

Saving Green

Encouraging Sustainable Business Practices for the
Corvallis Community



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The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, an extensive network of organizations and individual volunteers in Corvallis, provides grassroots leadership and encourages cooperation in order to create a more sustainable community. The Coalition contracted Oregon State University's Applied Research Methods class to provide advice on meeting Goal 2 of the Economic Vitality section of its 2013 Revised Sustainability Action Plan, which states that by 2020, 90% of businesses will use sustainable practices.

The primary purpose of this study is to identify the incentives and criteria that will support the Coalition's goal of fostering sustainable practices in the local business community. The study also examines barriers to implementation and the sustainable practices currently employed by Corvallis businesses. To accomplish these goals, we conducted case studies of sustainable business programs in similar communities and completed surveys and interviews with local Corvallis businesses.

This report provides background and justification for our selected methodologies, discusses our results and findings, and presents recommendations.

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Main Messages

FINDINGS

What sustainable practices are Corvallis businesses currently implementing?

- Recycling programs; including paper and plastic recycling, or reusing or donation of products
- Reducing resource or product use; such as paper reduction, decreasing water and energy consumption
- Product sourcing; for example using local or US-based products, and incorporating eco-friendly cleaning products
- Community involvement; including participation in sustainability events, donations to sustainable initiatives, and advocating for sustainability policies

What motivations are there for businesses to adopt sustainable practices?

- Personal motivations; for instance, a strong sense of commitment to the environment and social responsibility
- To attract customers; by showcasing sustainable business efforts and attracting sustainability-conscious patrons, as well as differentiating the business from competitors
- Compliance with regulations; local, state, and federal regulations dictating things such as recycling methods or water conservation

What challenges do businesses face when trying to implement sustainable practices?

- Product sourcing; finding sustainable or local suppliers of products to incorporate into the business
- Lack of knowledge; including new product information, clarity of the sustainable business practice, and being aware of what competitors are doing to be sustainable
- Costs; for example, buying sustainably or from local vendors at higher prices, investing in energy efficient appliances, and higher implementation costs

How can the Coalition encourage local businesses to implement more sustainable practices?

- Provide information; including potential sustainability projects, implementation strategies, a recycling guide, informative workshops, and current economic incentive options
- Encourage networking and collaboration between businesses; such as a sustainability event to network and provide feedback, an internet forum, and small group discussions
- Develop focused campaigns; for example, around issues of interest to the business community, such as energy efficiency or waste management, that allow businesses to commit to make changes with Coalition support and reap the rewards of recognition for this commitment without the difficulties of certification by the Coalition.

Main Messages

RECOMMENDATIONS

Information Provision and Sharing

- A high demand for information on sustainability practices and implementation, leads us to recommend collecting and developing a range of materials and resources aimed at informing and guiding businesses and organizations about how to operate in a more sustainable manner. Possible sources of such information include Sustainable Connections, Sustainable Tompkins, Green Resource Hub, and Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE).
- Financial incentives; such as government grants, rebates, or loans; were identified as an underutilized resource for businesses. Workshops designed to feature business owners who have successfully received grants, rebates, or loans in the past could educate business owners on achievable financial incentives. Not only would such events help businesses learn about how to defray costs associated with sustainable practices, but they would also facilitate peer-to-peer networking and learning.
- We recommend the creation of an online guide to meet demand for Internet-based sustainability resources. The guide should utilize an interactive format (blog or wiki) and could include recordings of past Coalition events.

Sustainability Events and Networking

- Businesses are motivated by seeing their peers adopt sustainable practices, so the Coalition should try to facilitate the sharing of successful sustainable business practices by hosting events for businesses and community leaders to network, share ideas, and provide feedback.
- Building upon the current sharing practices facilitated by the Coalition, an open forum for a dialog between businesses would allow for sharing of perspectives, experiences, and insights that could provide the Coalition with a critical feedback mechanism.

Development of Focused Campaigns

- We recommend that the Coalition develop targeted campaigns based on specifically defined sustainability goals and the existing Action Team Structure. Possible topics of interest to the local business community include energy efficiency or waste management.
- Consider a merit-badge approach for community recognition of business sustainability efforts in terms of commitment to these campaigns. This approach creates a competitive atmosphere between businesses but avoids the potential difficulties of a certification program.
- Based on the successful image of the Coalition, incorporation of an overarching branding scheme for these campaigns could further the name and sustainability efforts of the Coalition.

Executive Summary

The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition has been working to help local businesses succeed in the E3 sustainable categories—economy, environment, and equity. Through local campaigns, the Coalition has focused on encouraging community members to choose “local” and support locally owned independent businesses, and looked to work more directly with individual business owners to encourage sustainability policies and practices in their businesses.

The Coalition, along with citizens and local organizations, created the Community Sustainability Action Plan to apply goals and strategies to twelve areas important in the future development of a sustainable Corvallis community. The strategy to assist local businesses to adopt sustainable practices includes three parts: *adapt* existing sustainability “best practices” guidelines, *promote* the adoption and implementation of sustainability guidelines, and *recognize and build* community support for businesses that implement sustainable practices.

The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition contracted the Oregon State University’s Applied Social Research class to generate this “Saving Green: Encouraging Sustainable Business Practices for the Corvallis Community” report to identify the incentives and criteria that will support the Coalition’s goal of fostering sustainable practices in the local business community. They were also interested in examining barriers to implementation and the sustainable practices currently employed by Corvallis businesses.

METHODOLOGY

We conducted case studies of sustainable business programs in similar communities and completed surveys and interviews with local Corvallis businesses. Our goal was to answer the following research questions:

- What are the criteria for a sustainable business program?
- What are the incentives for businesses to participate in more sustainable practices?
- What are the barriers for businesses to implement more sustainable practices?

To execute the project, we divided into teams based on research methodology.

The Case Study Team identified sustainable business programs in Bellingham, Washington, and Ithaca, New York, as relevant case studies. Data collection involved examining each program website, in total 76 documents and/or webpages, and conducting an interview with each program’s director.

The Survey Team generated an online questionnaire that was sent to the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and the Corvallis Independent Business Association member businesses. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions focused on identifying the role of values, financial incentives and barriers, and the impact of information access in adopting sustainable business practices. Forty businesses completed the survey.

The Interview Team conducted personal interviews with 14 Coalition member businesses in varying sectors, to provide additional detail about local sustainable business practices.

FINDINGS

What sustainable practices are Corvallis businesses currently implementing?

The survey and interviews both reveal that businesses are currently participating in sustainable practices like recycling, reuse, product sourcing, energy reductions and use of energy-efficient appliances, and community involvement, such as participation in sustainability events or sustainable initiative advocacy. Some businesses also participate in Pacific Power's "Blue Sky Energy" program, an energy offset program.

Social aspects of sustainability are also a focus, with businesses consciously selecting local products for their goods and services. In addition, the sourcing of local products enhances the partnerships and networks between businesses and encourages further participation in community events, volunteerism, and group membership.

Few businesses produce a company environmental policy statement, a possible sign that businesses' sustainable practices are unrecognized by the public and not incorporated into the formal business structure.

What motivations are there for businesses to adopt sustainable practices?

We find a range of motivations for businesses to engage in sustainable practices, mainly personal motivations, attempts to attract customers, and compliance with state or local regulations. Personal motivations include a strong sense of commitment to the environment and social responsibility, overall concern for the planet, and setting an example for others to be more cognizant of their actions and choices. Earning government grants, loans, rebates, or other financial incentives is perceived as less important, suggesting a possible avenue for Coalition engagement.

What challenges do businesses face when trying to implement sustainable practices?

Businesses identify lack of materials, difficulty with product sourcing, lack of knowledge, and costs as challenges to operating sustainably. The sourcing challenge is often a result of vendor or supplier limitations. Limited knowledge is in the form of new product information, clarity on the business practice, or what other businesses are doing.

The case studies bring the challenge of lack of building ownership to attention, which is confirmed in interviews with several local businesses, who note that not owning the building where their business is located is often a limiting factor in the implementation of sustainable practices.

The survey results suggest that the challenges, although acknowledged as limiting the businesses' ability to operate sustainably to some degree, could be overcome with additional knowledge and assistance.

How can the Coalition encourage local businesses to implement more sustainable practices?

A foundational aspect in assisting businesses to achieve sustainable practices is information, with the Internet and environmental organizations, like the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, being the most relied upon sources. Networking and knowledge sharing between businesses brings a greater connectivity, coordination, and unification towards the common goal of a more sustainable community—a message substantiated by findings from all our research methods.

Campaigns based on business interests can bring visibility to the Coalition’s brand, provide motivations to businesses to participate in sustainable practices, and create a form of recognition for the commitment made by contributing members. Publically available educational information, a platform for connectivity, and a proactive marketing effort all increase awareness in the community. The Coalition can also advance the mission of promoting sustainability in the Corvallis business community through partnerships and alliances with other organizations.

There are numerous examples of current sustainability tools employed by successful sustainable organizations such as Sustainable Connections in Bellingham, Washington, and Sustainable Tompkins of Ithaca, New York. These tools range from business networks to web-based guides to partnerships with the local government to campaigns designed to reduce business waste.

The “Saving Green” report seeks to provide targeted recommendations for the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition based on the results of our research. The findings lead to a range of possible actions that the Coalition might take to further its goal of encouraging sustainable practices in the Corvallis business community.

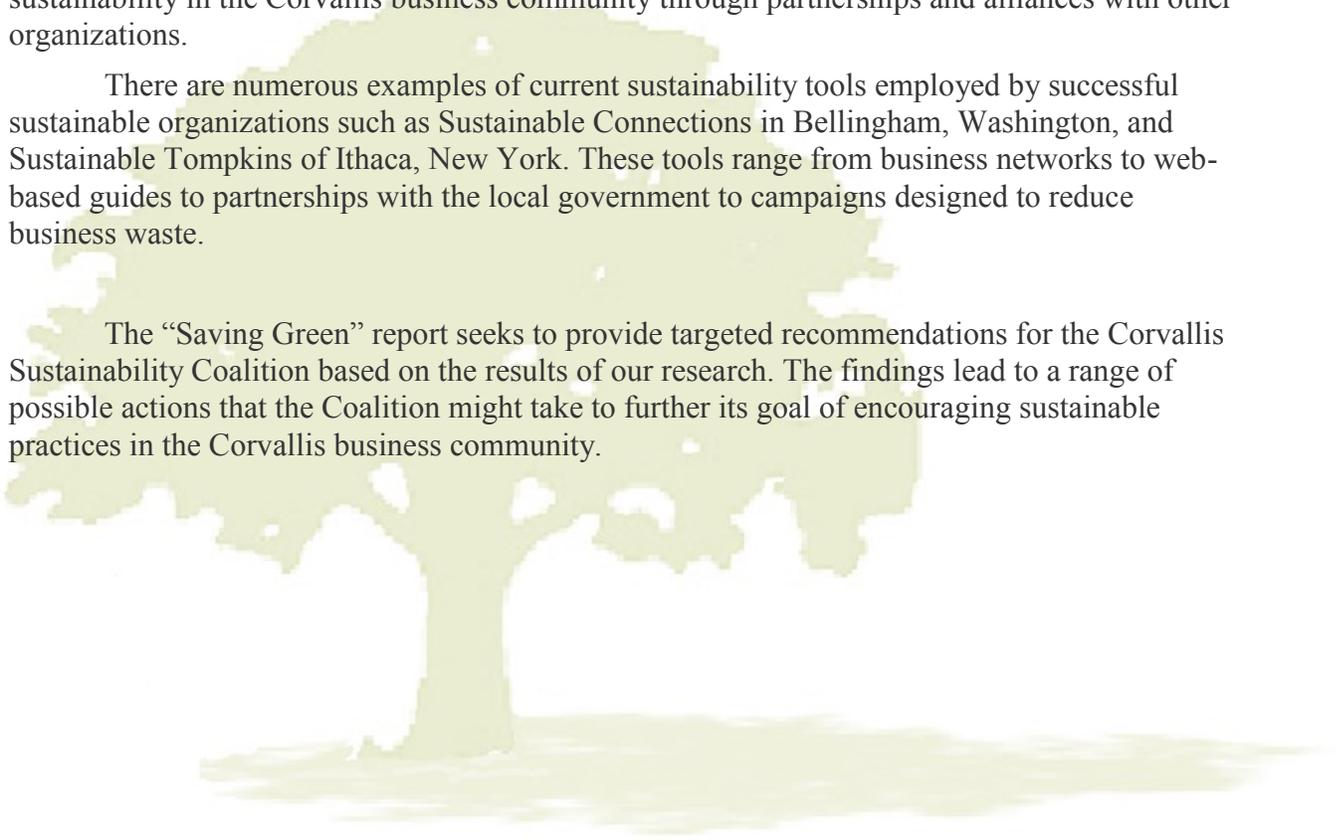


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BACKGROUND / METHODS

The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition contracted Oregon State University's Applied Research Methods class to provide advice on meeting Goal 2 of the Economic Vitality section of its 2013 Revised Sustainability Action Plan, which states that by 2020, 90% of businesses will use sustainable practices. The primary purpose of this study is to identify the incentives and criteria that will support the Coalition's goal of fostering sustainable practices in the local business community. The study also examines barriers to implementation and the sustainable practices currently employed by Corvallis businesses. To accomplish these goals, we conducted a review of relevant literature, case studies of sustainable business programs in similar communities, and completed surveys and interviews with local Corvallis businesses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature reviews provide essential background information that identifies research which has been conducted in the field and where the proposed research questions can add value. Compiling information from a variety of sources create a context in which the research questions can be viewed. The Applied Research Methods class provided individual literature reviews based on a research question of interest. These literature reviews were folded into the findings and are compiled in Appendix I.

CASE STUDY METHODS

Case studies are particularly useful when looking to answer “how” and “why” questions, such as how sustainability programs are developed and structured, and why certain business practices are classified as sustainable.¹ Case studies are imperative in gathering information in the exploratory phase of investigation, as well as providing insight and context during the explanatory phase of research. Case studies provide information on the operational links of a program, especially when an investigator has little control over the events and behaviors of programs of interest.²

The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition expressed a desire to learn about other similar sustainability programs. We selected two locations for study - Sustainable Connections in

¹ Stake, R.E. (1978). The case study methodology in social research. *Educational Researcher* 7(2): 5-8.
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.proxy.library.oregonstate.edu/stable/1174340?seq=1>

² Yin, R. K. (2008). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

Bellingham, Washington, and the Sustainable Tompkins and Green Resource Hub organizations in Ithaca, New York. Sustainable Tompkins is the primary organization and the Green Resource Hub is a subsidiary organization. We selected these communities because of 1) similarities in city population size, 2) robust conservation mindsets and healthy small-business communities (similar to Corvallis), 3) presence of a major university, 4) prominent farmer's markets, member-owned food cooperatives and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and 5) other community-wide sustainability initiatives (e.g., green power, alternative transportation).

We examined a total of 76 documents and web pages and conducted interviews with program directors to better understand the structure of the sustainability program, process of developing the program, barriers to adoption of sustainable practices, and incentives for adoption of sustainable practices. Our four person team formed two groups, each specializing in one specific case study. To ensure consistency, one team interviewed each program director, and, though the telephone interview was recorded, another member simultaneously noted key points of interest. We conducted interviews with Michele Grandy of Sustainable Connections in Bellingham on May 7th and Bob Rosse of Green Resources Hub in Ithaca on May 16th. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Appendix II provides a list of the specific questions covered during the interview process.

