

## Training and Education

You can adopt sustainable values into your company's policies and practices, but your efforts will only really begin to pay off when you integrate your employees into the process. Think of your team members as partners, champions and detectives. As they are on the frontlines with your customers every day, they are ideally positioned to not only carry your sustainable principles forward to your clients, but also to identify untapped efficiencies and opportunities across your organization. Empower your staff, communicate your efforts to your customers and watch the benefits multiply.

### Quick Start



In just a few minutes, you can realize savings for your business and help the environment at the same time. Set aside some time each week-even an hour-to consider the small, simple actions that you can take toward sustainability. Devote time to considering your practices and you will be on your way.

### Seek Out the Leaders

- ◆ Odds are, you already have one or two enthusiastic sustainability advocates on your payroll. Canvas your employees, and bring them into the loop on your sustainability initiatives from the get-go. You'll end up with greater buy in, an improved sense of ownership and strengthened morale.

### Spread the Word

- ◆ Make small signs to serve as visual reminders, such as: "Please turn off the lights as you leave."
- ◆ Circulate fun environmental tips via e-mail, through an employee bulletin or blog.
- ◆ Consider including a "values of sustainability" segment in your employee orientation program.

### Knowledge Is Power

- ◆ Contact local organizations as well as heritage and conservation centres to see if they can provide experts to deliver workshops and seminars on environmental and social topics.
- ◆ Coordinate brown-bag, lunch-and-learn seminars with interesting speakers. Workshop and seminar topics might include composting, wildlife conservation, community economic development initiatives, active transportation strategies, and small-scale, climate-change solutions.
- ◆ Send staff members to participate in external learning opportunities such as conferences.

### Green Your Team

- ◆ Establish a "Green Team" or "Sustainability Team" to support your sustainability program. Such teams are typically comprised of enthusiastic and committed employees who believe in the value of sustainable tourism. Almost every organization has at least one of these "cheerleaders"-empower these natural leaders to help guide your policies, and they will respond by influencing other employees to get on board.

### Find Your Champion

- ◆ Identify your "Eco-Champion"-the most committed and enthusiastic individual under your roof. You might ask this person to draft and communicate your company's sustainability goals and objectives, research appropriate community projects and evaluate existing programs within your organization.

## Tell the World

- ◆ In today's competitive labour market, social responsibility and environmental values can strongly influence recruiting and retention efforts. According to the Conference Board of Canada, 71% of surveyed individuals want to work for companies that commit to social and community concerns. Be sure to communicate your company's sustainable values to existing and potential employees through your recruitment advertising.

### Case Study: Sustaining the Business From the Bottom Up

[Canadian Mountain Holidays](#)-a helicopter skiing and hiking company based in Banff, Alberta-deeply involves its employees in its environmental stewardship efforts. The company's 17-member Second Nature Committee includes staff from multiple divisions and departments, and is tasked with helping to integrate sustainable practices in planning, operations and training, and to share the policies with other staff and guests.

- ◆ Include a section in your marketing materials and website that details your commitment and actions. Don't forget to include any awards or honours your company has received for its practices or contributions.
- ◆ Celebrate your successes and be sure to honour employees who demonstrate above-and-beyond-the-call commitment to stewardship.

## Scenario: A New Breed of Banquet Hall

Chloe and Claude recently purchased Salon Vert-a small Québec City banquet and meeting facility named for the colour of its walls. The husband-and-wife team hopes to cater to the corporate and special-event market. But the pair wants the "green" in its new company's name to run deeper than its paint job. Indeed, the new owners want to transform the firm into a sustainable enterprise.

Chloe and Claude inherit eight existing staffers with the acquisition, and quickly hire four more. They call an all-hands staff meeting and invite team members to share ideas on how Salon Vert might incorporate social and environmental stewardship into its operations. They lead the discussion with the following questions:

- ◆ What is your vision for Salon Vert's sustainable future?
- ◆ What first actions would you like to see taken?
- ◆ How would a company-wide sustainability program make you feel about working here?

Following an upbeat and productive meeting, Chloe, Marion, Jacqueline and Guy together form an in-house Green Team. The group includes representatives from management, event coordination, sales and administration. Since many of the sustainable practices Salon Vert hopes to implement will involve facilities, the group invites Gilles-the part-time building engineer- to participate as well.

All members of the Salon Vert Green Team agree to:

- ◆ Participate for a minimum period of six months
- ◆ Attend meetings with no more than three absences for the term
- ◆ Share ideas and take ownership of projects
- ◆ Act as a liaison between their departments and the team
- ◆ Train staff in their departments in new practices and policies

- ◆ Create learning opportunities such as Lunch & Learn seminars or workshops
- ◆ Facilitate employee recruitment and orientation sessions
- ◆ Ensure all new hires are trained in the company's new practices

The Green Team elects Marion-one of Salon Vert's event coordinators-as its Eco-Champion. An avid gardener and cyclist, Marion spends much of her personal time mentoring a small catering co-operative comprised of individuals with intellectual disabilities. At regular intervals, she circulates updates on the team's progress and proposes community-volunteer programs.

Chloe and Claude have created a respectful workplace culture that reflects the values of both their team members and their customers. After a year, the couple's efforts are already paying off via decreased energy and waste costs-and a "green leaf" award from their industry's national professional association.