variable hours. Studies show such programs improve employee productivity and retention. When appropriate, allow employees to work at home one day a week. Arrange for computer hookups, extra phone lines, or other low-cost technologies to allow employees to plug in to the main office from home.

## Product Life-Cycle

**Understand your impact.** Conducting a life-cycle assessment looks at the "cradle-to-grave" impacts of your products—from the raw materials to their manufacture, sale, use, and disposal. Life-cycle assessments can help you identify opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce waste, improve quality, save money, and provide products that are more environmentally appealing to customers.

**Design for the environment.** Sustainable product design is simple. It means you've thought ahead: Your product can be disassembled and recycled easily — it has no toxics, uses few raw materials and packaging materials, has fewer components, and takes less energy, water, and resources to produce than traditional products. Goods designed for the environment also can be less expensive to manufacture, and will keep you ahead of regulations.

**Reuse manufacturing excesses.** Find uses for manufacturing by-products, either in internal processes, or by selling the by-products to another industrial user.

## Make Sustainability a Rewarding Challenge

Not every employee is interested in improving company sustainability. A way to encourage all employees to participate is to make the challenge a rewarding experience. Plan options for motivating employees. Choose ways that help them at more than just the office. Offer incentives for employees to live a healthier lifestyle by giving them options to bike or walk to work each day. Some employees may want to ride their bike to work or walk but do not want to show up to work sweaty and exhausted. Many offices do not have shower facilities in their buildings and do not have the room to install one. Consider partnering with a local gym that is close to your office that will allow employees to use the shower facilities before work. Better yet, find out if the gym would be willing to offer a low rate for the office to become members. Not only could some employees ride into work on their bikes, but they could even go earlier in the morning so that they could bike in and work out at the facilities. You may even consider paying for a portion of the fees for all employees who work out a set number of days a month as a part of an office health plan. Employees who work out more often are less likely to become sick. That means fewer employees needing the assistance of the company's health plan!

Other options to offer employees are paid incentives for employees to purchase walking shoes once a year. Offering employees a \$50-100 certificate or gift card to purchase new running shoes each year would also encourage them to be healthier. Preventative measures are the best way to avoid disease and injury as employees who are fit and

healthy have a healthier immune systems. Another important fact is that exercising makes people happier and improves focus since it feeds our body natural endorphins that make us happy. Therefore, your employees will be more productive in the workplace. In the end, both you and your employees win because it will make them healthier, happier and more productive.

Public transit and carpooling are also good options to encourage. Limiting parking spaces at your office or offering spaces closer to the building for cars that are carpooling. This will encourage employees to work together toward the sustainability goal. Offering discounts or paid incentives to use public transit is another option for employers. Employees that use public transit limit carbon emissions and contribute one less car to the parking lot at the office. Combining these options would limit the amount of space that would have to be maintained on the company's parking lot each year.

## Working with Your Green Team

As discussed in Chapter one, employees can volunteer or create a green team at their workplace. The management team should feel compelled to work on this team as well. What can middle management do to work with and on the green team? Here are some examples of how management participate in and encourage employee green teams.<sup>33</sup>

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33 Herrera, Tilde. "Motivated Employees Make Sustainability Initiatives Sustainable." GreenBiz. 22 Feb. 2008. Web. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/feature/2008/02/23/motivated-employees-make-sustainability-initiatives-sustainable>>.

*The group keeps the green momentum going with consistent reinforcement: At each monthly meeting, an environmentally focused topic is discussed.*

- *D Magazine's green team produces in-house monthly newsletters with tips on how workers can make green changes at home and at the office.*

*Some companies offer ongoing incentives to inspire workers to take environmentally focused action.*

- *Thirty-eight Timberland employees, for instance, have taken advantage of the company's \$3,000 subsidy toward the purchase of a hybrid vehicle.*
- *JCPenney rewards teams of workers for developing and supporting energy-saving solutions as part of its company-wide program, Monthly Utility Mania.*

You could also consider offering more flexible work schedules: 4-day work weeks, the ability to use teleconferencing, working from home, etc. so that more employees can work out-of-office or have more consecutive days off.

