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Building #400 - Auditorium
21557 Telegraph Road | Southfield, MI

Attendee Guide

April 5, 2023

Great Lakes Women's Business COUNCIL

POWERED BY SBA U.S. Small Business Administration

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APRIL 2023

Welcome to execWE!
Beyond Sustainability: Business Essentials for Driving Growth

Welcome to the 2023 execWE on behalf of Great Lakes Women's Business Council. To welcome you is my pleasure—you've joined us for our first in-person execWE since 2019! Our 2023 theme is Beyond Sustainability: Business Essentials for Driving Growth. You'll see our theme through multiple, unique lenses—our presenters stepped up to share their knowledge, experiences, and expertise with you.

We're excited to partner with Lear Corporation this year, our title sponsor and host and WBE title sponsor Argent Tape & Label. Derrick Mitchell of Lear will greet you and share remarks and updates on the industry. Michelle Richards, Great Lakes Women's Business Council's Founding Executive Director, provides welcome remarks. Linda Hannah of Linda Hannah Speaks guides you on how to put on a specific hat (mindset) to embrace sustainability as a leader and prepares you for today's learning. Tanya Bolden of AIAG will convey in her keynote address how to skillfully navigate your ESG journey and grow your capabilities. You'll have an opportunity to engage with corporate members in breakout sessions for continued learning and open discussion. Sustainability trendsetters come together as a panel of diverse women business leaders moderated by Lear Sustainability Officer Carolyn Markey, to share sustainability experiences and best practices with you. Sherry Cummins of Great Lakes WBC helps you reflect on bridging what you've learned into action items toward a sustainable future. I will close out the day then release you for a half hour of powerful networking led by Arthur McClellan, Director of Supplier Diversity and Development at Lear.

We are grateful for the support of several corporate and WBE sponsors for this event.

We've designed this comprehensive execWE program to provide you opportunities for engagement, growth, networking, and sharing of knowledge and practice to become a sustainable business. I'm confident you'll find today a meaningful investment in your company.

Best regards,

Shawntay L. Dixon

Shawntay L. Dixon

Director of Business Education
Women's Business Center
Great Lakes Women's Business Council

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Agenda

9:00am	Registration		Lobby
9:30am	Host and Title Sponsor Welcome	**Derrick Mitchell** Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Non-Production Purchasing and Minority Business Enterprises | Lear Corporation	Auditorium
9:45am	Welcome & Acknowledgements	**Shawntay Dixon** Director of Business Education | Great Lakes WBC	Auditorium
10:00am	Opening Session	***"The Sustainable Leader"*** **Linda Hannah** President | Linda Hannah Speaks	Auditorium
10:30am	Keynote Address	***"Skillfully Navigate Your ESG Journey and Grow Your Capabilities"*** **Tanya Bolden** Vice President, Supply Chain and Corporate Responsibility Products & Services | AIAG	Auditorium
11:05am	Q&A	**Q&A Facilitators** • **Lawrence Jackson** Business Growth Counselor | Great Lakes WBC • **Lori Wesby** MentorWE Program Coordinator | Great Lakes WBC	Auditorium
11:15am	Brunch	Healthy Options 30 minutes	Café Area
11:45am	Breakout Sessions	**Corporate-Led Discussions** **Facilitator** • **Arthur McClellan—Aud 1** Director of Supplier Diversity and Development | Lear Corporation • **Marisyl Guevarra—Aud 2** Project Manager, Sustainability & Responsible Sourcing | Lear • **Teresa LeFevre—1A** VP, Supplier Diversity Manager | Comerica • **Brooke Bowers—1B** Executive Director, Sustainability | Adient • **Erica White—1C** MBA, CDP, Supplier Diversity Lead | Corewell Health • **Brian Moore—Café 1** Senior Director, Business Development & Supplier Diversity | Flex • **Lillian Lowery—Café 2** Supplier Diversity Manager | GE Health • **Therissa Allen—Lobby 1** NA Supplier Diversity Manager | Nippon Seiki NA • **Tammi Hart—Lobby 2** Director of Purchasing, Supplier Diversity and Corporate Services | Tenneco • **Tracy Deuman—Lobby 3** Head of Supplier Diversity | Valeo	Rooms & Auditorium