SURVEY METHODS

Development of the questionnaire (see Appendix IV for the full questionnaire) occurred after reviewing salient literature and identifying three central themes: the role of values, the impact of information access in affecting sustainable business practices, and financial incentives and barriers. The survey covered current sustainable businesses practices, business reporting/policy actions, goals that motivate businesses to operate sustainably, perceived benefits of sustainability, perceived barriers to operating sustainably, information sources, perceived influences of other business operations and business characteristics (size, sector, time of operation, ownership, scale).

We initially sent the online survey via Qualtrics to the 262 member businesses of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and/or the Corvallis Independent Business Association on April 29th. Thirty-one of the emails provided were defunct. We sent two additional reminder emails and closed the survey on May 17th. In total, 54 respondents began surveys, and 40 respondents completed surveys, yielding a 17% response rate (40 / 231). Completed surveys are those that respondents submitted as complete to the researchers; however, respondents were not

required to answer all questions. Only completed surveys are included in the results and analyses.

INTERVIEW METHODS

The purpose of the interviews was to expand upon the details of sustainable business practices that are specific to Corvallis businesses. The questions asked in the interviews pertained to the specific businesses' definition of sustainable business practices, its current business practices, motivations to adopt other practices, barriers to their adoption, and current and/or possible support systems for implementing these practices. We were careful to inquire about all aspects of sustainability: environmental, economic, and social.

We utilized guided interviews to capture qualitative information about sustainable practices from Corvallis businesses. Interviewees were selected from the Coalition's partner list of 143 members and limited to businesses that are locally owned and operated, have on-site employees, and reside within one mile of Corvallis city limits.

We originally aimed to select two businesses from each of seven sectors (administrative, agriculture/animal husbandry, hospitality, online, manufacturing, retail, and services) and ultimately conducted 14 interviews with Corvallis businesses. However, due to business availability and responsiveness, our final sample consisted of 5 businesses in the retail sector, 5 in the service sector, and 1 business each in the manufacturing, agriculture, hospitality, and online sectors. We contacted business owners to schedule an appointment either on location or at a public meeting space. To keep data as accurate as possible, only business owners or their chosen knowledgeable representative acted as informants.

Each interview was recorded with permission and interviewers also took notes throughout the interview process. Pre-configured questions and prompts ensured consistency among interviews, while allowing some room for flexibility. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Immediately following the meeting, each interviewer summarized their notes and extracted important themes to devise a suitable coding scheme.

Using an open coding method, we developed codes based on the guiding themes of the project. We developed codes according to types of sustainable business practices, the elements that motivate businesses to adopt said criteria (motivations), challenges businesses face or foresee (barriers), ways in which businesses would like to receive help (tools), and preferred recognition approaches (criteria). After open coding, we used thematic analysis to further describe and explain recurring themes. Two researchers coded each interview twice, using the

same codebook to increase inter-coder reliability. Any difference in coding interpretation was discussed and corrected.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The results and findings derived from the four methodological approaches are organized into four themes corresponding to the original research questions guiding the study: current sustainable business practices, motivations, challenges, and sustainability tools for the Coalition. This organization by theme follows a suggestion in the literature that a good incentive program must be diverse to reach a broad range of actors. Diverse programs work best because each business is unique, and it is often more critical to proactively create new direct incentives than remove disincentives.¹

QUESTION I: CURRENT SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Local businesses currently participate in many sustainable practices. Collectively, businesses identified fourteen distinct practices (Figure 1), of which six common practices stood out: recycling, reuse, product sourcing, alternative transportation, energy reductions or appliance utilization, and community involvement.

Recycling, reuse, and energy reductions all minimize the product and packaging cycle. Business efforts include recycling whenever possible, reusing or donating old materials, reducing or eliminating of chemicals, decreased consumption (business and consumer), and energy minimization / alternative energy sourcing. For example, some businesses participate in energy offset programs such as Pacific Power's 'Blue Sky Energy' program and the Bonneville Environmental Program. Utilizing alternative transportation also reduces energy consumption and businesses' overall environmental impacts.

Additionally, some businesses focused on social aspects of sustainability by consciously selecting local products. Eight businesses mentioned trying to use local or US-based products for the goods and services their business produces. As Coyle LLC stated, "We try to be sustainable by keeping money in the community. Our products have to be domestic." Throughout the interviews, it became clear that sourcing of local products enhances businesses' partnerships with one another to network and encourage participation in community events, volunteerism, and group membership.

At least half of all survey respondents engage in each of 7 different sustainable business practices (Figure 1). These practices include reduction in paper usage (95%), implementing a

¹ Goetz, K. (2010). Encouraging sustainable business practices using incentives: a practitioners view. *Management Research Review*, 33(11), 1042-1053.

recycling program (88%), reducing energy use (70%), using eco-friendly cleaning products (68%), participating in community sustainability events (63%), donating to community sustainability initiatives (58%), and reducing water use (50%). Conversely, fewer than half of all respondents reported engaging in advocating for sustainable policies with the local government (25%), condensing work weeks (20%), training employees about sustainability (18%), or carpooling (10%). No respondents indicated that they “don’t know” what sustainable practices they engage in, or that they do not engage in sustainable practices at all.

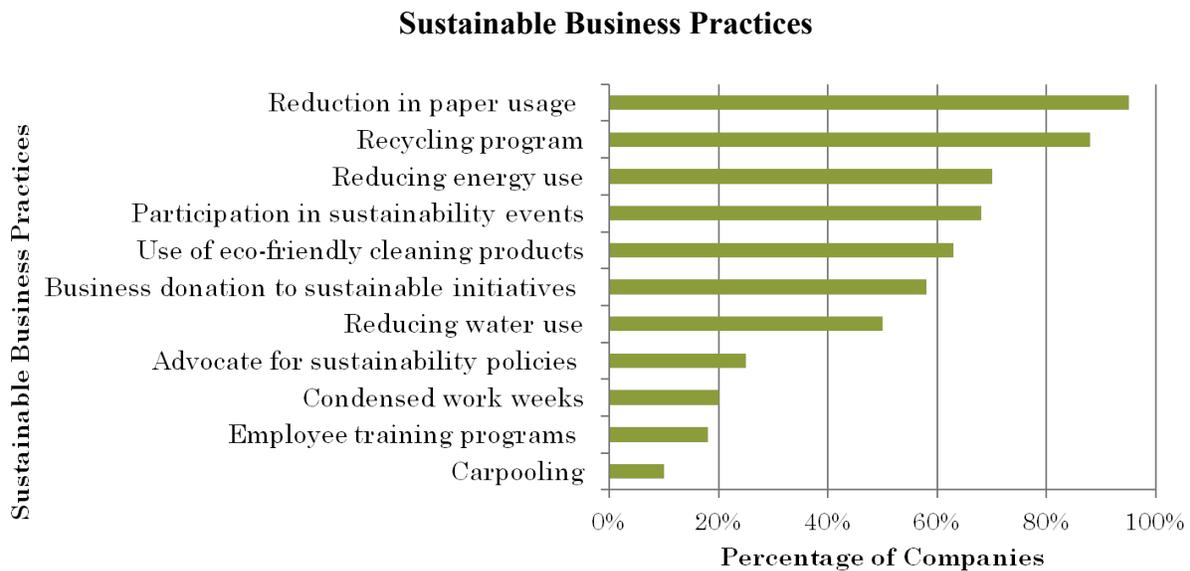


Figure 1. Current sustainable business practices being implemented in Corvallis

Despite the large number of respondents reporting sustainable practices, only 13% produce a company environmental policy statement and 5% produce a public environmental and/or sustainability report, a possible sign that businesses’ sustainable practices are unrecognized by the public and not incorporated into the formal business structure.

Eleven businesses stated they would like to implement additional sustainable practices (see Appendix V). Two practices mentioned most often were (1) using environmentally friendly supplies and suppliers, and (2) installing more energy efficient devices. Our interviewee from Block 15 stated, “We eventually would like to move to all compostable ‘to-go’ containers in our restaurant [...] and also set a goal of adopting one more practice annually.” Additionally, Block 15, Coyle LLC, and Broadleaf Architecture want to install solar panels and use more renewable energy, drive an electric vehicle, and insulate the walls and storm windows, respectively.

QUESTION II: MOTIVATIONS

Further delving into the incorporation of sustainable business practices, identifying and understanding the motivations behind compliance and implementation is important. The research finds a range of incentives and motivations for businesses to engage in sustainable business practices. These include personal motivations, attempts to attract customers, and cooperation in private-public partnerships.

Killian's (2012) report on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), found that CSR motivations may differ between large and small corporations.¹ Another study focused on the difference between business size and their implementation of sustainable practices found that the internal pressure to improve socially by shareholders and employees affected "one quarter to one-third of large businesses compared to 10% or less of small businesses".² Meanwhile, external pressures (i.e. from customers, competitors, central government, local government, and pressure groups) also abound. However, it is clear that larger firms are more sensitive to these external factors than smaller firms. Ultimately, this study found that "the attractiveness to employees and reputation and brand are the two largest factors influencing business implementation of social and environmental practices" but other shareholders had relatively little influence.³

The literature review also showed that traditionally, the most powerful outside incentive for sustainable business practices were government regulations. However, given the costs, potential for conflict, and bureaucratic red tape that emerges when designing and implementing regulations, voluntary environmental programs (VEP) emerged as an alternative strategy for encouraging sustainability.^{4, 5, 6, 7}

Survey results provided considerable information on perceived motivators for Corvallis businesses to behave sustainable. Respondents were asked, "*How important are each of the following goals in motivating your business's sustainable practices?*" and asked to rank 6 items

¹ Killian, S. (2012). Corporate social responsibility. *Accountancy Ireland*, 44(5), 30-31.

² Collins, E., Lawrence, S., Pavlovich, K., & Ryan, C. (2007). Business networks and the uptake of sustainability practices: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(8), 729-740.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Darnall, N., & Carmin, J. (2005). Greener and Cleaner? The Signaling Accuracy of U.S. Voluntary Environmental Programs. *Policy Sciences* 38: 71-90.

⁵ Darnall, N., & Sides, S. (2008). Assessing the Performance of Voluntary Environmental Programs: Does Certification Matter? *The Policy Studies Journal* 36(1): 95-117.

⁶ Mosier, S., Fisk, J. (2012) Can Local Voluntary Environmental Programs "Work"? An Examination of Fort Collins' (Colorado) Climate Wise Program. *Environmental Management*. 1-19.

⁷ Morgenstern, R. D., & Pizer, W. A. (2007). How Well Do Voluntary Environmental Programs Really Work? *Resources for the Future*. 23-26.

on a scale from 1 “not important” to 5 “very important.” Figure 2 demonstrates that the goals most businesses indicated as being very important were to “comply with local, state, federal regulations” and to “honor a commitment to environmental and social responsibility.” Perceived as less important, on average, were “reducing operating costs”, “enhancing public image” and “responding to consumer demand”. By a wide margin, the goal most commonly deemed not important was “earning government grants, loans, rebates, or other financial incentives”.

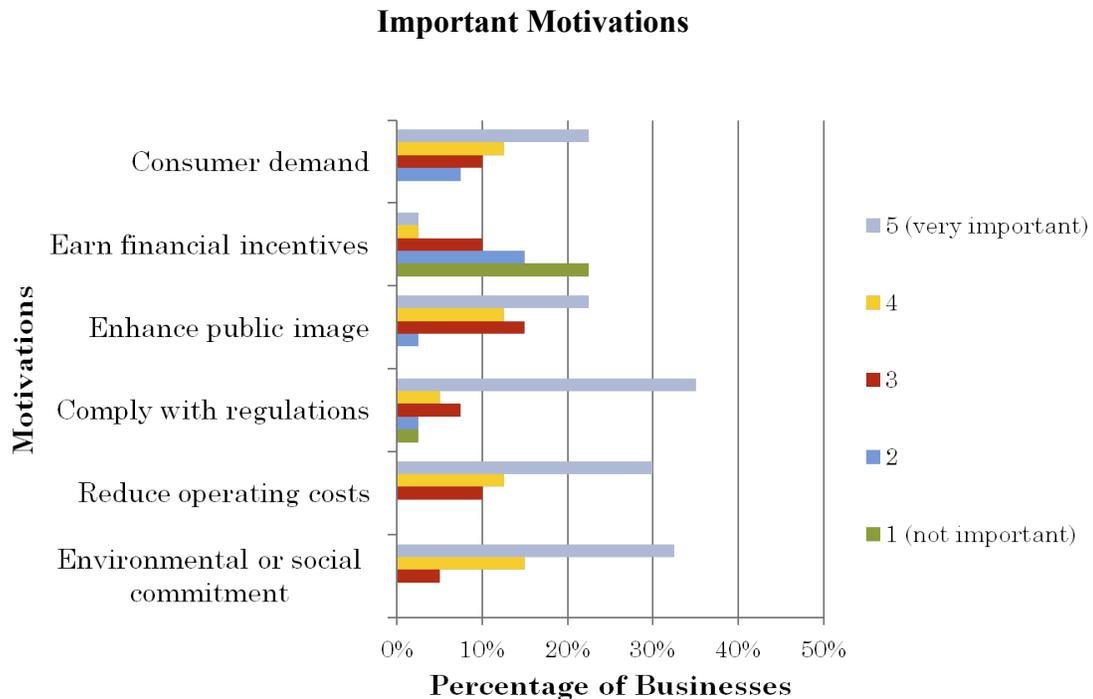


Figure 2: How important are each of the following goals in motivating your business's sustainable practices?

Responding to a separate question, most respondents strongly agree (28%) or somewhat agree (52%) that seeing other business owners use sustainable practices motivates them to adopt similar practices, with only 15% identifying as neutral/unsure.

In interviews, the three most cited motivations for adopting sustainable business practices were personal values, and concern for the environment and the community. Some owners feel that acting sustainably is simply the right thing to do, practice sustainability at home, or feel a strong connection to the environment. Animal Cracker Pet Supply stated, “I guess we just feel like we have a responsibility to do the right thing,” and Soft Star Shoes said, “We are motivated by our values and base our decisions on what we think is the right thing to do.”

Another motivation is an overall concern for the planet. Cattail Creek Lamb said, “My goal is to leave the planet a better place than it was when I got a hold of it,” while concerns expressed by the owner of Fitzpatrick Ecological Consulting, LLC included over-population and the extraction of exhaustible resources.

Similarly, attracting the many Corvallis community members who respect the environment and hold it in high regard also motivates businesses. Block 15 stated, “There is a lot of value in letting your customers know that you are a sustainable business, especially in Corvallis. That is one reason why we love doing business in Corvallis because the community actually cares about these values.” Additionally, Get Organized! wanted to set an example and encourage others to be more conscientious, believing that communities need to be cognizant of their actions.

Case studies revealed another aspect of motivations, mainly that the campaigns that motivate businesses and provide economic benefits or other cost saving incentives are the most successful (M. Grandy, personal communication, May 7, 2013). This supports identification and incorporation of motivations as a key component to encouraging business involvement.

QUESTION III: CHALLENGES

Businesses face several real and perceived challenges when attempting to adopt more sustainable practices. Identifying these challenges allows businesses and community leaders to focus their efforts on eliminating those factors most likely to impede sustainability.

Fowler and Hope (2007) examined barriers to implementation in a case study of a well-known privately owned clothing company and found that the main challenges businesses face relate to ownership level and status, core competencies of the firm, adaptability, lack of incentives, organizational structure and culture, diversity and competing needs, and overall business capacity.¹ Condon (2004) examined implementation barriers specifically in the context of small to medium sized businesses, finding that recurring barriers to implementing sustainable practices exists across a wide range of business sectors.²

During interviews, the top three challenges (greater than 30% of responses) small business owners identified when attempting to operate sustainably are (1) lack of materials

¹ Fowler, S., & Hope, C. (2007). Incorporating Sustainable Business Practices into Company Strategy. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 26-38.