## HOW TO BUILD A GREEN TEAM: THE FIRST STEP TO SUSTAINABILITY

By: Brandi McManus, global business development manager for energy services at TAC

### Rules of the Green Team

To begin on the path to corporate environmental responsibility, it is important to begin with a frank, executive-level discussion about where you are and where you want to be. Not every company will want to transform its business model to begin offering eco-friendly cars and renewable energy. However, it is possible that every company could fix the basics and take steps toward reducing its impact on the world.<sup>34</sup>

**Rule 1: Executive support.** One member of the team must be from the executive staff to show not only executive buy-in but also have access to the management team so that decisions can be made quickly. The goal of this group member is to:

- Listen openly to ideas from the team
- Guide discussions toward actionable plans
- Set expectations for direction of the team and funding

**Rule 2: Commitment.** The executive team must commit to reviewing the suggestions and discoveries of the team with the intention to take action. All your employees will be watching the actions of this team. If every idea is swatted down by management, then you may be doing more harm than good to morale.

34 McManus, Brandi. "How to Build a Green Team: The First Step to Sustainability." GreenBiz. 5 May 2009. Web. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/feature/2009/05/05/how-build-a-green-team+?page=0%2C0>>.

Make sure that this team is empowered to make real change in your organization.

**Rule 3: Diversity.** Other members of the team should be from different divisions and groups and hold positions. Have one person from sales, operations, manufacturing/quality, human resources, accounting and maybe even the receptionist. You can designate these members or ask for volunteers to get the most passionate and engaged people involved in your team.

**Rule 4: Size.** Limit the size of the team to 10 to 12 people. While this number may seem small for very large organizations, it is very difficult to get anything accomplished in very large teams. However, while the team is small, it is possible to have the delegate from manufacturing create his own small team in his group to give him ideas to bring back to the group.

**Rule 5: Unleash the creativity of your people.** This is one excellent opportunity to tap the resources that companies spend billions to recruit and retain. Encourage the team to think of creative ideas to reduce waste and energy or increase the durability of products. Make it clear that this is not just a cost-cutting exercise but a way to increase the value of your products while having an impact on the planet.



# Chapter 3: Leading Toward a Sustainable Future

CEOs, business owners and executive managers are just as important to the greening of a company. Perhaps the most important but not for the reason you may think. It does not take power and money to make green changes at a company. But it does take power and a leadership role to integrate sustainability into a company's business model and organizational culture. Business owners and managers have the opportunity to lead by their own example. You should encourage employees to work sustainably by rewarding employees who do it well. For owners, it is important to question:

- What messages are you sending to employees?
- What are you doing to motivate your employees to be sustainable?
- What types of goals are you setting for them?
- Are you getting feedback from them regularly about your company sustainability goals?

By making sustainability a central part of your business, you are encouraging employees that what they do matters and that they are an integral part of your company. There is also a significant financial aspect to working sustainably:<sup>35</sup>

*The study of six industrial sectors—energy, mining, steel, food, beverages and media—found that companies considered leaders in implementing environmental, social and governance policies designed to create*

35 Grayson, David, Mark Lemon, Sarah Slaughter, Miguel A. Rodriguez, Zhouying Jin, and Simon Tay. A New Mindset for Corporate Sustainability. British Telecommunications plc and Cisco Systems, Inc., 2008.

*sustained competitive advantage had outperformed the overall stock market by 25 per cent since August 2005. Within their own sectors, 72 per cent of these leading companies had outperformed their peers over the same period.*

If you want to be a leader in your business sector, consider being a leader in sustainability as a way to make it to the top.

## BEGINNING TO WORK SUSTAINABLY

Here is an example of a five-step program on what to realistically expect when you start working sustainably:<sup>36</sup>

- *Desire: The need for a company to “do something” can be driven by protesters, a board member, or the CEO’s grandchildren asking what he’s doing to stop global warming.*
- *Pride: A small group is soon assigned to address the topic of sustainability, and as they look around their company they find numerous examples of just how good their workplace environment is—people recycle, they print on both sides of paper, or they even have compact fluorescent light bulbs.*

36 Davies, John. “A Five-Step Program for Sustainability.” GreenBiz. 6 Jan. 2008. Web. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2008/01/07/a-five-step-program-sustainability>>.