Agenda *page 2*

12:30pm	Break	**15 Minute Break**	Auditorium
12:45pm	Sustainability Trendsetters Panel	**Moderator: Carolyn Markey** Senior Manager, Strategy, Reporting, and Communications | Lear Corporation **Panelists** **Amy Peterson** | CEO and Co-Founder | Rebel Nell **Debora Smith |** CEO | Debora Smith Energy Partners **Tarolyn Buckles |** CEO | Onyx Enterprise	Auditorium
1:30pm	Q&A	**Q&A Facilitators** **Lawrence Jackson** Business Growth Counselor | Great Lakes WBC **Lori Wesby** MentorWE Program Coordinator | Great Lakes WBC	Auditorium
1:40pm	Reflection	***"Embarking on a Sustainable Journey"* Sherry Cummins | Senior Specialist** Women's Business Development Great Lakes WBC	Auditorium
1:55pm	Closing Remarks	**Shawntay Dixon | Director of Business Education** Great Lakes WBC	Auditorium
2:00pm	Networking	**Lear Networking Session** **Arthur McClellan** Director of Supplier Diversity and Development Lear Corporation	Atrium
2:30pm	Adjourn	Thank you for attending, We look forward to seeing in September at the Conference in Novi, Michigan.	

Speakers

Emcee

Shawntay Dixon, Director of Business Education | Great Lakes WBC

Welcome

Michelle Richards, Executive Director | Great Lakes WBC

Title Sponsor Remarks

Derrick Mitchell, Vice President
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Non-Production Purchasing and Minority Business Enterprises
Lear Corporation

Opening Session

Linda Hannah, President | Linda Hannah Speaks

Keynote Address

Tanya Bolden, Vice President, Supply Chain and Corporate Responsibility Products & Services | AIAG

Corporate-Led Discussion Facilitators

1. Arthur McClellan | Lear Corporation
2. Marisyl A. Guevarra | Lear
3. Teresa LeFevre | Comerica
4. Brooke Bowers | Adient
5. Erica White | Corewell Health
6. Brian Moore | Flex
7. Lillian Lowery | GE Healthcare
8. Therissa Allen | NS International
9. Tammi Hart | Tenneco
10. Tracy Deuman | Valeo

Sustainability Trendsetters Panel

Moderator
Carolyn Markey, Senior Manager, Strategy, Reporting and Communications | Lear Corporation

Panelists
Amy Peterson | Rebel Nell
Tarolyn Buckles | Onyx Enterprise, Inc.
Debora Smith | Debora Smith Energy Partners

Reflection

Sherry Cummins, Women's Business Development, Senior Specialist | Great Lakes WBC

Lear Networking

Art McClellan, Director of Supplier Diversity and Development | Lear Corporation

SESSION RESOURCES
Handouts and Note Pages

Host and Title Sponsor Welcome

Derrick Mitchell | Lear Corporation

Notes _____

Welcome Remarks

Michelle Richards | Great Lakes WBC

Notes _____

Welcome and Acknowledgements

Shawntay Dixon | Great Lakes WBC

Notes _____

The Sustainable Leader

Linda Hannah, Linda Hannah Speaks

LINDA HANNAH SPEAKS

SHIFT Your Mindset!

Cultivate, Embrace, & Demonstrate Resiliency

When it comes to an Imposter Syndrome Hat, we can take it off and toss it away by replacing it with the Hat of Remembrance—which requires remembering ourselves and who we are. You haven't gotten where you are without the skills and strengths that you've gained through the years of experiences that are yours, and yours alone. These strengths deserve to be remembered. Use the space below to list 3-5 of your unique strengths, so that you can pull them out when you need to toss away that Imposter Syndrome Hat.

Unique Strengths _____

_____

_____

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The hats of comparison, and of imposter syndrome prevent us from identifying our true selves. We stop this by practicing our A, B, Cs—Write them here so that you can remember them.

A –

B –

C –

The Sustainable Leader

Linda Hannah, Linda Hannah Speaks

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How do you remember what to focus on? Write it here to help you remember to move forward when you're stuck:

F –

O –

C –

U –

S –

The Sustainable Leader

Linda Hannah, Linda Hannah Speaks

When it comes to negative self-talk, the last thing we should do is camp out in our past. Instead, we must get into the habit of saying the right things to ourselves to keep us in the present and keep us moving forward.

We do this for our friends and family, by encouraging them with our words. We build up others, so we should be able to build up ourselves. Make a list of four statements that you've told a friend to encourage them that will also work for your own situations. When discouraging moments come about—you can use this list to lift your soul and be your own best friend!