² Condon, L. (2004). Sustainability and Small to Medium Sized Enterprises--How to Engage Them. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 20(1), 57-67.

(difficulty with product sourcing), (2) knowledge, and (3) cost (Figure 3). Several businesses also noted the limitations of not owning the building where the business resides.



Figure 3: What are the challenges for you in adopting sustainable business practices?

The difficulty in sourcing sustainable products and materials is mostly due to supplier and/or vendor limitations. For example, a product commonly used in the manufacturing and retail sectors is adhesives, which are not typically environmentally-friendly products. These limitations frustrate business owners wanting to reduce their negative environmental impact.

Limited knowledge also poses multifaceted barriers. Internally, businesses seek information about new products as they become available, but research time is limited and often products and technologies have not evolved sufficiently. Another facet involves a price conscience customer that prefers low prices and may not value costly sustainable products, decreasing demand for sustainable products. Lastly, businesses feel not knowing how other businesses operate sustainably limits their own abilities. Soft Star Shoes owner stated: "We do as much as we can, but some things we just aren't sure about or don't know what else we can do."

Finally, cost poses another challenge. For some businesses, higher implementation costs are offset by a personal moral certitude to act sustainably. The "challenge of doing it right" includes purchasing from local suppliers at a higher cost. As stated by Fitzpatrick Ecological Consulting: "It takes money to be as sustainable as possible." The rationale is that investing

locally is a better economic model than pursuing cheap products. While convincing more businesses to invest locally is challenging, business owners repeatedly mentioned the Coalition as an intermediary resource to facilitate change in this area.

The survey specifically attended to perceived barriers to operating sustainably in Corvallis (Figure 4). Respondents were asked, “To what degree have the following been a limiting factor in your use of sustainable practices,” and ranked each of 6 items on a scale of 1 “not limiting at all” to 5 “highly limiting.” No respondents indicated that any of the provided items were highly limiting, although overall results were generally mixed, with the most common ranking for each item being 3, or between “not limiting at all” and “highly limiting.” These results suggest that business owners believe several factors limit their ability to operate sustainably to some degree, but also believe they can overcome these challenges with additional resources and assistance

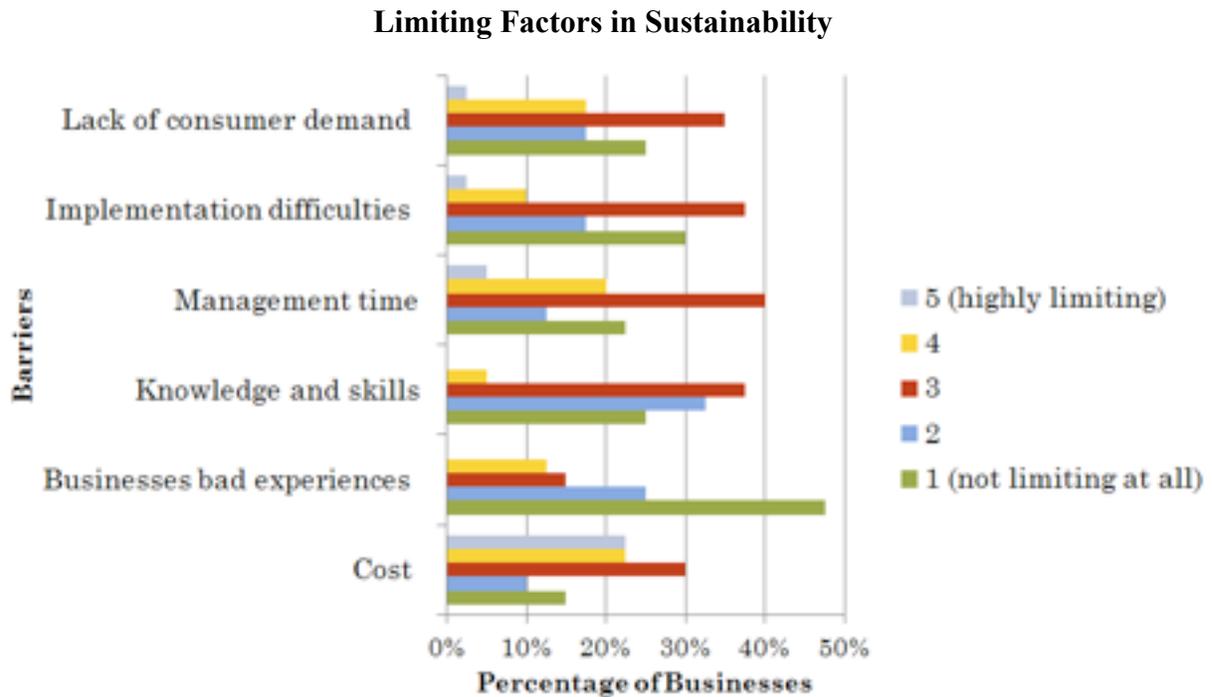


Figure 4: To what degree have the following been a limiting factor in your use of sustainable practices?

QUESTION IV: SUSTAINABILITY TOOLS

According to previous research, small- and medium-sized businesses consistently lack resources, time, and expertise to strategically develop, implement, and maintain more sustainable practices. Environmental issues are often seen as insignificant, implementation is viewed as a

burden and not as an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage, firms assume only small marginal monetary benefits, and businesses with few employees consistently lack information on the specific steps they could take to increase the efficacy of operations. Pressure to conform to environmental and social standards traditionally comes from consumers or through government regulation; however, community organizations are playing an increasingly important role in fostering the implementation of sustainable business practices.¹

Assisting businesses to achieve sustainable practices is largely information-based. Survey responses indicate the two most relied upon information resources are the Internet and environmental organizations, such as the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition. Professional organizations and other business owners supply peer-to-peer information value and media / government sources are cited least. We note that word of mouth is used quite often, which suggests that increased interaction of businesses could be quite helpful to the increase in knowledge sharing (Figure 5).

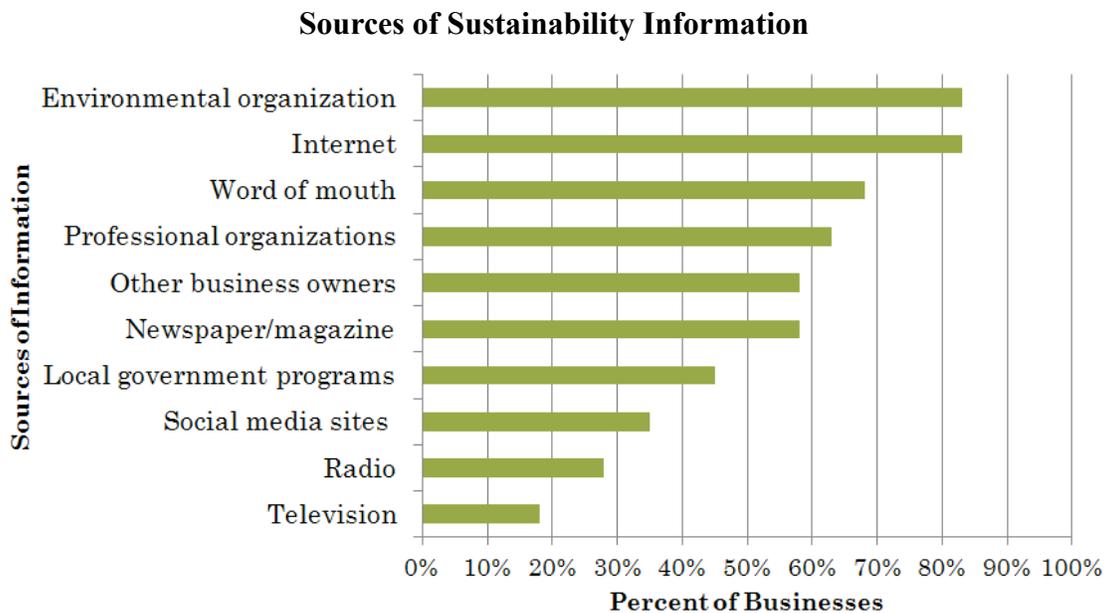


Figure 5: Where do you get information on sustainable business practices? Check all that apply.

Interviews with Corvallis businesses identify a range of options that would help their sustainability efforts, including an emphasis on networking and knowledge sharing. The survey results (Figure 6) echo a similar message. Networking allows business owners to share sustainability practices with one another, learn implement strategies, collect new ideas,

¹ Kelly, K., & Caputo, T. (2006). Case study of grassroots community development: sustainable, flexible and cost-effective responses to local needs. *Community Development Journal*, 41(2), 234-245.

coordinate, and unify. One business stated: “It would be nice to know what other businesses in the area have done, there is a good support system amongst the businesses in Corvallis but there is little focus on sharing knowledge and experiences regarding sustainable business practices.” Establishing relationships and facilitating interactions would create a stronger, more beneficial business network for local owners.

The desire for greater connectivity aligns with a desire for increased knowledge. Business owners seek to improve their sustainability efforts but are not always sure what actions may have the greatest impact, where to go next, or how to implement certain practices. Since a major goal of the Coalition is to understand how to encourage businesses to implement sustainable practices, we asked interviewees which types of help they felt would be most useful. Networking and increased knowledge sharing were clearly the two areas businesses believed would be of most assistance.

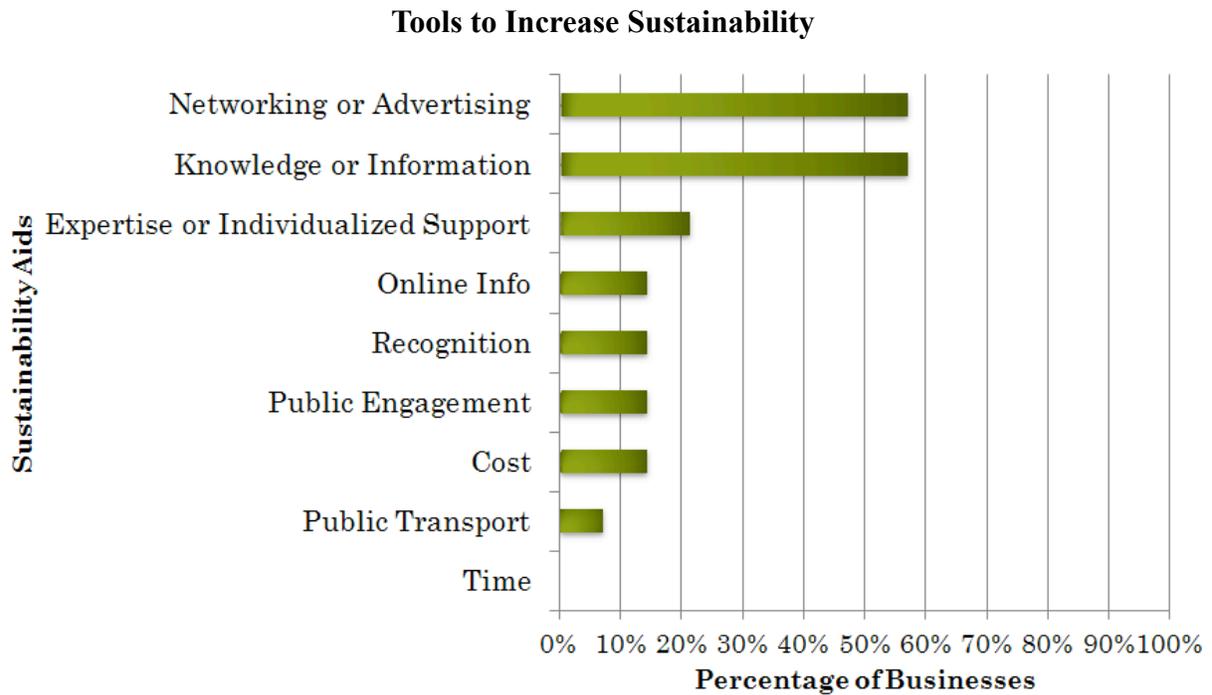


Figure 6: What are a few things that would help you implement sustainable business practices?

The case studies of Bellingham and Ithaca provide insight for implementing sustainable business practices. Both case studies indicate a strong community desire to encourage sustainable businesses practices and environmental organizations to act as educators. The Sustainable Connections program in Bellingham provides background research and information to assist businesses financially, education kits that include a manual of practices, pamphlets, and

individualized consultations to help businesses succeed. Meanwhile, the programs in Ithaca host monthly education and networking events sponsored by the members. The sustainability tools efforts for each case study are highlighted below.

CASE I: SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS – BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

Sustainable Connections (SC) in Bellingham recognizes that many small business owners lack the time to research sustainable practices. To assist businesses in overcoming limitations, SC sustainability tools include campaigns, education and community connections, market development, and other partnership and alliance activity.

Sustainability Tool I: Campaigns

Campaigns are SC organized events designed to create visibility in the sustainability brand, which enables participating businesses to display its efforts in sustainable business practices. SC surveys the interests in its membership and evaluates both the economic benefits of implementation and the ability of members to make meaningful change given the resources available. Only campaigns that motivate businesses are pursued. The intent of campaigns is to recognize members who make a commitment to achieve sustainable business practices, though SC does not evaluate business implementation nor certify business progress (M. Grandy, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

The diversity of campaigns range from community supported agriculture projects to energy audits. One notable example is the Toward Zero Waste Campaign designed to reduce business waste. Features of the campaign include an education kit consisting of a manual of practices, and a list of service providers to assist in a business waste reduction.¹

Sustainability Tool II: Education and community connections

Business sustainability efforts are featured in the SC online member directory. The directory registers businesses so individuals can associate business activity with sustainability campaigns. Businesses that participate are featured with icons that indicate engagement. An emphasis on this ‘merit badge’ approach allows consumers to independently view the level of business efforts and commitment, which creates a competitive atmosphere between businesses

¹ Sustainable Connections. n.d. Sustainable Connections. <http://sustainableconnections.org>.

(M. Grandy, personal communication, May 8, 2013). Other forms of recognition include participation plaques, press releases, and public recognition at events and annual awards.¹

By providing a platform of connectivity, the business community learns success (and failures) from one another and enhances the sense of community in Bellingham. Publicly available educational information can incite unified political and community action to invoke change.²

Sustainability Tool III: Market development

Proactive market development increases awareness in the community. SC incentivizes market development by facilitating a variety of reduced cost incentives among members and the community. The intent is to garner recognition, alter purchasing patterns, and develop a market for sustainable practices, further incentivizing business cooperation. SC retains a graphic designer for the purpose of creating high quality visual communications and invests resources to create visually appealing advertising materials to businesses. Examples include window stickers, posters, fliers, maps, coupon books, and other advertising media that promotes the sustainability brand.³

The provision of a businesses member directory, marketing campaigns, business sustainability awards, and the recognition of business excellence in sustainability are corollary marketing incentives (M. Grandy, personal communication, May 8, 2013).⁴

Sustainability Tool IV: Partnerships and Alliances

Partnerships and alliances with other organizations advance the mission of promoting sustainability. The alliance with the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) provides information, resources, and assistance to operationalize community-wide sustainability programs. The information provides SC an opportunity to identify business and other organizations that are suitable for specific campaigns while providing consultation tools, tip sheets, and a DVD media. Consultation tools assist other communities to emulate elements of SC programs.⁵

The partnership with the Opportunity Council, a non-profit organization that serves homeless and low-income individuals in Whatcom County, resulted in the formation of the

¹ Sustainable Connections. (n.d.) Local businesses taking action for a healthy community. *Sustainable Connections*. <http://sustainableconnections.org/>

² Khanna, M. (2001). Non-Mandatory Approaches to Environmental Protection. *Journal of Economic Surveys* 15(3): 291-324.