- *Satisfaction: The company initiates energy efficiency and waste reduction projects that all meet the financial hurdle rate and ROI requirements established by the CFO. Marketing wants to publish its first corporate citizenship report, which may or may not contain cautious but long-term emissions reduction targets.*
- *Depression: The easy projects are done, and now management wants to know how they're going to make money at this sustainability stuff. A non-governmental organization (NGO) publicly chastises the company for not doing enough, and the core team responsible for the company's sustainability initiatives realizes "this stuff is hard."*
- *Collaboration: At some point, companies realize they can't take this journey alone and they need their company collaborating within functions and business units and to drive for more collaboration with business partners, governmental bodies, NGOs, and customers to continually revisit their strategy as it relates to their sustainability journey.*

Working toward sustainability is not a one-time fix that will work until the end of time. Sustainability is ever-changing and there are always new and better ways to create greener technology. This is why it is important to encourage sustainability goals that work with the business's main goals. Integrate sustainability into all aspects of the business plan, not as a separate entity.

## EIGHT TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT OFF THE GROUND

By: Deborah Fleischer, Founder and President of Green Impact<sup>37</sup>

1. Look at the big picture and identify your company's greatest impacts. Review your key business operations to understand the key environmental issues for your business and the opportunities and risks presented by these issues. Alex McIntosh, Director of Corporate Citizenship at Nestlé Waters, advises new directors to "think broadly about what sustainability means to your business, look beyond your four walls, up and down your full value chain." Then," he continues, "quantify your impacts [green house gas (GHG) emissions or life cycle assessment (LCA) or tons of waste] and prioritize the places where your impacts are the greatest. Pay lots of attention to how people inside the company are being rewarded or penalized for their performance in those areas."
2. Land some quick wins—go for cost savings. To start, prioritize and focus on capturing the low-hanging fruit. Look for opportunities that will deliver results quickly, such as increasing efficiency and reducing waste. Scan your business and look for logical opportunities to save money and develop measurable metrics to track results.
3. Be authentic. If you are going to use sustainability as a product differentiator, be sure you have done all you can to be authentically green. This does not mean you have to be perfect. Consumers want honesty and transparency, not perfection. But with today's social media tools, it only takes a moment on Twitter for someone to accuse you of greenwashing.
4. Develop internal partners. For directors getting started, begin to network throughout the company and create relationships with directors who oversee key functions, including product design, procurement, sales, supply chain, governmental affairs, social investment, analyst relations and employee engagement. Look for opportunities to gain their trust and educate them on the value sustainability offers the company, including product differentiation that can capture market share and drive top-line revenues.
5. Engage your stakeholders. McIntosh suggests meeting with as many people as you can outside of your company, "prioritizing to meet with the most influential and interested stakeholders first."

"Stakeholder engagement is an important, essential element in good citizenship and good business strategy. You need to know what issues are most important to the people that are most relevant to your business," suggests McIntosh.

Include your supply chain, customers, investors and employees in your outreach so you

can understand what leadership looks like or what risks may be coming. What issues do they care about? What is important to them? How are they tackling their end of the equation? Answers to these questions can help inform your strategy and programs.

6. Engage employees. If you are short on resources to implement new programs, look to your employees. Bonnie Nixon, Director of Environmental Sustainability at Hewlett Packard, explained that the company engages employees on multiple levels, ranging from providing them energy kits to reduce their personal carbon footprint at home to offering incentives for biking to work to encouraging them to innovate more and find ways to imbed sustainability into product design, the supply chain and the sales process.
7. Develop a communications strategy. A key component to a sustainability program is communicating both internally and externally about your efforts and results. Develop a strategy that details how you are going to communicate your efforts -- both your successes and future areas for improvement.
8. Develop a long-term strategy. Going green does not happen overnight. Hunter Lovins, the president and founder of Natural Capitalism Solutions warns, "avoid the temptation to be green all at once. This is a years long process, like continuous improvement."

## CREATE SUSTAINABILITY GOALS FOR YOUR COMPANY

Set goals for your entire company to follow that work toward sustainability. Set sustainability goals that have an effect on your company's triple-bottom-line. Get everyone involved—the company will advance and you will help the environment simultaneously. To begin, work on a North Star goal which is “an overarching business goal that has these characteristics:<sup>38</sup>

- *It is optimistic and aspirational.*
- *Your organization can achieve it in five to 15 years.*
- *It applies across the enterprise.*
- *Every employee can personally act on it.*
- *It connects to the core of your business.*
- *It drives excitement and passion in your organization.*
- *It serves a higher purpose than business profitability.*
- *It solves a great human challenge.*
- *It leverages your organization's strengths.*

While all of these may seem out of reach for a company, any sustainability goal should have all of these characteristics already built into it. Remember, you are working sustainability into your business, not creating a separate program or job description.