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2. _____

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3. _____

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4. _____

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The Sustainable Leader

Linda Hannah, Linda Hannah Speaks

The Hat of Gratitude is something you should never take off. It helps you remember to move away from negative self-talk, or even self-pity, and shift your mindset towards gratefulness. We wear this hat by practicing gratitude. Think of three things that you're grateful for, things like a roof over your head, your health, or practical things like a working appliance. Write them down and read them periodically to remind yourself of the things you're grateful for:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

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3. _____

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Notes _____

The Sustainable Leader

Linda Hannah, Linda Hannah Speaks

LINDA HANNAH SPEAKS

SHIFT Your Mindset!

Cultivate, Embrace, & Demonstrate Resiliency

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: I find that I wear hats that are not mine to own. How do I break free of this without feeling like I'm letting down everyone around me?

Answer: When wearing hats that are not your own, self-talk is also important. Identifying for yourself who YOU are and removing those other hats so that you can successfully wear your own. For instance, if you find yourself being that person who always comes to the rescue when others are in self-created crisis, you'll need to remove yourself from being the person who executes for everyone else. Instead, provide advice and point them in the direction of information and resources. That way you're helping with less strain on yourself. Help empower others by helping them to wear those hats themselves that they previously made you feel that you needed to wear.

Notes _____

The Sustainable Leader

Linda Hannah, Linda Hannah Speaks

Question: Can navigating through perceptions be applied at a corporate level? It's sometimes difficult to turn the outside perception of a company around quickly, but we must do so in order to achieve our goals.

Answer: Employees are the best ambassadors, and that's ultimately how corporate images are established. It's the thousands of daily interactions that external folks have dealing with internal people. It's the difference between calling a company and being put on hold with a machine vs. someone who answers promptly and resolved your issue. It's whether employees are involved in the communities in a meaningful way.

Notes _____

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Question: We talk a lot about Work / Life Balance. Sometimes it feels like it's just "talk." Why is it so important that everyone (including management) finds this balance?

Answer: It's important because anything that is out of balance eventually sees and feels the consequences of the tilt- be it fatigue, lack of enthusiasm/drive, or even aspirations of dreams. If our vehicles sputter and stop when they run out of gas, how are we much different? It is not going ANYWHERE, and neither can we! Work / Life Balance is NOT an option! In order to be equipped – physically, emotionally, and mentally, to be there for our families for the long haul, we must implement practices to invest in ourselves – activities or hobbies – things that release stress and energizes us. This gives us clarity of mind and causes creativity and ideas to flow. To keep your balance, put yourself on the "must do" list of the week. Balance and refreshing causes us to be stable, and **stability releases ability**! Ability to accomplish the next task with clarity and motivation because you've been rejuvenated. Ability to still dream and have hope for any changes you want to see in your life and those you love. You, your family, and your employer – everyone benefits when you are at your best.

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The Sustainable Leader

Linda Hannah, Linda Hannah Speaks

Question: How do we help ourselves to manage the hats we take on? Is it possible to get rid of certain hats, or do we feel they are something that always stays with us?

Answer: Learn to schedule, "me time." Then actually schedule it – regularly. It helps our brain to unwind. Learning this may require research and reading/exploring. Don't imagine you can just make it happen for yourself if you haven't ever done so before. Seek information on the subject. It encompasses more than a spa day.

Answer: Expand your circle. Nurture your existing relationships or develop new ones with others with whom you can "exchange" hats. Help them remove hats that they struggle with, by your providing them help with what comes naturally to you in exchange for them helping you with what they are better suited for and removing that hat from you.

Notes _____

Keynote Address—Skillfully Navigating Your ESG Journey and Grow Your Capabilities

Tanya Bolden, AIAG

Notes

ENGAGE
AIAG SPEAKER SERIES
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY + SUPPLY CHAIN

AIAG ARE YOU IN?

CR/SC Speaker Series

1. How ESG Research Firms Evaluate Supply Chain Sustainability
2. How Your Company's ESG Data Can Be Used
3. U.S. Customs and Border Protection - AIAG USMCA Briefing
4. USMCA: Beyond Implementation and Into Best Practice
5. German Due Diligence Act: Legal Requirements
6. German Due Diligence Act: Managerial Implications and Pragmatic Actions
7. German Due Diligence Act: Responsible Supply Chains: New Requirements
8. Introduction to Science Based Targets
9. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

And many more!