³ *Ibid.* 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Sustainable Connections. (n.d.) Local businesses taking action for a healthy community. *Sustainable Connections*. <http://sustainableconnections.org/>.

Community Energy Challenge (CEC) campaign [1st footnote]. CEC is an energy efficiency program serving 150 small and medium-sized businesses and provides expert energy assessments, facility action plans, cost-effectiveness analyses, and financing for participants.¹ Another sustainable tool for energy savings is the SC-provided access to a Commercial Conservation Specialist.

The CEC campaign emphasizes friendly competition between participants to measure individual progress and encourage continued energy efficiency effort. The highest achievers receive the title of "Energy Champions," while those making significant progress are "Energy Leaders," and those just entering the campaign are "Energy Savers." Participant rewards include publicity and in-store displays to inform the public about achievements.²

The Commercial Conservation Specialist, hired to provide free initial energy assessments of participating businesses, offers individualized action plans for energy efficiency and prioritizes recommendations based on cost-effectiveness.³ Participants consult periodically with the Specialist to assess progress and develop future planning actions.

CASE II: SUSTAINABLE TOMPKINS, GREEN RESOURCE HUB, THE SEEN – ITHACA, NEW YORK

Sustainable Tompkins (ST) of Ithaca is instrumental in the participation and production of a wide variety of initiatives and programs, past and present. The advancement of sustainability tools by ST includes a green business network, web guide, and partnership alliances. One example is the Neighborhood Mini-Grants Program, which provides “seed money” to residents and small organizations to make neighborhoods more sustainable and the Finger Lakes Climate Fund that allows the community to purchase offsets for carbon emissions.⁴ The funds are redistributed to low and moderate-income residents to help with home insulation, the installation of energy efficient heating systems, and reduction of energy consumption.

The Green Resource Hub of the Finger Lakes, a non-profit organization initiated from a Sustainable Tompkins working group, addresses community engagement, consumer education on green products and services, and provide tools to support and expand the marketplace for

¹ Reisman, E., Ramel, A., & Selch, M. 2010. The community energy challenge: Bringing energy conservation to local independent businesses. ACEEE Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings. <http://sustainableconnections.org/energy/energychallenge/pdfs/aceee-paper-commercial>.

² *Ibid.* p. 286.

³ *Ibid.* p. 282-283.

⁴ Sustainable Tompkins. n.d. *Sustainable Tompkins*. <http://sustainabletompkins.org/>.

sustainable living for a “vibrant and resilient regional economy that serves a healthy, happy, and self-reliant community.”¹

Sustainability Tool I: Green Business Network

The green business network in Ithaca – the Sustainable Enterprise & Entrepreneur Network (SEEN) – brings sustainability ideas to fruition. The program operates on the core foundation of Triple Bottom Line principles of people, planet, and profit. Initially a volunteer-driven effort, the program now has charter membership and a paid program director for marketing and programming support. Monthly networking events and Triple Bottom Line workshops include a partnered effort with the Green Plus Certification to educate members on competitive marketing of sustainability achievements to the community. Other program offerings include networking, membership cards, Member-to-Member (M2M) Specials, and Member Spotlights that produce high-definition promotion videos at reduced prices.

Sustainability Tool II: Web Guide

The web-based guide – Finger Lakes Buy Green – was developed through a partnership between Sustainable Tompkins and Tompkins County Solid Waste Management to produce a guide for establishing green purchasing practices in the Finger Lakes region. The guide established a set of green purchasing practices in the region. One theme of the program is to increase community education about sustainable practices. A second theme is to provide assistance to local businesses for achievement of sustainability goals. It is intended for individuals, schools, and businesses to find simple, easy ways to make purchases that benefit the community and environment. The database began with office supplies, cleaning, and maintenance supplies, but has grown substantially to include a wide variety of different products. The local Chamber of Commerce supports the web guide.²

Sustainability Tool III: Partnerships

Partnering with other organizations helps Ithaca better meet local business sustainability goals by 1) raising community awareness of local businesses and encourage sustainable business practices by educating the community of the economic, social and environmental benefits (triple

¹ Green Resource Hub. 2008. About the Hub. *Green Resource Hub of the Finger Lakes*. <http://www.greenresourcehub.org/site/view/47>.

² Finger Lakes Buy Green. n.d. *Finger Lakes Buy Green*. <http://fingerlakesbuygreen.com/content/show/overview>.

bottom line) and 2) increasing influence over government issues that affect local businesses. A related organization, Local First Ithaca, partners with two national organizations, the American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC) and the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE). The ASBC provides public information campaigns to educate both the public and policymakers on the benefits of vibrant, business communities.¹

¹ American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC). n. d. Local First Ithaca. <http://asbcouncil.org/node/97>.

SECTION III: TARGETED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition commissioned this “Saving Green” report to gain insight on possible next steps for the organization. This final section represents the combined conclusions of the research. In general, Corvallis businesses want more information on sustainable practices and look to the Coalition as a resource for this information. In addition, findings suggest that facilitating networking opportunities is also important. These key findings provide the primary focus of the recommendation section. Recommendations are grouped into three categories, discussed below, these categories are: information provision and sharing, implementation of a recurring sustainability event for businesses, and development of focused campaigns.

INFORMATION PROVISION AND SHARING

The Coalition as a Broad Sustainability Resource

A key barrier identified for businesses was the challenge of finding information on potential sustainability projects, and how to implement them. Results of the survey revealed that local businesses would like to do more around particular practices but do not understand how to implement them. We recommend that the Coalition collect a range of different materials and resources aimed at informing and guiding businesses and organizations through the process of becoming more sustainable. For example, business owners may benefit from a guide on recycling challenging items like batteries and ink cartridges. Examples of this type of service are abundant in the findings from the case studies, particularly the materials Sustainable Connections circulates to assist businesses in becoming more sustainable. We recommend that the Coalition meet this need for a broad knowledge base of sustainable business practices.

Findings indicate the business community also needs greater knowledge of available incentives. Most of the participating businesses noted a desire to achieve greater sustainable practices, but incentivizing options were not readily apparent to many business owners.

Development of Workshops

Based on survey results, 66% of business owners say the prospect of earning government grants, loans, rebates, or other financial incentives does not motivate them to implement sustainable practices. They viewed these incentive programs as either unimportant or of low importance. We postulate that this could be due to one of two possibilities. The first likely possibility is business owners are not well-versed in navigating confusing government loan and

grant programs in order to receive financial benefits. This translates into missed opportunities to receive cash assistance in their sustainability efforts. The second possibility is that Corvallis businesses understand the government grant and loan process but are not interested in participating in these programs when attempting to implement sustainable practices in their business. Since 45% of businesses feel either somewhat or very constrained by the cost of implementing sustainable practices, it is unlikely that this second possibility is the case.

We propose the Coalition develop grant writing and loan workshops for area businesses to combat these challenges. Most business owners in Corvallis agree that seeing other business owners use sustainable practices motivates them to adopt similar practices. With this in mind, we suggest that workshops be led by business owners who have successfully received loans and grants in the past. These grant and loan workshops could be facilitated through a yearly face-to-face meeting or via online media using a webinar or short video format. If implementation of a workshop program is successful, this program could then be expanded to include a wider range of sustainable topics of interest to Corvallis businesses and organizations.

Further Development of Online Resource

Our research suggests that a majority of those surveyed went to the Internet and different environmental groups as a resource for sustainable behavior. The prevalence of mobile devices has changed the way modern businesses and organizations seek information. Repositories of information exist and thrive on the Internet. We recommend that an online guide be created for sustainability practices in the Corvallis community. The information can be presented in blog or wiki format. We also suggest that live coalition activities be integrated with this online resource. For example, when possible, film Coalition events and post them online, so they can be referenced by both attendees and those that did not attend.

SUSTAINABILITY EVENTS AND NETWORKING

Our findings suggest that businesses are motivated by seeing their peers adopt sustainable practices. The Coalition can be of great help by facilitating the sharing of successful sustainable businesses practices. This suggestion is partially implemented through the recommendations to create an Internet forum and develop workshops. In addition, we recommend the Coalition consider hosting periodic events where business and community leaders can network, share ideas, and provide feedback to the Coalition. These events would also be an excellent opportunity to recognize businesses that are leading the way in sustainable practices and showcase their efforts, successes, and the benefits they are accruing.

The proposed events would serve as a platform for exposing local businesses and organizations to successful sustainable businesses and would enable them to share their experiences. These events would also provide networking opportunities for business leaders to exchange contact information and hear the perspectives and experiences of their peers while sharing their own insights. Events would further enable the Coalition to present key ideas that they feel are useful for business leaders. Inclusion of a respected keynote speaker, or organization around one or two campaigns (discussed below) may lend further benefits. One additional approach – which could be implemented independent of these proposed events – would be to set up small groups of businesses to share experiences on a periodic, ad hoc basis. These small groups could efficiently reduce the charge to the coalition, as it would only have to keep track of the activities of the groups, and not of the individual businesses.

Finally, events serve as a critical feedback mechanism to the Coalition. Discussions are an opportunity for the Coalition to gauge what sort of sustainable practices businesses would consider implementing and engage the community in a productive conversation about sustainability in business. A short survey to collect information on changes businesses would like to see at the next event, issues and possible campaign topics could be included at the end of the event.

DEVELOPMENT OF FOCUSED CAMPAIGNS

One of the key findings from the case studies was the value of targeted sustainability campaigns in fostering community sustainability. We recommend that the Coalition develop a few well targeted sustainability goals and build them into campaigns – it may be helpful to use the existing Action Team Structure to design the initial campaigns. Possible first campaigns might center around energy efficiency or waste management. Findings from the interviews suggest that the Coalition implement new programs and actions carefully and with feedback from individual businesses. A certification-type program – if attempted – needs to be inclusive and have stages, or multiple levels, of achievement. Criteria should be universally applicable yet allow a business to achieve goals relative to its specific function while avoiding “greenwashing”.

Interview findings suggest that not all businesses are fully aware of Coalition activity, and desire a greater degree of communication and partnership with the Coalition. Interviews and case studies also indicate that further growth of a strong, visible brand is important to increasing the visibility of the Coalitions actions. These findings are particularly critical for the development of campaigns. Findings from the case study indicate that easily-identifiable, cohesive marketing is an important strategy for legitimizing and growing the Sustainable

Connections model. Sustainable Connections found that using a professional graphic designer is an effective way to add pop and continuity between specific campaigns and the rest of Sustainable Connections' efforts. The use of a unified visual theme for fliers, websites, and other materials was immediately recognizable as part of SC's brand. We recommend that the Coalition follow in this vein by further developing marketing efforts and a visual presence to incentivize businesses, showcase the success of campaigns, and recruit new businesses to participate in campaigns.

In conjunction with the development of campaigns and the increased web resources called for above, we recommend that the Coalition implement an online directory similar to the one created by Sustainable Connections (<http://sustainableconnections.org/directory>). Their use of a "merit-badge approach" allows businesses to take on sustainable commitments which matter most to them and which they feel they can reasonably complete, rather than subjecting all participants to a checklist approach. Furthermore, this merit-badge approach builds in an easy mechanism for recognition – without the challenges associated with a full certification program – while still leaving a structure in place should the Coalition opt to create certification programs in the future. Businesses are thus free to adopt the campaigns which they can meet, benefit from the advice of Sustainable Connections staff on meeting objectives, and reap the rewards of recognition for their commitments.

CONCLUSION

This "Saving Green" report sought to provide targeted recommendations for the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition based on the results of a mixed-method research approach. The recommendations provided offer a range of possible actions that the Coalition might take in order to further develop its role in the Corvallis community and further its goals of sustainability.

The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition has the opportunity to continue to develop as a critical resource for area businesses and organizations. The range of possibilities for the Coalition is vast, and can vary substantially based on financial and labor constraints. While the long term future of The Coalition might reasonably resemble that of highly institutionalized sustainability programs like Sustainable Connections in Bellingham, Washington, there are a wide variety of highly valuable services that might be provided in the near- and mid-term. Through education and resources, workshops and events, and the development of targeted campaigns, we believe that the Coalition can continue to fill the important role of leading the community towards a higher level of sustainability.

APPENDIX I: LITERATURE REVIEW

What are the criteria for a sustainable business?

An essential aspect to differentiating between sustainable and non-sustainable business practices is understanding that expectations and perceptions vary across marketplaces and societies (Svenson, Wood and Callaghan 2009). Common definitions of sustainable business practices and their development emphasize meeting the needs and requirements of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, 1987). To pursue sustainable development, companies should minimize their environmental footprint, while simultaneously working to create social and economic value (Feltmate, 2008).

However, for Azapagic and Perdan (2000) there is no single definition of sustainable business. For Bae and Smardon (2011) this lack of common definition hampers the implementation of effective policies and actions in the field. To some, operating a sustainable business simply means doing the right thing. To others, it means advocating for policies to ensure a green sensibility. And to still others, it means maximizing profits without compromising environmental standards (University of Oregon Center for Sustainable Business Practices). Veleva and Ellenbecker (2001) agree that the concept is vague, but they argue there is a growing agreement that the definition of the concept is not as important as the development of concrete tools which can help promote and measure achievements.

Many international organizations tried to set a framework for sustainability by issuing certifications, but each of them has a different way to assess the performance of businesses. Ranganathan identified two dozen such institutions among which the most famous are the International Standardization Organization (ISO), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and Center for Waste Reduction Technologies (CWRT). She found that none of these organizations' frameworks are applicable alone to evaluate business sustainability.

For Veleva and Ellenbecker, the number of sustainability indicators in the literature is growing, but none of them actually help to define corporate sustainability. For them, business sustainability should be regarded from six different perspectives: resources use (energy and material), natural environment, social justice and community development, economic performance, workers, and products. Applying these perspectives commonly means using renewable energy, recycling, charitable donations from the business, training employees, and offering internships to younger members of the community.

Mira (2003) describes the development of Urban Sustainability Indicators as focusing around three key dimensions: the environment, the economy and society. The indicators could thus present a more holistic measurement of urban sustainability efforts. She notes, however, that the definition and selection of indicators is often a “contentious exercise (p. 37)” and that a significant trade-off exists between selecting a few straightforward indicators, and selecting multiple, complex indicators to measure sustainability practices more comprehensively. She also notes that at times qualitative data could provide additional explanatory value, but that a qualitative approach to measuring sustainability is often dropped in favor of a numbers-driven approach.

One frequently cited frustration in the literature is the ambiguity of the definition of ‘sustainable’. There is currently no agreed-upon set of standards operationalizing sustainable practices (Sarkar and Young, 2009; Parris and Kates, 2003; Bell and Morse, 1999). The lack of a standard set of indicators translates into a diverse pool of possible sustainable practice indicators researchers can draw from when conducting baseline assessments and subsequent comparisons (Parris and Kates, 2003). Attempting to find some cohesion on the topic, Parris and Kates (2003) researched 12 prominent cases of international, national, and municipal sustainable development efforts, looking at quantitative indicators. Analyzing how sustainable practices were defined and measured, as well as how indicators are selected across the cases, Parris and Kates concluded that there are no universally-accepted indicator sets. While there is no unanimously agreed upon criteria for measuring sustainable practices, researchers often do agree on the need for an interdisciplinary approach involving the inclusion of several sectors in data collection. Baseline data should be comprehensive, considering the social, economic and ecological aspects of sustainable practices. This approach is frequently referred to as the triple bottom line (Dasgupta and Tam, 2005; Cornforth, 1999; Shen et al, 2011).