An example of a North Star goal is how the hotel-chain Hilton created initiatives to work on their sustainability:<sup>39</sup>

38 Werbach, Adam. *Strategy for Sustainability: A business manifesto*. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2009.

39 Ibid.

1. *Reduce the energy consumption of direct operations by 20 percent*
2. *Reduce CO2 emissions by 20 percent*
3. *Reduce waste output by 20 percent*
4. *Reduce water consumption by 10 percent.*

*These goals represent millions of dollar of cost savings for Hilton and require everyone, from the housekeepers to the operating engineers, to lend a hand.*

Using this example, setting a North Star goal does not mean you initially know exactly how you will set forth on your goal. The point is that you and your company need to set a reasonable goal and then work on how you will achieve it. It is also important to meet regularly to discuss the goals and how they are being met. This should not be an annual or bi-annual meeting but at the very least a once-a-month meeting. You will be more able to accurately track the progress that you are making. It is important to meet regularly and report your findings to the entire office. Make sure that everyone is aware of the progress or shortcomings. Remember, sustainability should be a part of the overall business goal:<sup>40</sup>

*...businesses are no longer approaching CSR as an add-on capability but view sustainable management as a new way of doing business that touches on every department.*

Interface, an Atlanta-based carpet tile company with a mission to eliminate any negative environmental impact from the company by 2020, estimates its sus-

40 Nahser, Ron. “Educating Executives: Sustainability 101.” *GreenBiz*. 20 Nov. 2007. Web. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2007/11/21/educating-executives-sustainability-101>>.

tainability efforts have saved it more than \$336 million since 1995. The company attributes its success to a comprehensive, across-the-board approach.

An excellent way to reduce energy, water use and waste output by your company is to employ a sustainability consultant. They will be able to find where your company may be hemorrhaging money. Strategic Sustainability Consulting (SSC) has consultants all over the United States to offer consulting expertise. Additionally, SSC also offers sustainability classes in the form of webinars. These can be attended anywhere in the world to help your company with its sustainability needs. Some of the classes that may help in finding ways to begin working on North Star goals or reducing waste are:

- How to Conduct a Waste Audit
- How to Conduct an Energy Audit
- How to Create a Paperless Office
- How to Green Your...
  - o IT
  - o Meetings
  - o Travel

Many options are available including a course to help create a Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) for your company. These may be viewed at <http://www.sustainabilityconsulting.com/events/>.

While there are many benefits of making sustainability an integral part of your business, here are a few of the best:<sup>41</sup>

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41 Winokur, Daniel. "My Company Just Started a Sustainability Department -- What Do I Do Now?" Green Biz, 17 Aug. 2008. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2008/08/18/my-company-just-started-a-sustainability-department-what-do-i-do-now>>.

- *Lower costs through reduced resource use.*
- *Reduced risk of backlash/increased access to new locations by community outreach.*
- *Capital investments in more efficient infrastructure, saving money and resources.*
- *A more healthy, less wasteful, less toxic, and more pleasant workplace.*
- *Monetizing resource use reductions -- by trading greenhouse gas credits or selling waste materials.*
- *Providing input to business units at planning stages to design for financial and environmental efficiency.*
- \* *Turning waste streams into revenue streams.*
- *Modeling all of the energy and materials flows in and out of a business.*
- *Studying the life cycle of the value chain.*

## **ENCOURAGE YOUR COMPANY GREEN TEAM**

Form a green team at your company or if one is already in place, encourage your green team to establish a North Star goal. Keep up-to-date on the team's goals and achievements. Find ways to encourage the team's growth so that their fire for sustainability does not burn out. Some items to consider when forming a green team:

- Who is the head of the team?
  - Will this be you as the head of the company, a middle manager or do you prefer to let general associates take on the task?