To register visit: https://www.aiag.org/store/corporate-responsibility/webinars

AIAG WORKGROUPS

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https://www.aiag.org/corporateresponsibility/environmental-sustainability

Environmental Sustainability Advisory Group

Greenhouse Gas Workgroup

Chemical: https://www.aiag.org/corporate-responsibility/chemical-management

Chemical Management Advisory Group

Recommendation & Documentation Group

Social: https://www.aiag.org/corporateresponsibility/responsible-materials

Responsible Materials

Breakout Sessions | Corporate-Lead Discussion with Facilitators

During brunch, make your way to your assigned breakout group. Most groups will be in the auditorium, some in rooms outside the auditorium. Please be sure to check your nametag for your assigned group number and look for the sign number by your group. Corporate Facilitators and their breakout group numbers are shown below.

Prepare to connect with others and engage in an interactive session of best practices and corporate wisdoms.

Arthur McClellan Auditorium 1	**Marisyl Abaja Guevarra Auditorium 2**	**Teresa LeFevre Room 1A**	**Brooke Bowers Room 1B**	**Erica White Room 1C**
LEAR CORPORATION	LEAR CORPORATION	Comerica Bank	ADIENT	Corewell Health
Brian Moore Café 1	**Lillian Lowery Café 2**	**Therissa Allen Lobby 1**	**Tammi Hart Lobby 2**	**Tracy Deuman Lobby 3**
flex	GE HealthCare	NSWA NIPPON SEIKI INTERNATIONAL	TENNECO	Valeo

Notes _____

Sustainability Trendsetters Panel

Carolyn Markey | Lear Corporation

Panelists

Amy Peterson | Rebel Nell
Debora Smith | Debora Smith Energy Partners
Tarolyn Buckles | Onyx Enterprise, Inc.

Notes

Reflection—Embarking on a Sustainable Journey

Sherry Cummins, | Great Lakes WBC

Notes _____

Closing Remarks

Shawntay Dixon | Great Lakes WBC

Notes _____

Lear Networking

Art McClellan | Lear Corporation

Connection

Name _____

Company _____

Email _____

Phone # _____

Next Steps _____

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Connection

Name _____

Company _____

Email _____

Phone # _____

Next Steps _____

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Connection

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Sustainability Plan

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HOW TO CREATE A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN: EXECUTIVE GUIDE TO BECOMING A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Article by Bill Zujewski

THE PLAYBOOK FOR BECOMING A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

If your company is working toward improving its sustainability performance, you need a strategy, plan and roadmap. There are ten steps we've defined at Green Business Bureau to gear your company's purpose, culture, focus and actions towards sustainability. All 10 steps below were summarized in the first article, The Executive Guide for Becoming a Sustainable Business:

Step 1: Define your vision, mission and values

Step 2: Create a sustainability committee or green team

Step 3: Benchmark and assess your current sustainability performance

Step 4: Engage your employees

Step 5: Plan, set goals and prioritize based on over 400 GBB initiatives

Step 6: Implement the plan, establish and communicate new policies and practices

Step 7: Leverage the GBB Scorecard to track progress and measure results

Step 8: Analyze your results and compare to goals and benchmarks

Step 9: Celebrate and communicate your accomplishments

Step 10: If you're ready, get Certified or continue making improvements

Today's article will cover Step 5, a blueprint for a sustainability plan.

STEP 5: CREATE A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS

The fifth step in your green business journey is to create a sustainability plan. A holistic and well-organized sustainability plan will include several key components:

Part 1: Sustainability Drivers – This section summarizes the aspects of your business that use scarce natural resources, contribute to climate change, cause environmental harm, or produce useless waste. It's essentially a summary of your sustainability opportunities and challenges.

Part 2: Goals and KPIs – This section documents your current baseline in terms of your eco profile which includes your energy usage, water usage, carbon emissions and overall eco score. The score can be based on several common certifications including Green Business Bureau and the B Corp Impact Assessment. It also includes your goals and target KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

Part 3: Action Plan – This section includes a list of planned green initiatives and a detailed description for each. The initiatives should be prioritized based on impact, effort, cost, and feasibility. They should consider processes, materials, people, policies, and projects related to energy, waste, buildings, products, packaging, supply chain, transportation, food, water, community, and employee wellbeing.

Part 4: Implementation Plan – This section includes the organization structure required to support your sustainability program as well as employee training, internal and external communication, policy requirements and certification plans.