The “Sustainability for Business” report generated by NJPRO foundation (2012) defines sustainability based on three dimensions: people, planet, and profit. The “people” component of this plan requires assessment of organization’s impact on and treatment of all involved stakeholders. The report explicitly defines the stakeholder population as consumers, employees, vendors, and suppliers. Additionally, an organization’s contribution to the development and wellbeing of the local community through support of local programs is also incorporated in this dimension. Specific criteria for this dimension are concerned with workplace environment, supply chain and procurement, and community engagement. The report further elaborates on the “planet” component by citing two criteria: minimizing of the ecological footprint and doing no harm to the environment.

What are the incentives for businesses to participate in more sustainable practices?

Literature on this theme addressed recommendations for how the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition might encourage local businesses within and outside of their network to develop more sustainable business practices. The research finds a range of incentives and motivations for businesses to engage in sustainable business practices. These include personal motivations, attempts to attract customers, and cooperation in private-public partnerships.

Killian's (2012) report on Corporate Social Responsibility, another study found that CSR motivations may differ between large and small corporations. The study focus on the difference between business size and their implementation of sustainable practices found that the internal pressure to improve socially by shareholders and employees affected "one quarter to one-third of large businesses compared to 10% or less of small businesses (Collins, 2007). Meanwhile, external pressure (i.e. customers, competitors, central government, local government, and pressure groups) to improve either environmentally or socially did not show that a specific pressure stood out. However, it is clear that larger firms are more sensitive to these external factors than smaller firms. Ultimately, this study found that "the attractiveness to employees and reputation and brand are the two largest factors influencing business implementation of social and environmental practices" but other shareholders had relatively little influence (Collins, 2007).

Goetz (2010) argues that a good incentive program must be diverse for it to appropriately reach a broad range of actors. Since each small firm is different, a different program would work best for each firm. He also contends that it is more critical to proactively create new direct incentives than remove disincentives. An altruistic approach is when individuals experience empathy and sympathy for others (Batson, 1991; Davis, 1996). Entrepreneurial actions may affect their likelihood of recognizing opportunities for sustainable development (Patzelt and Shepard, 2010). Patzelt and Shepard (2010) propose that increased entrepreneurial knowledge may also affect community sustainable development.

Traditionally, the most powerful outside incentive for sustainable business practices were government regulations. However, given the costs, potential for conflict, and bureaucratic red tape that emerges when designing and implementing regulations, voluntary environmental programs (VEP) emerged as an alternative strategy for encouraging sustainability (Darnall & Carmin, 2005; Darnall & Sides, 2008; Moiser & Fisk, 2012; Morgenstern & Pizer, 2007). VEPs are formally defined as programs, codes, agreements, and commitments that encourage organizations to voluntarily reduce their environmental impacts beyond the requirements

established by the environmental regulatory system (Darnall & Carmin, 2005; Darnall & Sides, 2008), and are often, though not always, formed between businesses and government bodies.

Some informational and educational VEPs focus more on informing the public about which businesses and products are most sustainable, which theoretically can shift consumption trends toward more sustainable products and affect business practices (Khanna, 2001). VEPs often provide information to the public via labeling; however, this process can be lengthy and consumers might not always understand exactly what a label implies (Khanna, 2001). Publicly available information, especially when it reveals a business's environmental wrongdoings, can incite unified political and community action to invoke change (Khanna, 2001). However, this process can take time, and it may require the VEP to be willing to assume more of an activist role in the community.

Research to uncover business motivations for adopting sustainable practices takes a variety of forms. Qualitative studies that include interviews and case studies, seen in Cambra-Fierro et al (2008) and Bansal and Roth's (2000) research, have a limited sample size, but provide a useful depth in their analysis. Other research performed by Brønn and Vidaver-Cohen (2009), Uhlener et al (2012), and Hahn and Scheermesser (2005) take a quantitative approach, using surveys to accommodate large sample sizes that provide broad generalizations.

What are the barriers for businesses to implement more sustainable practices?

Background literature on this question sought to inform the team's research design and help develop recommendations for the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition to assist Corvallis businesses in overcoming obstacles to sustainable business practices. The literature showed that there are specific organizational barriers to implementing sustainable business practices and that, importantly, small and medium-sized business have a competitive advantage over larger firms in implementing sustainable business practices, despite having fewer resources at their disposal than larger businesses.

Chew (2010) discusses organizational barriers to adopting sustainable business practices. While much of our focus on barriers to this point has been external pressures, this article examines one of the strongest barriers for adoption: internal organization. Chew offers a description of these barriers and possible remediation. They recommend that firms do any of several things to increase the likelihood of adopting sustainable practices: create a sustainability division; create a clear process for defining and evaluating sustainability proposals; and establish a pattern of rewarding successful sustainability projects.

Small to medium sized businesses have a competitive advantage over larger companies in addressing sustainability issues (Condon, 2004). Smaller firms have more autonomy in the strategic application of available resources that position the firm to increase economic vitality (Fowler and Hope 2007). Often, these are win-win solutions that enhance environmental performance while reducing the economic bottom line (Hall and Vredenburg, 2003). Fowler and Hope (2007) find that “a company can maximize returns while making some progress towards the implementation of sustainable business practices.” However, current business approaches are largely failing to accomplish sustainable development goals (Hall and Vredenburg, 2003) and substantial challenges make it difficult for even proactive businesses to implement sustainable practices (Condon 2004).

Complex and unique demands are placed on business owners and managers interested in implementing sustainable practices (Hall and Vredenburg, 2003). Fowler and Hope (2007) examined barriers to implementation in a case study of a well-known privately owned clothing company and found that ownership level and status, “core competencies of the firm”, adaptability, lack of incentives, organizational structure and culture, diversity and competing needs, and overall capacity are the main challenges that businesses face. Condon (2004) examined the barriers of implementation specifically in the context of small to medium sized businesses and found that recurring barriers to implementing sustainable practices exists across a range of sectors.

Small and medium sized businesses consistently lack resources, time, and expertise needed to strategically develop, implement, and maintain more sustainable practices. The findings from the study show that environmental issues are often seen as insignificant, implementation is viewed as a burden and not as an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage, firms assume only small marginal monetary benefits, and businesses with few employees consistently lacked information on the specific steps they could take to increase the efficacy of operations. Pressure to conform to environmental and social standards traditionally comes from consumers or through government regulation; however, community organizations are playing an increasingly important role in fostering the implementation of more sustainable business practices (Kelly and Caputo, 2005).

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APPENDIX II: CASE STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Section I – Background and Program Introduction

- I. Can you please tell me your name, what your role is in the organization and in running the sustainable business program?
- II. Can you give me a brief overview of your organization?
 - A. Can you describe the process of decision-making and agenda-setting?
 - B. What role do you have in the process of a business taking on sustainable practices? (Knowledge, financial help, label, sustainability evaluation etc.)
 - C. Was your organization ever completely volunteer run and if so, how did you make the transition to paid staff? OR In your opinion, what are the limitations for a program like this but for a completely volunteer-run organization?
 - D. What are some challenges you have encountered in your operations?
 - E. What are the key successes you're most proud of?
- III. Can you give me a brief overview of the program itself?
 - A. When and where was it started?
 - B. What is the mission of the program?
 - C. Who is in charge of oversight and administration?
 - D. How is it funded?

Section II – Genesis of the project

- I. Can we talk about how the program was started and the process it went through prior to being well established?
 - A. What started the pursuit of a sustainable business practices model?
 - B. Who were the actors involved? Have they changes over time and if so, how?
 - C. How did you go about designing the specific plan?
 1. What were some challenges in designing the plan?
 2. Criteria/definitions/evaluations/recognition etc.
 3. Did you pattern your plan after any existing plans/organizations (and if so, which ones)?

Section III - Program Implementation

- I. Can we now talk about the current status and operations of the program?
 - A. Who runs the program? Are there any community or government groups that are involved? What is the extent of their involvement?
 - B. How do you enlist business?
 1. What are some barriers in recruiting businesses?
 2. What are some incentives that you use to get businesses to adopt your program? Is there a specific process or method you use to recognize businesses who are adopting your program?
 - C. Program specifics
 1. How does the organization define sustainable business practices?
 2. What sort of specific criteria do you use to evaluate businesses/within the program?
 3. How does it get conveyed to the community about a business's sustainable practices?
 4. Ongoing operations
 - a) Maintaining membership?
 - b) Managing membership?
 - c) Accountability of program/organization?
 5. Efforts to advance?

APPENDIX III: ADDITIONAL CASE STUDY FINDINGS

CASE STUDY #1: BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

Sustainable Connections (SC) is a nonprofit organization in Bellingham, Washington whose stated mission is “to be the local forum where businesses come together to transform and model an economy built on sustainable practices”.¹ The organization has about twenty full time staff, including the executive director, managers and coordinators for each of SC’s main campaigns, and other staff accountable for communications and office management. Since SC’s goals remain relatively constant, staff members generally remain employed with the organization long-term, which maintains internal stability over time (M. Grandy, personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Much of SC operations and functions depend on a diversity of funding resources. Program revenue, contracts, grants, and donations fund 80% of operations and annual membership fees provide the remaining 20%. Membership fees vary according to member-type (business, non-profit, individual, or business outside of Whatcom County) and the average annual sales or operational budget for each member. Individuals may become members by donating any amount to SC, but will only receive e-mail newsletters and invitations to events with a minimum \$35 donation. SC also allows membership upgrades for those paying annual fees of \$1,200. These “Sustaining Members” receive all the benefits of regular membership, but also enjoy more widespread and diverse promotion.²

Another source of revenue is derived by offering sponsorship opportunities to businesses and organizations wishing to sponsor SC campaigns. SC offers a three-tiered sponsorship fee structure depending on the level of exposure, information, or other SC-provided participation. Organizations choose a level of commitment most suited for their budgets. This strategy also helps SC because they continue to receive funding from organizations that may not otherwise pay the costs for Gold sponsorship.

Gold (lead sponsor) - greatest financial commitment but highest return potential.
Silver (co-sponsor) - moderate financial commitment and medium return potential.
Bronze (supporting sponsor) - minimal financial commitment and limited return potential.

¹ Sustainable Connections. n.d. Sustainable Connections. <http://sustainableconnections.org>.

² *Ibid.*

CASE STUDY #2: THE TOWN OF ITHACA, NEW YORK

“The Town of Ithaca has a fundamental commitment to protect and enhance economic, community, and environmental resources.”¹

Similar to Bellingham and Corvallis, the Town of Ithaca, New York has a thriving local food scene, and a number of local, independent people, businesses, and organizations comprise a community that values economic resources, experience, and inclusiveness. Community interest provided the basis for the development of local sustainability programs.

The Ithaca case study provides a robust example of a community that houses a multitude of programs that demonstrates the breadth of the sustainability movement. Ithaca embraces organizations and programs that aim to increase awareness and compliance with sustainable practice. The community represents a structure of collaborative efforts with a similar, unifying interests in sustainability. The cooperative approach between individuals, businesses, organizations, and the local government showcases how engaging different groups can strengthen sustainability efforts and organizations. For these reasons, two area organizations - Sustainable Tompkins and the Green Resource Hub of Finger Lakes – were selected as an ideal case study. Each is described separately below, along with other notable participatory programs.

Sustainable Tompkins (ST) is a citizen-based organization created from a study circle process in early 2004. ST is a coalition of citizens, community organizations, elected officials, educators and professionals interested in creating a more sustainable community that integrates social equity, economic vitality, ecological stewardship and shared responsibility.² The organization hopes to create effective social change by utilizing a four-way strategy of top-down and bottom-up engagement, sustainable living education, and infrastructure building.

Sponsorship for the organization includes support from the Park Foundation, Ithaca College, Cornell University, and local businesses. Membership dues range from a student (\$15) to business or non-profit (\$50). A small staff services the program in addition to local volunteer contribution of time and expertise to further sustainability education and communication in the community. A Neighborhood Mini-Grants Program funded by Sustainable Tompkins has, as of April 2013, awarded 102 grants totaling \$40,445 to local grassroots projects (Sustainable Tompkins, n.d.). Membership incentives include monthly newsletters, discounted entrance to

¹ Town of Ithaca. n. d. Sustainability. *Town of Ithaca Sustainability*. <http://www.town.ithaca.ny.us/sustainability>.

² Sustainable Tompkins. n.d. *Sustainable Tompkins*. <http://sustainabletompkins.org/>.

events and conferences, and access to educational material. Businesses membership benefits include partnerships with other local green businesses and other discounts and waived fees.

Sustainable Tompkins efforts have resulted in other successful initiatives and programs. Examples include the Neighborhood Mini-Grants Program, which provides “seed money” to residents and small organizations to make their neighborhoods more sustainable¹ and the Finger Lakes Climate Fund that allows the community to purchase offsets for carbon emissions. The funds are redistributed to low and moderate-income residents to help with home insulation, the installation of energy efficient heating systems, and reduction of energy consumption.

Green Resource Hub of the Finger Lakes is a non-profit organization initiated from a Sustainable Tompkins working group that envision a “vibrant and resilient regional economy that serves a healthy, happy, and self-reliant community.”² Achievement of the vision is being addressed through community engagement, consumer education on green products and services, and tools to support and expand the marketplace for sustainable living. Funding is comprised of grants, private donations, and membership dues based on category (i.e. business, organization, individual, etc.). Volunteer Board members donate time to promote and facilitate organization efforts.

CROSS – CASE CONSIDERATIONS

From the Ithaca community, the program that is most similar to Sustainable Connections is the Sustainable Enterprise & Entrepreneur Network (SEEN) that is run by Green Resource Hub. SC and SEEN both attempt to be a source of information and guidance on sustainability practices for businesses. The core philosophy of the two entities rests on the Triple Bottom Line approach of people-profits-planet. While SC is heavily focused on running individual campaigns with clear-cut deliverables, SEEN places emphasis on holding events to engage business owners, entrepreneurs, and individuals in conversations on sustainable practices. In selecting campaigns to take on, SC evaluates funding availability, economic and sustainable deliverables of the campaign, interest from business community etc. In this manner, SC conducts what seems to be a cost-benefit analysis and presents itself as being “run like a business” (M. Grandy, personal communication May 8, 2013).

The ability of SC to maintain this type of an organization rests heavily on the funding and resources available to them. SC is run by numerous paid staff and has expanded its funding

¹ Sustainable Tompkins. n.d. *Sustainable Tompkins*. <http://sustainabletompkins.org/>.

² Green Resource Hub. 2008. About the Hub. *Green Resource Hub of the Finger Lakes*. <http://www.greenresourcehub.org/site/view/47>

sources to include contract work for the city and other organizations. Contrastingly, SEEN is operated by volunteers and one paid director. Their only funding source is the membership dues they charge and the entry fees to the events they hold. This limited revenue is used to pay the director and to continue holding events. Because SEEN is relatively young as it was started in 2009, the staff is working to develop the infrastructure of their program. For example, self-organizing infrastructures for membership renewal, expansion of benefits, etc. are seen as necessary for growth of the program (B. Rossi, personal communication May 15, 2013). Though both programs have differences in terms of structure, goals, and organizational capacities, a significant similarity between the two is that neither of them engage in any certification of sustainable businesses nor do they consider themselves to be monitors of member businesses' implementation of sustainable practices.