- Is it a separate job where you hire new employees to work only on sustainability measures?
  - Or will it be a team that spends a few hours each day looking at sustainability issues for the company as part of their other workload?
- What is the budget?
  - All green teams need to have a budget. Working toward sustainability does not have to be expensive but change means that an initial cost may be necessary to reach long term savings.
- How will you formalize the role as part of employee's jobs?
  - Will it be a part of the necessary qualifications in the hiring process or will you look for volunteers to work on the committee as employees leave and join the company?

All of these items are necessary to consider when forming the green team. It will help employees feel well-prepared for the task at hand. Having these items decided before the team begins will help employees be ready to start working on their goals rather than still hammering out the details. Here are some great goals for your green team to implement:<sup>42</sup>

1. *Make innovating for sustainability a part of your company's vision.*
2. *Formulate a strategy with sustainability at its heart.*
3. *Embed sustainability in every part of your business.*
4. *Walk the talk: emphasise actions, not words.*
5. *Set up a body at board level with the power to make sustainability matter.*
6. *Set firm rules.*
7. *Bring your stakeholders on board.*
8. *Use people power.*
9. *Join the networks.*
10. *Think beyond reporting: align all business systems with the company's vision of sustainability.*

## **BUILDING**

Whether you are a business looking to upgrade to a new building, downgrade to a smaller office or just starting out, there are many tips for keeping your real estate a good investment. Work on updating the building for better efficiency:<sup>43</sup>

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42 Grayson, David, Mark Lemon, Sarah Slaughter, Miguel A. Rodriguez, Zhouying Jin, and Simon Tay. A New Mindset for Corporate Sustainability. British Telecommunications plc and Cisco Systems, Inc., 2008.

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43 Green Biz. "Greening Your Business: A Primer for Smaller Companies." 17 July 2007. Web. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/resources/resource/greening-your-business-a-primer-smaller-companies>>.

**Green your building.** *Environmentally conscious design and construction can reduce a building's life-cycle costs—the total cost of building, owning, and maintaining the structure. Techniques begin with the building's siting—its relationship to geological and other natural features—and can include all of the building's materials and systems. There are thousands of environmentally preferable building items to choose from, ranging from structural products made from recycled materials to flooring made from nontoxic or renewable materials.*

If you are looking to purchase new sites or upgrade an old building here are some areas to check for updates:

Construction and Landscaping:

- Multi-paned windows
- Efficient use of space
- Light and natural lighting
- Water source
- Building oriented for appropriate solar heat gain
- Green or solar roof
- Facilities for rainwater capture
- Water harvesting/parallel water systems

Check to see how the building stands up to the heat and cold (depending on location). There are windows available that react to the seasons, allowing more solar heat to be let in during cold months and less in hotter months. Be sure the window panes are highly rated and windows, doors and other areas are well sealed from the elements. Use space efficiently and do not use more than what is

necessary. Although large, corner offices are a sign of status, they are often energy hogs that use more electricity and need more heating/cooling. Opt for natural-lighting wherever possible by installing many windows and skylights nearest to employee workspaces. Installing a green roof or solar panels on the roof are also great ways to save on energy costs. In addition, optimizing the ability to use solar heat to warm the building in colder months is a benefit. Finally, if your facility has its own landscaping, consider collecting rainwater in a drum connected to the rain gutters. This water can be reused to water any plants, flowers or grass that you plant.

*Remember to invest in native plant species as these require less maintenance and will not harm other native plants that grown in the area.*

## EXECUTIVE MANAGERS

All executive managers have the opportunity to aid in company sustainability plans. It is important to do more than just set a goal—enforcing the goals is key to sustainability survival. First, it is important to take a step with everyday operations. Take Offsetters as an example, “one of the leading companies in Western Canada [providing] carbon offsets and related services (measure, track, reduce) to businesses”:<sup>44</sup>

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44 Justin - Interviewer.”Interview with Donovan Woollard, Chief Operating Officer, Offsetters.” Walk Softly. Walk Softly Communications Inc., 13 Mar. 2009. <<http://www.iwalksoftly.com/blog/2009/03/interview-with-donovan-woollard-chief-operating-officer-offsetters/>>.

