



SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES FOR LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES

Local Economy* Healthy Environment* Stronger Community Ties* Meaningful Employment

Sustainability is a smart way of doing business. It means creating a better quality of life for all people, now and for generations to come, and using the planet's resources at a rate by which nature is able to replenish those resources. Prosperity, fairness and a healthy environment are interrelated – each of these elements can sustain its existence indefinitely only if the others are in balance. A sustainable business strives to achieve high standards by creating value for its customers, suppliers, employees and the communities on which its business depends. It also ensures the preservation of the social and environmental systems it relies on for its resources.

A sustainable company integrates and balances economic growth, social equity and environmental impact into how it does business. This three part approach is often referred to as the "triple bottom line." Whether yours is a small, medium or large business, integrating your business practices to work in harmony with - and not against - sound environmental management practices allows you to reduce operational costs, gain a competitive advantage and maintain loyal customers and employees.

SBNP is committed to developing ways of sharing best practices in this area among our members as well as educating the public and businesses at large about the benefits of implementing sustainable business practices.

Why Should My Company be Interested?

Companies should be interested in sustainability because it is efficient and profitable. Sustainable companies enjoy the benefits of:

- * reduced costs of doing business
- * reduced liability
- * increased competitiveness over the long term
- * greater innovation
- * improved productivity
- * new customers
- strengthened market trust and credibility.

How To Develop A Sustainable Business

Strategy — A key business driver

Whether you have a carefully crafted formal plan, or an informal set of values, your business is driven by its strategy. Businesses are finding that to be successful it is important to have a strategy that reflects their commitment to economic, environmental, social and cultural ideals. Refocusing your strategy will give you a starting point from which to apply sustainable practices across your organization.

Process — Doing more with less

There are a huge number of ways that businesses can change, for example switching to renewable energy

sources, developing resource and energy efficient processes and examining the transportation of goods. As well as creating a lean operation and generating cost savings, these refined ways of working can enhance your reputation, building a positive image both with customers and staff alike.

People — At the center of every business

Your people are critical to your business success. Integrating good employment practices into your business, such as family-friendly policies, flexible working, access to training and community involvement, will help you to create an environment where people feel valued and content. In today's market, this could well prove crucial to your ability to attract and retain the right people.

Capital - The bottom line

Obtaining capital is essential to every type and kind of business — whether by selling products, delivering a service or attracting and maintaining loyal customers. The two-fold capital benefits of sustainability are savings from efficiencies and an improved image. This enhanced reputation can make you a more desirable prospect to both customers and suppliers.

Six easy steps towards sustainability

- 1. Energy Use and Waste:** Reduce your energy waste by switching off unnecessary lights and equipment, especially when everyone's gone home for the day. Buy energy efficient equipment and appliances.. Many appliances and office equipment now have powersave features too. Switch to more energy efficient (compact fluorescent) bulbs.
- 2. Paper & Office Supplies:** Save money and support environmental practices by reducing your paper use and buying stationery products which are kinder on the environment, ie: paper that is non-bleached or from sustainable forests. Make a difference by specifying "greener" printing options when ordering your letterhead and business cards, and think carefully about print quantities. Use locally owned businesses to purchase from, saving transportation costs.
- 3. Recycle & Re-Use:** Reduce the amount of waste you're sending to landfills by recycling and re-using. As well as paper, you can recycle plastics, tins, glass, and you can look into composting food trash as well. Replace machines with individual packaging and individual cans with soda fountains and bulk dispensers. Buy pre-owned office furniture to keep more waste from the landfill.
- 4. Choose greener and safer cleaning products:** Choose products with ingredients that have less impact on human health and on the environment. Many cleaning products end up in local wastewater systems, and eventually in waterways. You can also reduce your rubbish by choosing products with minimal and/or recyclable packaging.
- 5. Encourage employees to use alternative modes of transportation:** Install bike racks or secure bike parking, help defray costs for taking MAX or the bus to work, encourage car pooling.
- 6. Local First** Give preference to and source from other locally owned businesses and develop personal and business relationships with them to enhance the overall business climate in our community. Choose service partners that align with your values and demonstrate sustainability leadership in their field.