CONCLUSION

By conducting these case studies and interviews, we were able to explore different models for pursuing sustainable business practices in a community. While Sustainable Connections (SC) of Bellingham takes an entrepreneurial approach to spreading sustainability to businesses, the SEEN in Ithaca is engaged in an advocacy approach to engaging the community in productive conversations about sustainability and building networks among businesses. To some degree, this difference in approaches can be explained by funding and resource availability.

In determining how to pursue a sustainable business program, the primary facet to consider is organizational capacity. Bellingham's SC program is efficient, effective, and creative, yet also dependent on the flow of money and paid labor. As such, it is unlikely to indicate the "next step" for sustainability organizations looking to move beyond their current scope and efforts; nevertheless, SC's campaigns and structure offer appealing long-term models. Understanding how SC achieves its success can offer numerous goals, incentives, and ideas for smaller organizations attempting to expand their reach. Conversely, Green Resources Hub's The SEEN, while also relying on some paid labor, relies heavily on volunteer efforts to advance the sustainability message. Given the breadth of initiatives Green Resources Hub's The SEEN tackles with mostly volunteer labor and under the direction of a (paid) director, it may be more feasible for the Coalition to look to the SEEN for immediate next steps but consider SC in assessing long term growth.

APPENDIX IV: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is being administered by a group of OSU graduate students in support of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition. The goal of the survey is to gather information from Corvallis businesses on their sustainability practices, as well as incentives and barriers to adopting sustainable business practices. The information from this survey will be analyzed by the OSU students. A final report, with recommendations, will be shared with the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition. The information in this survey, as pertaining to specific businesses will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you for participating in this project.

PART 1 – Sustainable Business Practices

**Q1: Which of the following sustainable practices does your business engage in?
Mark all that apply.**

- Reduction in paper usage (e.g., replacing print materials with electronic communications, electronic records)
- Use of eco-friendly cleaning products
- Condensed work weeks
- Carpooling
- Recycling program
- Employee training programs related to our social and/or environmental goals
- Reducing water use
- Reducing energy use
- Participation in community sustainability events
- Business donation (in-kind, financial, time) to community sustainable initiatives (e.g. fund-raising activities)
- Advocate for sustainability policies with local government
- Don't know
- Other
- None

**Q2: Which of the following reporting/policy actions does your business engage in?
Mark all that apply.**

- Produces a company environmental policy statement
- Produces a public environmental and/or sustainability report
- Is a member of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition
- Is a member of an environmental group or network other than the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition

PART 2 – Incentives and Barriers for/to adopting Sustainable Business Practices

Q3: How important are each of the following goals in motivating your business's sustainable practices? On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is very important, and 1 is not important.

- Honor a commitment to environmental and social responsibility
- Reduce operating costs
- Comply with local, state, federal regulations
- Enhance public image
- Earn government grants, loans, rebates, or other financial incentives
- Respond to consumer demand

Q4: The following are potential benefits to businesses that use sustainable business practices. Please rate on a scale of 1-5 what degree your business benefitted from the following, with 5 being greatly benefitted and 1 being did not benefit.

- Improved company or brand image
- Cost savings
- Increased sales
- Employee satisfaction, morale or retention
- Product, service or market innovation
- Business model or process innovation
- Effective risk management
- Enhanced stakeholder relations
- Other

Q5: To what degree have the following been a limiting factor in your use of sustainable practices? On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is highly limiting, and 1 not limiting at all.

- Cost implications
- Negative experiences of other businesses
- Knowledge and skills
- Management time
- Technical difficulties during implementation process
- Lack of consumer demand for sustainable practices
- Other

Q6: Where do you get information on sustainable business practices? Check all that apply.

- Internet
- Newspaper/magazine
- Television
- Radio

- Local government programs
- Environmental organization (e.g., Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, Nature Conservancy)
- Other business owners
- Social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Google+)
- Professional Organization
- Word of mouth

Q7: Seeing other business owners use sustainable practices motivates me to adopt similar practices.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Don't know/Unsure
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

PART 3 – Business Profile

Q8: How many full-time employees does your business have?

- 1–3
- 4–10
- 11–20
- 20+

Q9: Type of business sector:

- Automotive
- Agriculture
- Banking and Financing -Building and Construction -Energy
- Food Service
- General Manufacturing
- Health Care
- Insurance
- Paper and Printing
- Retail
- Transportation
- Utility
- Other

Q10: How long has your business been in operation?

- Less than one year
- 1–3 years
- 4–10 years
- More than 10 years

Q11: Is your business locally owned?

- Yes
- No

Q12: At what scale does your business operate (excluding internet sales)?

- Local
- Regional
- National
- International
- Solely e-commerce

Q13: Does your business generate over 25% of its sales from e-commerce?

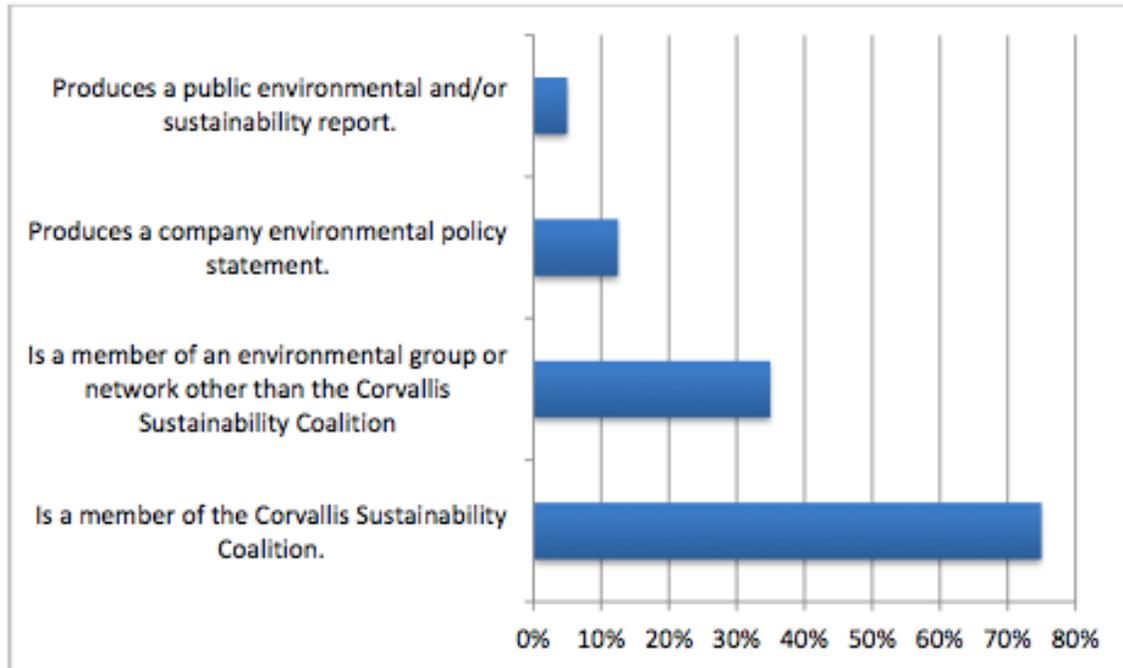
- Yes
- No

Q14: Business name: _____ (This information is kept strictly confidential and is used only for potential follow-up purposes)

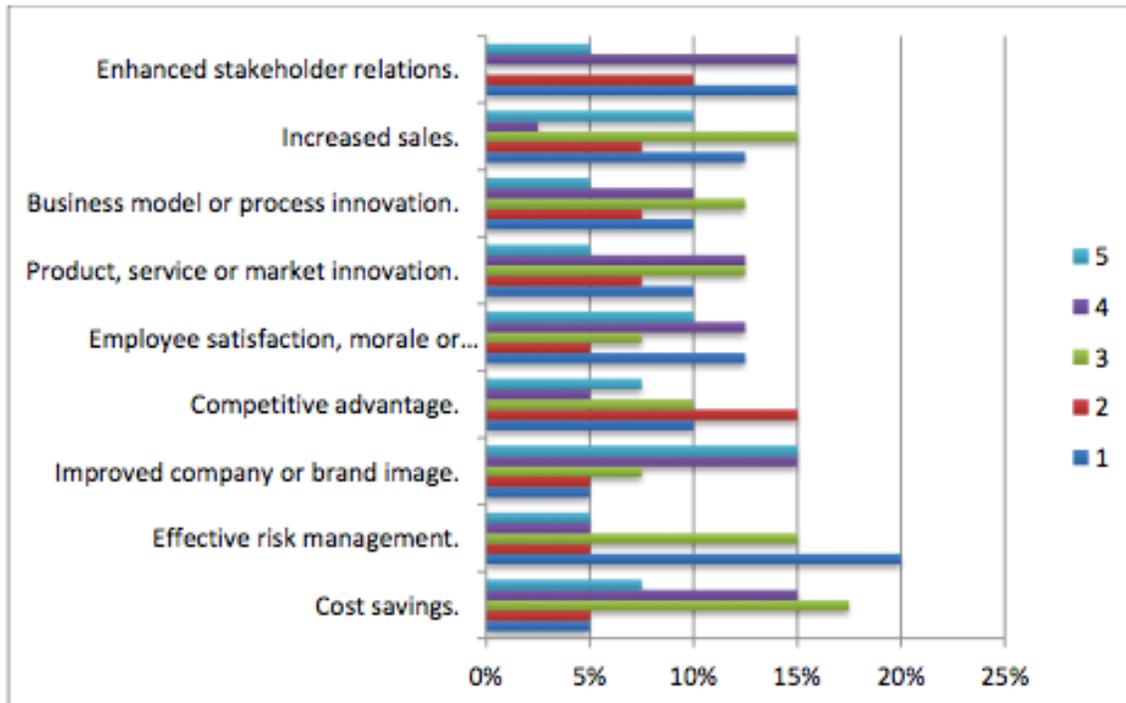
Q15: Would you be willing to be contacted for a more in-depth interview on these issues?

- Yes
- No

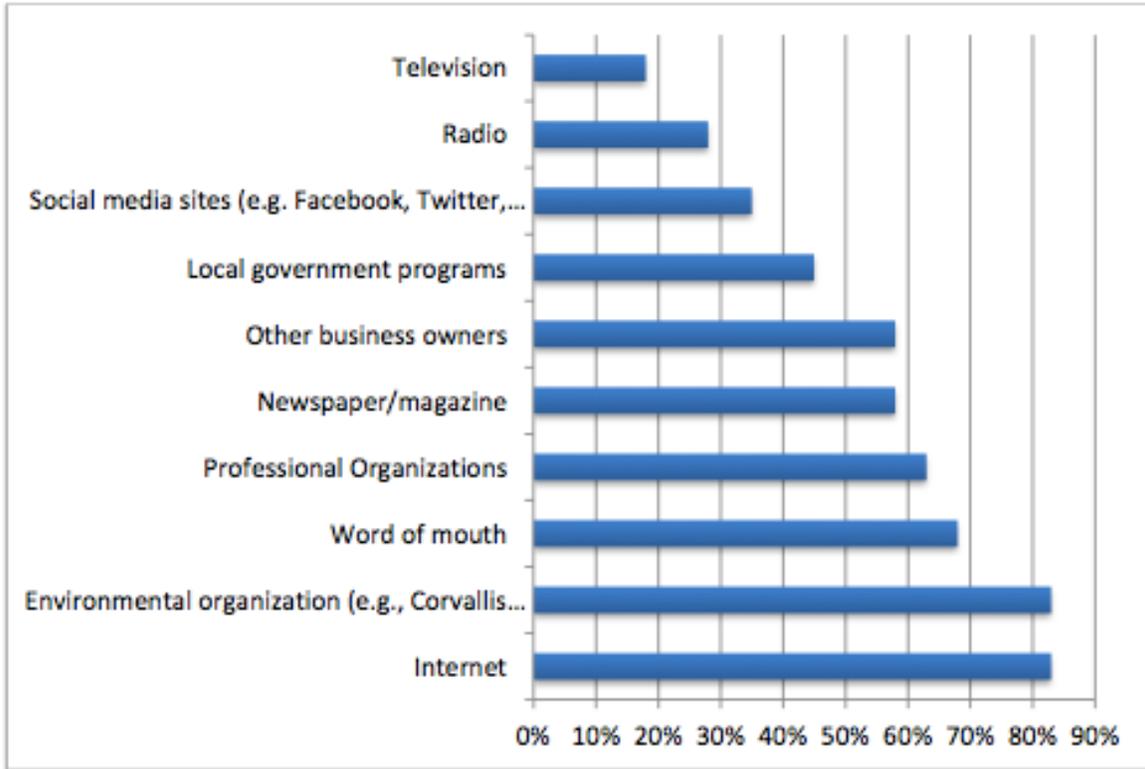
APPENDIX V: ADDITIONAL SURVEY GRAPHS



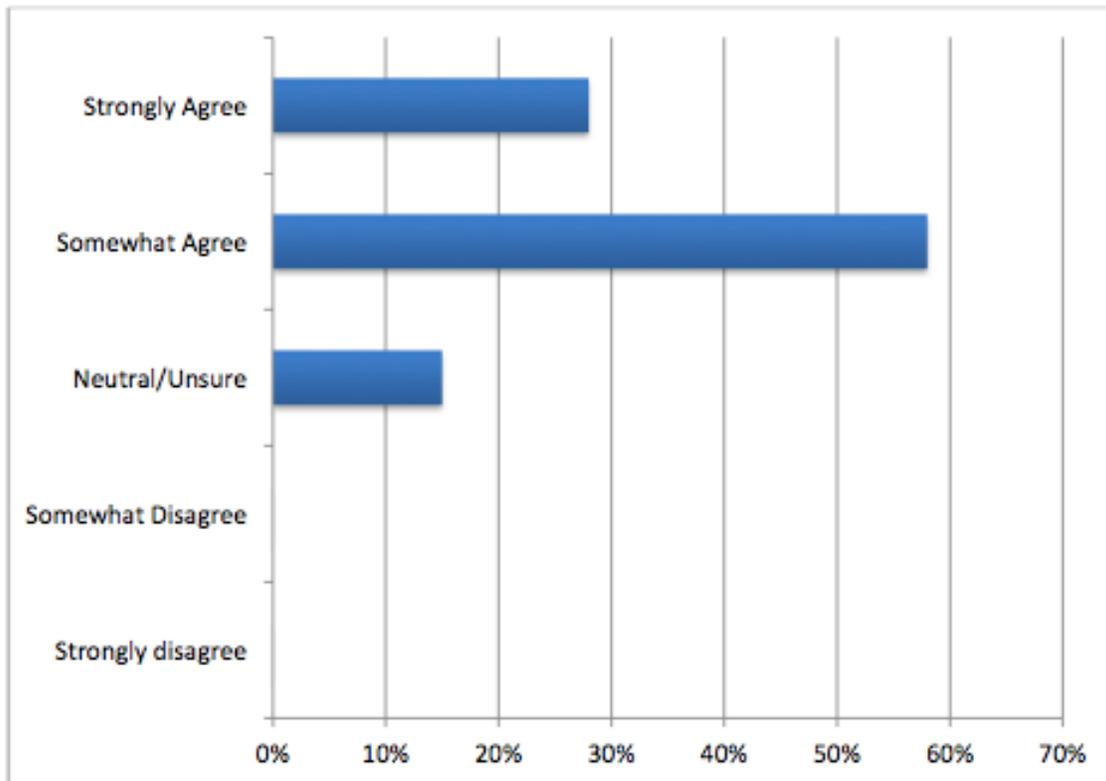
Question 2: Which of the following reporting/policy actions does your business engage in?