*Offsetters has maintained a very low footprint overall through the following measures:*

- *All staff cycle, walk, or take transit to work.*
- *Offices located in urban hubs, close to transit and community amenities.*
- *We are a member of The Company Car (Cooperative Auto Network), a Vancouver-based car share network, so that staff have access to vehicles if absolutely required for client meetings and errands rather than being obligated to bring a vehicle of their own.*
- *High use of natural light in our office.*
- *All paper consumed is high post consumer recycled content; printer default settings for double side.*
- *We source from Frogfile ([www.frogfile.ca](http://www.frogfile.ca)), an environmentally friendly office supply company located in our neighborhood.*
- *We use Skype and iChat or telephone for most communications with remote clients and partners (instead of travel).*
- *We have a ban—punishable by steep fines—for disposable food or drink containers in the office;*
- *All food waste is composted rather than thrown in garbage (avoiding hauling of wet waste and methane emissions in landfills).*

Not only were goals set and expected to be followed, they were achieved quickly and enforced well to be sure the rules were followed.

Next, consider new IT goals at the office that can keep costs down, waste low and sustainability high. As always, make a goal that is long-term and will be carried out through the life of the company (keeping in mind updates that may be available in the future). First of all, save energy and money by enacting a power-down time for the entire office. “Roughly 3-13% of total electricity consumption is for office equipment such as computers, servers, etc.”<sup>45</sup> As most employees will be leaving at 5 o’clock each day, enact a rule that all employees must turn off all the electronics they use when they clock out for the day. If a main IT area utilized, be sure this area is shut down as well each evening—these tend to use the highest level of energy. While some people believe that powering down your computer will shorten its lifetime, this only refers to outdated technology that is rarely ever in use in modern offices. Always power down! In addition to energy, also consider how your company is disposing of your old IT equipment. “In the U.S., 2.3 million tons of electronic waste were disposed, only 12.5%, 300,000 pounds were recovered for recycling.”<sup>46</sup> When it is time to purchase new equipment, choose a company that builds its products to be remanufactured and offers a return program to take back your old IT equipment. If you cannot return your current electronics and appliances to the original company, be sure that your company is sending the old items to a reputable electronics recycling facility within the U.S. or your home nation.

45 Woofter, Jennifer. “How to Green Your IT.” Lecture. How to Green Your IT. Washington D.C. 23 July 2009. Web.

46 Ibid.

Finally, one of the biggest challenges facing companies is finding the savings when new, sustainable initiatives are enacted:<sup>47</sup>

*The difficulty in measuring the effects of sustainability on shareholder value and on financial performance proved to be the greatest barriers to incorporating sustainability into financial strategy. CFOs, though not chiefly responsible for fueling sustainability initiatives, can play a role in using sustainability to improve financial performance, the survey found.*

One of the easiest ways to know how much money is being saved is to track the progress. Meaning, write it down! It's one of those K.I.S. references we've always been taught to do. If you want to know what kind of progress you are making and how much money you are saving, you need to know where you started and how you got there. By having a Green Team at your company, this is a quick and easy way to be sure that you always have someone to keep track of the changes you are making and the savings you are receiving from it. Keep your files for months and years and you will see exactly what kind of a difference it makes and you can report those findings to your stakeholders in an annual Sustainability Report.

## **SENDING THE RIGHT MESSAGE**

Finally, what kinds of messages are you sending to your employees? "If your organization says it is committed to sustainability and the [less sustain-

47 GreenBiz Staff. "CFOs View Sustainability as a Business Opportunity: Survey." Green Biz. 30 Mar. 2008. Web. <<http://www.greenbiz.com/news/2008/03/30/cfos-view-sustainability-business-opportunity-survey>>.

able employees] get promoted over the [more sustainable employees], the people see the disconnect right away. Alignment of the 'talk' with the 'walk' is critically important to building an aligned and committed organization."<sup>48</sup> Employees are aware of the practices you are using. Consider an awarding system that offers employees not only the chance to be better employees but to be recognized for doing so. If employees are making significant actions towards sustainability, award them with gift certificates, prizes, closer parking spaces, or even promotions for a job well done. Also, remember to encourage employees that are not working well towards sustainability instead of threatening. People respond much better to encouragement than to threats. Choose to show them the right path by listening to suggestions they have. It may help them with their sustainability at the company.

48 Tebo, Paul. "How Can One Develop 'Sustainability Leaders'?" GEMI Metrics Navigator, Web. Accessed 9 July 2009. <<http://www.gemi.org/metricsnavigator/eag/How%20Can%20One%20Develop%20Sustainability%20Leaders%27.pdf>>.