

THE SUSTAINABILITY POCKETBOOK

By Patricia Hind

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"Focuses not only on the *whys* and *wherefores* of embedding sustainability within businesses, but also on the *how*. Immensely practical and full of tools to help frame, implement and maintain value-adding sustainability strategy."

Colin Braidwood, Managing Director, Energy ABC Ltd

"A great introduction to a crucial subject that every manager today needs to understand and put at the heart of their work."

Matthew Gitsham, Director of the Ashridge Centre for Business in Society

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In it for the long term, taking relevant & appropriate action, all in it together

PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PRACTICE

PREPARING TO IMPLEMENT



The previous chapter started you thinking about what areas you could tackle, and who you could do it with.

This chapter will give you some more ideas about actions you could take to implement your sustainability strategy. Working with the four areas of workplace, environment, marketplace and community, you'll find suggestions for activities in each one. You can go back and jot down the ones you like in the table in the previous chapter.



PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PRACTICE



PRACTICAL IDEAS

Here are some ideas that you might like to try – they're 'unpacked' on the following pages.



WORKPLACE IDEAS

- Establish a 'green team' in the office
- Inform/ educate everybody of your sustainability plan, and how they can help
- Put pot plants round the office
- Review your recruitment and training policies
- Check out the office environment



ENVIRONMENTAL IDEAS

- Manage and monitor your energy (carbon footprint)
- Manage and monitor your paper use
- Reuse and recycle as much as possible
- Check your transport and travel policies

PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PRACTICE

PRACTICAL IDEAS



MARKETPLACE IDEAS

- Manage your promotional items
- Join or create a 'green partners network'
- Review your supply chain – what are your suppliers' sustainability strategies
- Look at your whole product life cycle



COMMUNITY IDEAS

- Create a community liaison group
- Sponsor a local charity
- Support a local sporting initiative
- Support volunteering amongst your employees

PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PRACTICE



WORKPLACE IDEAS

Establish a 'green team' in the office. Find out who has some energy for helping you with your initiatives, then support them to organise a team who will take responsibility for making things happen. They could work to find ways to make it easier and more effective for your business to be greener/ more sustainable. They could have a dedicated LinkedIn or Facebook page to let people know what they are achieving; they could keep the rest of your community informed by sharing ideas and initiatives across the whole organisation. Be sure to recognise their efforts in private and in public!

Inform/ educate your stakeholders of your sustainability plans, and what they can do to help. Make sure everybody knows what's going on. You can start this with your team, through the company newsletter, on noticeboards, perhaps using information 'bites' that are easily accessible. Make sure your sustainability messaging is in the waiting area, in the company cafeteria and even in the bathrooms (with reminders to limit use of water and conserve energy). Don't limit communications to one meeting, and then let it drop. Continue communicating to everybody throughout the work day – every day.

PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PRACTICE

WORKPLACE IDEAS



Modern offices are polluted with chemicals that are given off from carpets, paints, computers and plastics. So – **put pot plants round the office**. This may sound weird, but not only do pot plants actually reduce air pollution (part of *sick building syndrome*) but they have been shown to reduce stress levels. Increased calmness and cooperation has been found amongst those who work with one plant for every 100 sq ft of floor space. Rubber plants, peace lilies and corn plants are all good!

Review your recruitment and training policies. Are they delivering a diverse, skilled and healthy workforce that is engaged and actively volunteering to do more than the minimum? You could integrate sustainability into people's careers from the very beginning. Starting with the first day a new employee joins your organisation, she/ he could be provided with a complete overview of the company's sustainability plans and efforts.

Make sure that, as far as possible, people enjoy a pleasant workplace with daylight, good air quality and access to views of the outside world. Try to make sure the design of office space fosters collaboration. Good office conditions can have an amazing impact on morale and productivity – this is called 'human capital'.

PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PRACTICE



ENVIRONMENTAL IDEAS

Manage and monitor your energy consumption This goes way beyond turning the lights off! But lighting makes up about 20% of all electricity use, so put signs up reminding people to switch off and make sure the bulbs are energy-saving. Go further – consider who supplies your energy. Do they use any alternative energy sources other than fossil fuels? Close doors to conserve heat, or install automatic doors; make sure you have programmable thermostats. Carry out a ‘machine audit’ – list all your electrical office equipment and make sure it’s all switched off or powered down when not in use. This will save money as well as being environmentally responsible.

Paper waste is huge in most offices – make somebody responsible for monitoring consumption; insist on double sided printing where possible; use recycled copy paper where feasible. Hold a brainstorming session on ways to reduce paper use. Visibly recognise and praise success; get people to share how they did it. Consider using chlorine free toilet paper – every day about 270,000 trees are flushed down the toilet! Recycled toilet paper uses 44% less energy, produces 38% fewer greenhouse gas emissions, 41% fewer particulate emissions, 50% less wastewater, 49% less solid waste and 100% less wood.



PUTTING SUSTAINABILITY INTO PRACTICE



ENVIRONMENTAL IDEAS



Reuse and recycle. Use office furniture and supplies made of recycled materials wherever possible. From bin bags to pens, envelopes to disposable cups, everything that can be recycled or reused should be rethought.

Check your **transport and travel** policies – there's so much that can make work travel more sustainable. Here are some ideas:

- Encourage car-pooling – it lowers travel costs and reduces environmental impact
- Use 'green fleet' cars – they're carbon neutral as trees are planted to offset emissions
- Reimburse or subsidise the costs of changing to environmentally sound practices. For example, offer bicycle shop vouchers for staff who cycle to work
- Travel at off-peak times; travel in peak-hour traffic can increase fuel consumption by up to 15% due to longer idling time and increased start-stop travel
- Allow staff flexibility to plan their travel time and routes to reduce fuel consumption
- Take public transport to work
- Arrange teleconferences or videoconferences rather than face-to-face meetings. You'll also avoid unproductive hours of travel time

About the Author

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