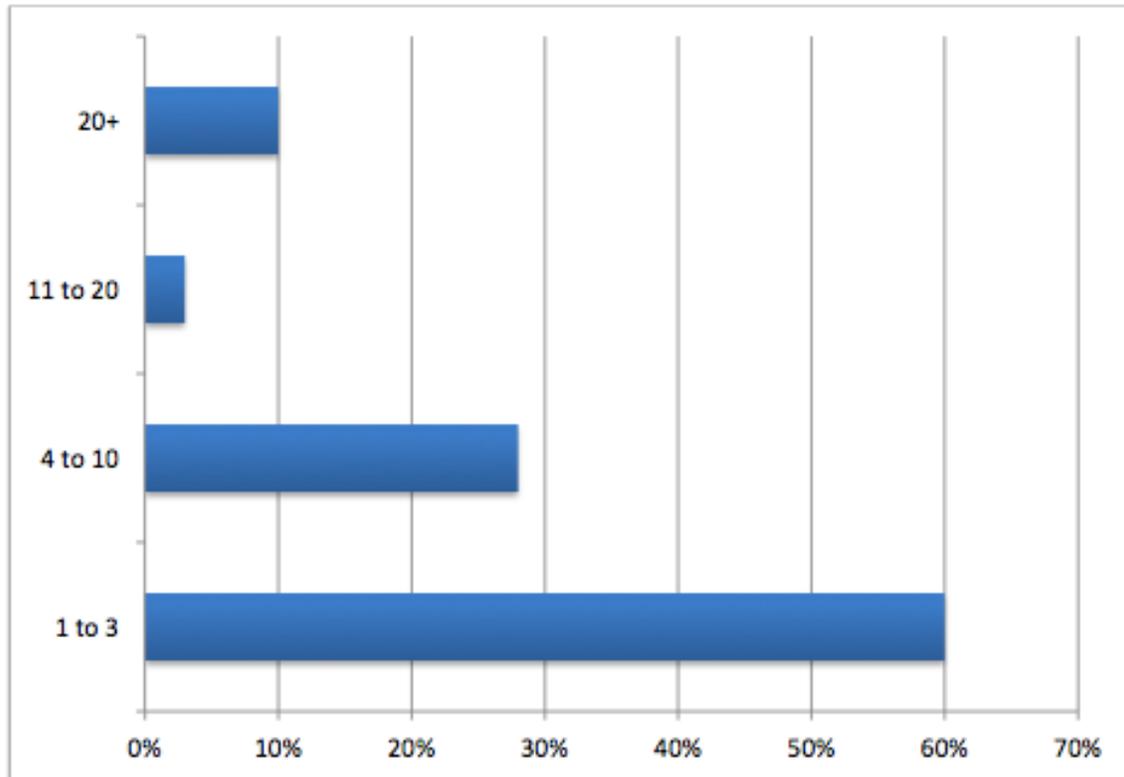
Question 4: The following are potential benefits to businesses that use sustainable business practices. Please rate on a scale of 1-5 to what degree your business benefits from the following with 5 being greatly benefits and 1 being did not benefit.



Question 6: Where do you get information on sustainable business practices?



Question 7: Seeing other business owners use sustainable practices motivates me to adopt similar practices.



Question 8: How many full-time employees does your business have?

APPENDIX VI: ADDITIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

We sent the sustainable business questionnaire to those in both the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and the Corvallis Independent Business Association to acquire data on sustainable business practices. Questions covered current practices, incentives and barriers, and business profiles. This section organizes results thematically, focusing on the most important results for encouraging sustainable practices. Survey respondents were not required to answer all questions; thus, results reflect percentages of total responses for each question. Refer to Appendix VI for the full survey questionnaire.

In total, 98% of survey respondents were locally owned businesses, 45% of whom operate locally, while 38% operate regionally. The remaining businesses operate nationally, internationally, or solely through e-commerce; however, only 10% of respondents indicated involvement in any form of e-commerce. The majority of respondents represented small businesses, with 60% employing 1 to 3 full-time employees. Additionally, most businesses that completed the questionnaire have been in operation for more than 10 years (62%). Most respondents are part of the Coalition (75%), or some other environmental group / network (35%), suggesting that 10% of respondents are part of the Coalition and at least one other environmental organization.

Given the opportunities for increasing knowledge and assistance for local businesses, it is important to recognize sources from which most businesses get information about sustainable business practices. The most common sources were the internet and environmental organizations (83%) each, followed by word of mouth (68%), professional organizations (63%), newspaper/magazine (58%), and other business owners (58%). Less common sources of information were local governments programs (45%), social media (35%), radio (28%), and television (18%).

APPENDIX VII: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. Introduction

- A. Self
- B. Project
 - 1. Class project working with the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition evaluating barriers and incentives on sustainable business practices
- C. Housekeeping
 - A. Would you like us to use your name? Otherwise, will keep you anonymous
 - B. Is it ok to record the interview? Will be destroyed after the project.
 - C. Will also be taking notes
 - D. Feel free to ask any questions during the interview
 - E. Feel free not to answer any questions you don't want to
 - F. Should last about 30-45 minutes
 - G. Questions before we start?

Questions

II. Tell me about your business:

- 1. Number of employees
- 2. How long have you been in business
- 3. How many owners, managers
- 4. Are you part of any other sustainability groups/initiatives? What about professional organizations
- 5. What got you started doing _____?

III. When did you start your business in Corvallis?

IV. Tell me about how your business ended up in Corvallis?

V. Since we're here working with the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, we're interested in knowing more about your involvement. When did you become a member of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition? Why did you join the Coalition?

VI. Before we get into the specifics for what your business does for sustainable business practices, what do you *personally* consider to be sustainable business practices in general?

- 1. What about social and economic practices?

VII. Based on your views are you currently implementing sustainable business practices?

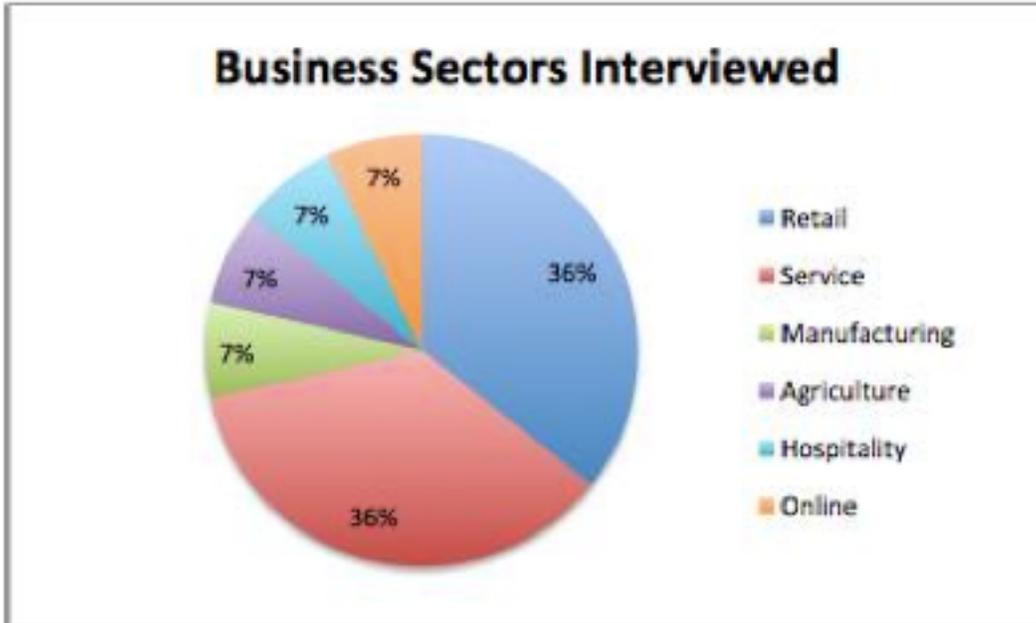
- 1. What about environmental?
- 2. What about social sustainable practices?
- 3. What about economic sustainable practices?
- 4. Is there anything (additional) you would like to be doing?

VIII. What was your motivation to adopt these practices?

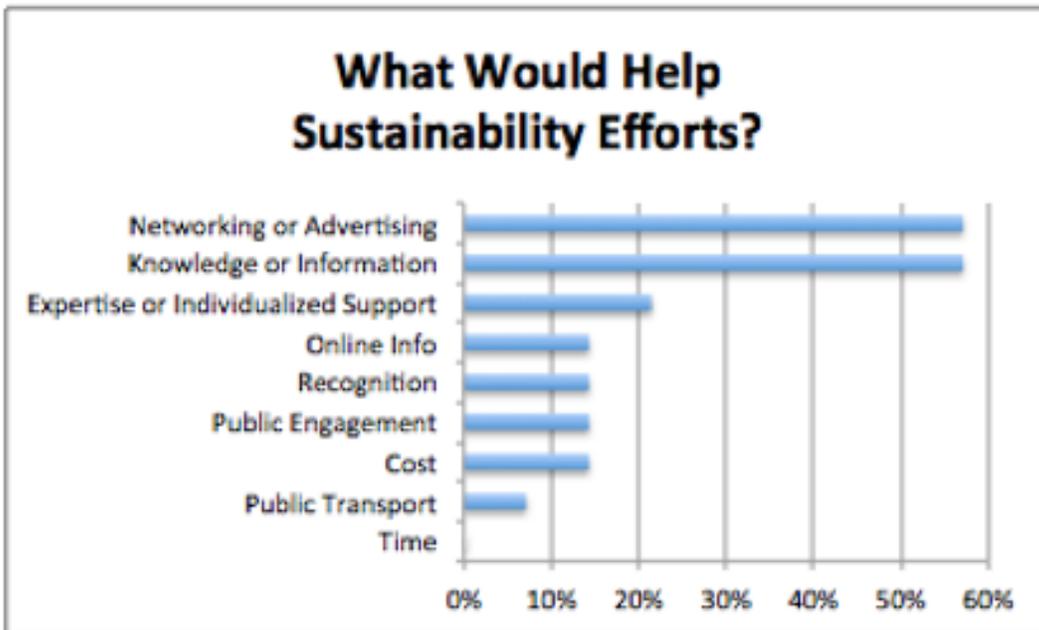
IX. Are there any challenges for you in adopting sustainable business practices?

- X. What are a few things that would help you implement sustainable business practices?
 - 1. What could different groups do to help?
- XI. If there were a sustainable business certification program in Corvallis would you be interested in participating?
 - 1. Why/why not?
 - 2. What criteria do you think businesses should be evaluated on?
 - 3. What would motivate you to participate?
- XII. Anything else you would like to add or we didn't talk about today?
- XIII. Survey
 - 1. Expect this from our classmates
 - 2. How would you like delivered (in person, phone, online)?
- XIV. Invite to final presentation
- XV. Are you interested in knowing our results?

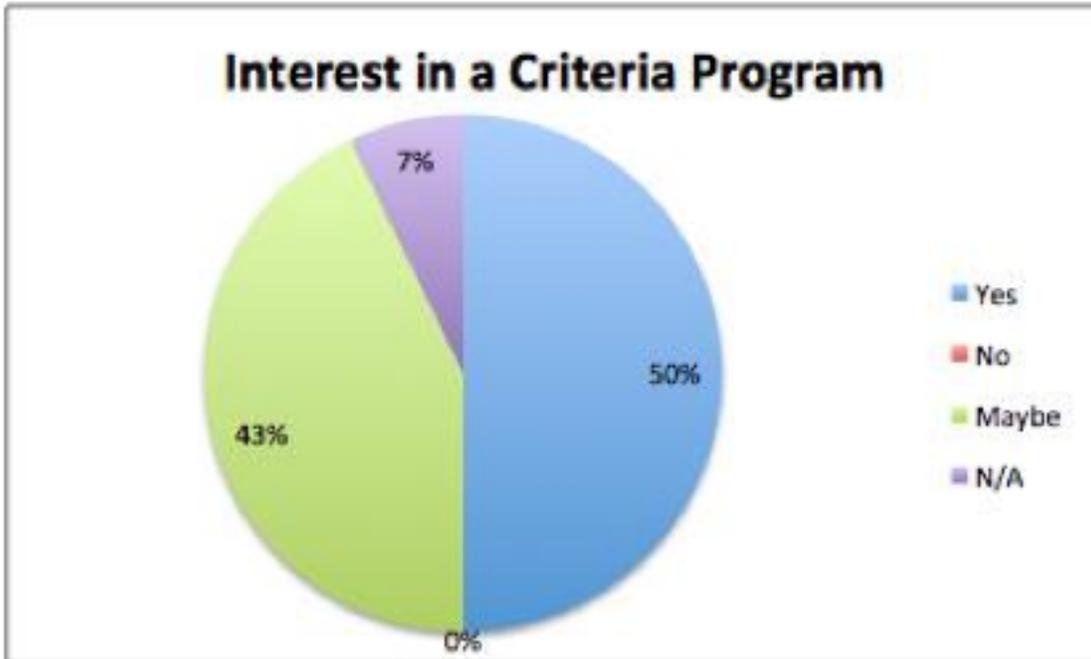
APPENDIX VIII: ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW GRAPHS



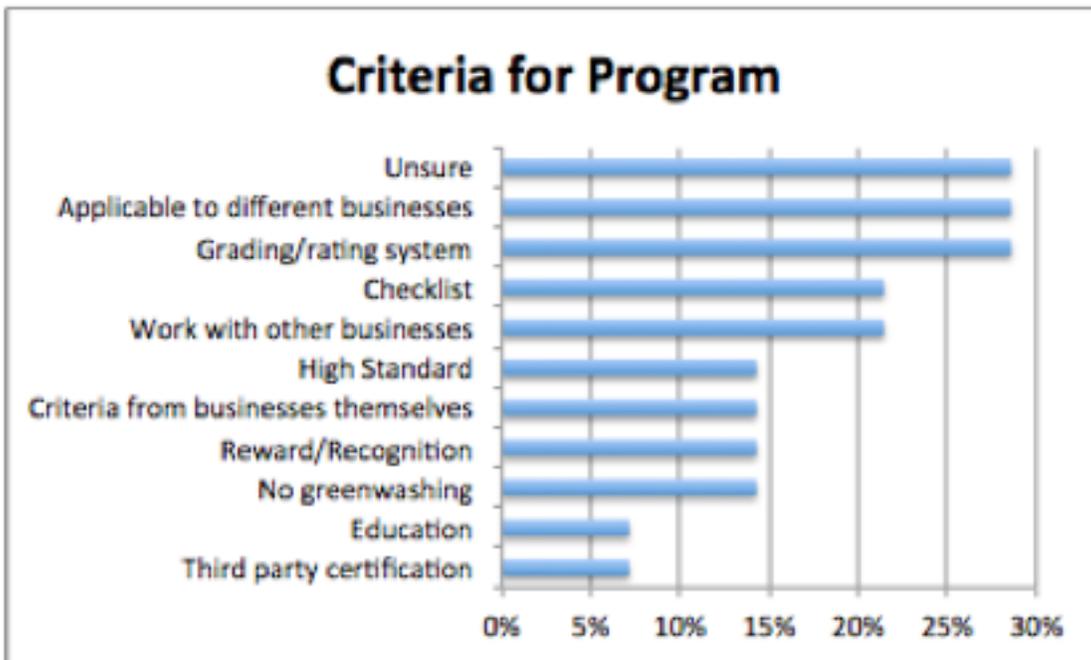
Percent of businesses interviewed by sector.



