

STARTING A GREEN TEAM

The catalyst to climate change resiliency

BY KENT WADDINGTON



Forward-thinking organizations are rapidly accepting the fact that being green pays dividends and being climate change resilient keeps them in the game during times of weather calamity when the competition is busy sweeping up and asking, "What happened?"

Strong leadership can begin to address the many issues tied to greening and resiliency through a corporate Green Team which, it must be noted, needs to be fully supported by all levels of management. A Green Team, assembled from members

of every department, helps companies and organizations enumerate their most pressing environmental concerns and help develop plans to address them based upon the insider knowledge each brings to the table.

In board terms, these issues include green leadership (or lack thereof), environmentally-preferred purchasing, safer chemicals, sustainable facilities, energy and water conservation, waste management, and – in some cases – healthy and sustainable food.

Properly executed, the organization becomes stronger and more resilient, the workplace becomes safer and healthier, and your corporate profile is enhanced in the minds of the stakeholders you serve because you are recognized as a sustainability leader in your community. It's a win-win-win!

BUILDING YOUR GREEN TEAM

Every corporation has its keeners who make no secret of the fact they care about the environment. Look for them, get them

on your team, and harness their passion for a greener, healthier planet. You can't miss them; they're the ones who jog or bike to work, drive electric cars, sport decals from environmental organizations on their laptops and lunch boxes, and never drink from a disposable plastic water bottle.

Call a meeting, send out invites, and prepare to be amazed at the number of ideas that come forward for creating a greener organization.

Your Green Team can be as active (or inactive) as the members choose to make it. Consider the following suggestions as you formulate the Green Team within your facility and work towards a healthier planet:

Terms of Reference:

The Green Team will, through the facilitation of the team's chairperson, provide directional support to the company/organization in fulfilling its commitment to stated policy (environmental, energy conservation, sustainable development etc) by:

- **Researching** environmental, sustainability and resiliency issues facing the corporation/organization including articulating potential options and alternatives;

- **Leading** the environmental management process, inciting positive change, and improvement on environmental and climate change issues;
- **Communicating** to respective programs, departments, staff, and management on issues germane to energy environmental and climate change issues;
- **Building Enthusiasm** in staff and clients to embrace environmental programs and change;
- **Capacity Building** through educating and providing tools to manage change and initiatives;
- **Recommending** solutions for improved management of environmental and climate change issues;
- **Selling** ideas and concepts as they relate to solutions and improvements; and
- **Acting** as a resource tool to staff and management on environmental management and climate change issues.

The Green Team will be accountable to the corporate community through a reporting structure as defined by management and will be responsible for the following as part of the corporation's overall

environmental management and climate change mandate:

1. Identifying potential ecological and climate change impacts;
2. Prioritizing environmental and climate change issues;
3. Identifying options for addressing high priority – or the most significant – issues;
4. Evaluating the economic and environmental impacts of options;
5. Recommending specific options for corporate approval;
6. Assisting with implementing the approved options;
7. Evaluating the effectiveness of implemented options, and making recommendations for continual improvement.

Energy conservation is often one of the first topics embraced by Green Teams with plenty of resources online to assist in the process. Most people are familiar with ENERGY STAR for lighting, computer monitors, and printers but not everyone is aware of the magnitude of ENERGY STAR's reach which includes.

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in Canada. The list of eligible products, available at www.nrcan.gc.ca*, has grown over the years and new products continue to be added.

Then there is the *ENERGY Health Care Food Services Resource Guide – Going Green in the Kitchen with ENERGY STAR®* by the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care. While written for the healthcare sector, the content spans sectors and is a good primer for anyone wanting to learn more about the many places ENERGY STAR products can fit in your organization.

Is waste management rather than energy a more pressing issue for your Green Team to embrace? Most communities, to some degree or another, have at least a rudimentary recycling program in place but organic waste from cafeterias and in-house kitchens is often overlooked. And while this does pose a much larger challenge for Green Teams if local infrastructure is not in

place to deal with organic waste, it is good to get informed about the various options available. Check out *Taking a bite out of organic waste - Green Best Practice Case Study #6* at www.greenhealthcare.ca. This best practice paper is a great introduction to anyone embarking upon an organic waste management program or is looking to modernize an existing protocol.

As the saying goes, "it ain't rocket science." Your organization is filled with

opportunities to embrace environmental stewardship while increasing your resiliency to climate change. With the right encouragement from management and an open line of communications, your Green Team will thrive. Effectively communicating the team's presence and its successes will go far to engaging others in the organization to take responsibility for the issues within their control. Everyone has a part to play! ■

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* <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/products/energystar/why-buy/13631>

** <http://greenhealthcare.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CCGHC-Organic-Waste-Case-Study-June17-2013-FINAL.pdf>

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