Percent of businesses that discuss relative efforts to implement sustainable business practices.



Percent of businesses that would be interested in a criteria-based sustainability program.



Characteristics businesses would want in a criteria-based sustainability program.

APPENDIX IX: ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW FINDINGS

We interviewed fourteen locally-owned Corvallis businesses listed on the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition’s member list including the retail, online, manufacturing, agriculture, hospitality, and service sectors. One business was family owned, one was a large business having more than 45 employees, and twelve businesses employed fewer than 20 employees. Only businesses mentioned by name in the analysis gave permission to be discussed in these findings, the names of businesses which objected have been omitted.

In general, Corvallis business owners expressed interest in a criteria-based program to help promote sustainable business practices but are uncertain about the form and application of this program. While half expressed interest, forty-three percent would only be interested depending on what the program entails.

Potential program aspects businesses questioned include time, money, greenwashing, applicability, networking, and standards. Three factors stood out that owners would most like to see in a criteria-based sustainability program: a grading or rating system, broad applicability, and a checklist of potential practices.

Most owners would prefer a flexible program. One owner stated, “A program with a rating system, such as a 5-star rating system, may work best so that businesses can at least get on the list, get certified, and then know where they rank amongst other businesses in the area.” Participants expressed desire for multiple paths to succeed that address capabilities on a case-by-case basis.

A criteria program must also be applicable to all types of businesses; however, incorporating all sectors may be difficult. Block 15 expressed these concerns, stating: “Coming up with criteria is a challenge. I feel that it would be hard to develop criteria that would be applicable to all businesses.” But many businesses leaders are less concerned; Broadleaf Architecture stated, “I don’t need a certificate,” but would greatly value a teaching program. Additionally, multiple individuals thought a checklist would be a good place to start a criteria program.

The Cleland Marketing representative stated, “If you made a checklist that is challenging but easy enough to follow, you can reward businesses doing the right thing but not put businesses who aren’t down too much — rather to challenge them to step it up [to improve]. Maybe a checklist with a few different things and if you get a certain number of them you are doing well.”

In conclusion, businesses are interested in a criteria program, provided it covers all sectors and remains flexible. Moreover, business owners want to feel like they are part of

something larger, which a criteria program could help offer. Broadleaf Architecture captured this sentiment: “Aren’t there bigger things we could have done? And maybe not just in this office but aren’t there bigger things that we could do for somebody else? Sometimes I don’t feel like it’s enough because it’s so small.” The program must be substantial, provide legitimate environmental and/or social benefits, and most importantly resist becoming a greenwashing program.

APPENDIX X: ADDITIONAL CASE STUDY DOCUMENTS

See Next Page.

How to implement a Recycling Policy and begin the journey towards “Zero Waste”

CONTENTS:

Objective and Timeline

Gain Management Support

Selecting a Recycling Coordinator

Research

Select Recyclers

Set up a Collection System

Educate Employees

Promote Your Program

Tracking and Reporting

Challenging Items

ZERO WASTE TIMELINE

OBJECTIVE: To produce zero waste

TIME TO COMPLETE INITIATIVE: 1 Year

The most dramatic reduction in waste will take place during the first month. A successful program will make it easy for employees to recycle and reduce waste immediately. This handbook outlines the steps needed to help you follow the timeline below:

After 1 month - reduce waste by 1/2

After 6 months - reduce waste by 3/4

After 12 months - limit waste to 1 household container

A typical company may easily fill over two large dumpsters every month, so their goal should consist of reducing waste to:

- one large dumpster after one month
- one small dumpster after six months
- one household container after one year



Step 1: Gain Management Support

Support from upper management is crucial if your program is to succeed. Even though commercial recycling is mandatory in most large cities, it is still important for everyone to know that upper management is serious about the business and environmental responsibilities.



First, the CEO or organizer should meet with the Senior Management team. Then, a second meeting with Senior Management and all department heads is needed to gain support.

The meetings should accomplish the following:

Explain why the company should institute a recycling program:

- Reduces landfill costs and energy costs
- Prevents pollution caused by manufacturing of products
- Saves energy
- Decreases emissions of greenhouse gases
- Conserves natural resources
- Helps sustain the environment
- Cleaner facilities
- Competitive advantage for sales
- It's the law in some states and cities
- Corporate security (shredders for paper and plastic)

Involve the upper management in setting up the program:

- Ask for suggestions or recommendations
- Make sure they are supportive
- Include them in training sessions with the employees

Educate managers on how to use resources efficiently:

- Order materials and supplies more precisely
- Donate used or discarded goods to assist your community
- Use durable, reusable products in place of disposable
- Print documents double sided instead of single sided

Organize a plan for the CEO or President to endorse the program publicly to the company:

- Announce personally in a company wide meeting
- Send out an e-mail memo
- Hold a special inaugural event

Facilitate open communication to keep everyone informed of the progress of the program

- Be open to ideas and suggestions

Step 2: Selecting a Recycling Coordinator

Description of ideal person:

- Passionate about our environment
- Good communication skills
- Comfortable with public speaking
- Good listener
- Hands-on problem solving
- Great organization skills
- Ability to coordinate events/training
- Leadership skills
- Motivating
- Detail orientated when documenting progress
- Willingness to learn regulations and federal compliance
- Inventory management skills
- Not afraid to touch garbage



Depending on the size of your office, the coordinator may spend anywhere from a few days to a few months getting the program off the ground. Once it's running smoothly, no more than a couple of hours a month will be needed to monitor the program.

Some of the coordinator's responsibilities may include:

- Selecting a recycler and working with them to develop the collection system
- Purchasing and distributing containers
- Creating a promotion and education campaign
- Answering questions from employees and managers
- Working with various departments and supervisors to help encourage employee participation
- Acting as liaison with the recycling company and the janitorial staff
- Detailed tracking and reporting of the program's success

Step 3: Research

Phase One: Identify all waste produced from your company

1. Take digital pictures of all garbage
2. Where does it come from?
3. How is it collected on site?
4. How is it removed from the site?
5. What happens to it once it is removed off site?
6. What is the cost of removal?
(estimate monthly or annual costs)



Phase Two: Identify what is currently being recycled

1. Take digital pictures of all recycled materials
2. Where does it come from?
3. How is it collected on site?
4. How is it removed from the site?
5. What happens to it once it is removed off site?
6. What is the cost of removal or profit?
(estimate monthly or annual costs)



Phase Three: Identify what garbage can be recycled

Add any additional items you can recycle to this list:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Steel | Mixed Plastic Film/Bags |
| Aluminum | Polystyrene |
| Dirty* Aluminum | Polyethylene |
| Copper Wire | Rubber |
| Electric Motors | Plastic Bottles |
| Circuit Boards | Sealed Air Foam |
| Mixed Paper | Cardboard |
| Aluminum Cans | Batteries |
| Rigid Plastics (Clean) | CD/DVD |
| Rigid Plastics (Dirty*) | Floppy Disks |
| Bubble Wrap | Glass |
| Clear Plastic Film/Bags | Monitors/CRT's |

*Dirty items contain a foreign material (such as wood or other metals) that can't be economically removed

Phase Four: Estimate quantity and conduct a waste audit

To determine if there are other recyclable materials in your garbage, conduct a simple waste audit to provide data on how much waste is generated, disposed of, and recycled.

1. Collect 1 week's worth of garbage and recycling.
2. Set up labeled boxes and sort out waste. If applicable, there should be 1 box for each type of waste mentioned above.

(You can also use digital pictures to estimate answers to these questions.)

- A. How much waste will be produced on a monthly/yearly basis?
- B. Who can collect the waste?
- C. How can it be collected and removed from the site?
- D. What happens once it is taken off site?
- E. What is the cost to dispose of it or the profit that can be made by selling it?

Step 4: Select Recyclers

Now that you know which materials you'd like to recycle, compare the services of several local recyclers. More than likely, a common recycler will recycle:

- Metals
- Glass
- Paper
- Cardboard
- Plastic film



Not as common, are recyclers who accept the following:

- Rigid plastics, DVDs, CDs
- Circuit boards
- Foam
- Rubber

Depending on your location, you may be able to receive money for many items such as:

- Steel
- Aluminum
- Copper
- Plastic
- Cardboard
- Paper

You should expect to pay for disposal of the following:

- CRTs
- Monitors
- TVs
- Batteries
- Food Scraps

You may want to spend extra money to ensure that certain items containing confidential information are not resold.

Use the table on the next page to help you identify the best recyclers in your area.

Research local resources to find the recyclers:

- Phone book
- Internet
- Local waste management facility for your county (solid waste division)

Invite the recyclers onto your property and establish a relationship with them. This will help them get acquainted with your facility and help you determine the best collection methods (location, time, packaging and sorting requirements). Also, review any city, state, or province specific regulations and restrictions with your recycler to make sure nothing is overlooked.

Identifying the best recyclers in your area

Service Options			
	Recycler #1	Recycler #2	Recycler #3
What types of materials are accepted?			
Is there a minimum quantity for pickup service?			
What is the collection schedule? Are they flexible?			
What are the charges, if any, for the service?			
What materials will they pay for and how much?			
Does the price change if the item is compacted or bailed?			
Containers, Collection, and Storage			
Will the recycler provide containers or equipment? What type? Costs?			
Do the recyclables need to be in separate containers or can they be combined ?			
Does the recycler have specific requirements for storage and pick-up?			
Special Services			
Will the recycler provide reports with materials and volumes recycled?			
Will they provide training for employees?			
Will the recycler come on site and help setup the program?			
Compliance and Reference Checklist			
Have they filled out an audit document and proved licenses?			
Have they provided references?			
Have you checked local government records for compliance?			

Step 5: Set up a Collection System

A simple and convenient collection system is essential for employee participation. Recycling containers placed at every desk and in the other common work areas are the cornerstone to a successful program. BE CREATIVE! Design a collection system unique to your business' needs. Here are some helpful tips for setting up a successful collection system:

- Remove existing garbage cans and replace with a desk side collection container (see fig. A)
- Place containers for paper collection by copiers, printers, and other paper-related workstations
- Provide desk side paper shredders to managers for sensitive materials
- Place containers for food waste in the employee's lounge, cafeteria, or work areas
- Make sure that all of your recycling containers are clearly labeled for easy use
- Place an inline station in the workspaces and in the lunchrooms

You may need to purchase:

- a. 1 desk side container for every employee
(Use the small container for compostable items and the large container for recycling)
- b. A supply of small biodegradable plastic bags for the small container of the desk side collection unit (from local janitorial supply company)
- c. Plastic stackable collection bins (from local recycler)
- d. In-line stations for installation in:
 - ~Lunchroom– use as a launch/event/installation
 - ~General work area(s) – make it convenient
 - ~Front of the building – install at the end of the initiative to set the stage for people when they first arrive

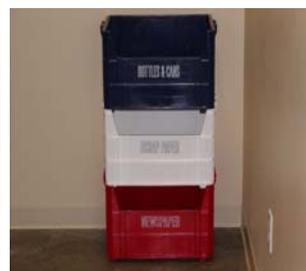
**For In-line Stations:
Fibrex Products**
www.fibrexgroup.com
Phone: 757-487-5744



A. Desk side container



B. Small bags



C. Plastic stackable bins



D. In-line station

Tailor your system to your business by figuring out the best role for employees, janitors, facility, staff and the recycling vendor. Common answers to the following questions are noted below:

- Who will be responsible for emptying desk side recycling containers? (employees)
- Who will be responsible for emptying the common area recycle containers? (janitors)
- Will the janitors empty the containers every night? (yes)
- Will employees empty them in a central location once they are full? (yes)
- Who will transfer the contents to outdoor collection containers? (janitors)
- Who will train staff and janitorial personnel? (facilities administrator)

Make sure your system is convenient and flexible and keep the janitors and facilities staff involved throughout the process. Your janitors might surprise you and take the idea to their other clients!

Step 6: Educate Employees

Learn what will work with every department. Since certain departments may need special attention, be open-minded to suggestions and ideas. Employees know their work areas best and can help come up with solutions.

Organize group meetings to show a presentation and discuss:

Why you are instituting a recycling program:

- Reduces the need for landfilling
- Prevents pollution caused by manufacturing of products
- Saves energy
- Decreases emissions of greenhouse gases
- Conserves natural resources
- Helps sustain the environment
- Competitive advantage for sales
- It's the law in some states and cities
- Corporate security (shredders for paper and plastic)

Why the current recycling system (if there is one) doesn't work

The solution/action-what you are instituting

How to recycle and the importance of separation

Who your recyclers are and where they send materials

A timeline to reach your goal of zero waste

Photos of your facility's waste stream (the "before" photos)

Safety hazards and concerns about materials such as:

- Batteries
- Light bulbs
- Chemical disposal
- Electronics
- Solder/lead



Step 7: Promote your Program to Keep it Growing

Promotion is the key to all successful recycling programs and well-informed employees will actively participate. Up-front education and planning will help ensure that you have fewer implementation problems. Involve your staff in promotions and planning so that they have ownership in the program.

Schedule training sessions for management, employees, and janitorial staff so that everyone understands how the program will work:

- Give everyone a "how to" handout on waste prevention and recycling
- Distribute a list of recyclable materials to all staff
- Make sure staff know whom to contact with questions

Introduce the program by using some of the following ideas:

- Place promotional posters on display in high traffic areas
- Officially kick off the program when you hand out desk side containers
- Make sure everyone knows the locations of the central containers
- Throw a party to celebrate the start of the program
- Create a contest such as a recycling relay to build enthusiasm

As you hire new employees, work with HR to educate new employees:

- Include recycling documents in a new hire book
- Organize meetings for new hires (at least once per quarter)

Monitor waste to determine weaknesses:

- Look into garbage cans and pull out garbage from dumpsters
- Meet with the janitorial group to address any concerns
- Conduct follow up meetings with departments that have challenging waste

Other suggestions:

- Provide staff tips and monthly e-mail reminders about recycling
- E-mail awards for outstanding participants, competitions, etc.
- Highlight milestones or accomplishments (e.g., when you are down to one dumpster/month)
- Add new materials to recycle programs when needed: toner cartridges, fluorescent light bulbs
- Move or sell valuable items on the internet

Remember, this is something new.

It will take some time to get everyone to participate, so be patient. The more people that help with planning and setting up the program, the easier it will be to implement.



Step 8: Tracking and Reporting Progress

Tracking and reporting your progress is essential and proves the program’s success. A report should be given every month to the head office. It must include a detailed spreadsheet showing cost and container reduction.

When compiling your end of month report:

- Measurements by weight are preferred (from recycler, pallet scale, or other type of scale)
- Weigh each container
- Use specific categories that are broken out by commodity

To calculate dumpster reduction:

- Document original quantities and size of dumpster
- Factor in the amount / expense
- How many times is it dumped and what is the cost per dump?

Behavior Changes:

Not all things are easy to recycle, and sometimes we needed to change our behaviors.

Urinal Deodorizer

For instance, most men’s bathrooms have a deodorizer in the urinal. No recycling companies will recycle the deodorizer because it is considered toxic waste after it is used. One solution might be to eliminate the deodorizer and use wall mounted air fresheners that spray deodorizer into the air automatically.



Cigarette Butts

Another difficult item is cigarette butts. What can you do with the toxic waste? The butts will inevitably end up in a land fill, but you can persuade employees to quit smoking by promoting and offering reimbursement for smoking cessation programs. By assisting employees to quit smoking, you are improving their health as well as eliminating toxic waste.