UNDERSTAND YOUR SUSTAINABILITY DRIVERS

There is not one sustainable business blueprint that applies to every company. Every industry and every business uses resources and energy differently. However, there are a few common goals every business shares: to minimize their waste and reduce carbon emissions. Business factors that influence sustainability priorities include investors, customers, resource shortages, consumer preferences, the ROI of projects, regulations, employee morale, recruitment and retention, and brand equity. All of these need to be taken into account in your sustainability strategy, tactics and prioritization of initiatives. Here are the main areas to consider and questions to ask yourself when understanding what changes your company needs to make to improve its sustainability performance:

- **Energy** – How much energy do we use? Can we use less or adopt clean alternative energy sources?
- **Water** – How much water do we use? How much do we waste? Can we conserve water with smart technology (e.g., motion sensor faucets)? Do we use plastic bottles for water?
- **Food** – Where do we source our food from? What food do we provide employees? Is it healthy and produced from sustainable sources? Can we minimize meat and offer more plant-based options? Are we composting food waste?
- **Waste** – What waste do we produce and where does it come from? Is it hazardous? How can we reduce waste and prevent pollution? Can we find ways to recycle or upcycle waste materials (e.g., install recycling bins in the break room)?
- **Buildings** – How eco-friendly are our buildings? Are there opportunities to improve energy efficiency and upgrade lighting, insulation, heating and cooling? Are we maximizing natural light or natural airflow whenever possible?
- **Products & Packaging** – Do our products use sustainably sourced and eco-friendly materials? How does manufacturing our products impact the environment? Is our packaging also safe for people and the planet?

- **Supply Chain** – Are we using vendors and suppliers who are environmentally and socially responsible? Are we sourcing products locally or from the closest source? Are there areas to improve supply chain efficiency in terms of lowering waste and carbon emissions?
- **Transportation** – What vehicles do we use for distribution and operations? Can we reduce employee business travel? If not, how can we offset our carbon emissions?
- **Community** – Do we support our local communities and local farms? Do we get involved in environmental causes, events, and associations? Are we evangelizing green business?
- **Employees** – Do we offer employee training in sustainability? Do we have a green team? Are we creating a green culture? What's our level of employee engagement? Do we communicate policies company-wide?

CONSIDER ALL BUSINESS FUNCTIONS AND DEPARTMENTS

For many industries, the process of manufacturing products causes the most harm to the planet. This is especially true in Industrial Manufacturing and Consumer Manufacturing where supply chain, materials and factory operations drive significant carbon emissions and waste. But every department and every employee has an impact on your eco footprint, not just manufacturing. Companies looking to become more sustainable need to look at all departments and all business functions:

- **Manufacturing,** including production, sourcing, fulfillment, distribution, and logistics.
- **Facilities,** including buildings, cleaning and maintenance, bathrooms, food service, heating, air conditioning and landscaping.
- **Engineering,** including product design, materials, and end-of-life management (e.g., the product's reuse and recycling potential).
- **Finance and Accounting,** including applying carbon credits, minimizing paper billing and printing and remote working.
- **Customer Service,** including remote service and product repair that uses spare parts for replacements.
- **Human Resources,** including video conferencing interviews, hiring of employees that are purpose-driven and committed to sustainability.
- **Information Technology and Printing,** including your servers, data center and hosting providers.
- **Sales and Marketing,** including business travel, printing of marketing materials and sustainability evangelism.
- **Executive Team,** including establishing a company purpose, green mission statement, green culture, and the right values.

BUILDING THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

There are several key steps required before a company actually starts creating and documenting its sustainability plan and program. These are discussed in detail in previous articles in the Green Business Bureau Executive Guide Steps 1 to 4. The company leadership team must define the sustainability vision, mission, and values for the company. A sustainability committee or green team must be in place to begin the research, strategy and planning phase. The team will need to benchmark and assess the current sustainability performance and engage employees to gather ideas and understand the current state of sustainability. Once these foundational steps are taken, it's time to begin creating the plan. The following sections review all the major areas that should be considered in your plan.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RENEWABLE ENERGY

If your building hasn't undergone an energy audit, now is the time. Energy audits help you truly understand your energy use and offer recommendations for better efficiency and lower utility bills. You will likely uncover opportunities for alternative clean energy (non-fossil fuel energy sources and processes). Examples include solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, wave power, nuclear and hydropower. There are dozens of initiatives in this area and Green Business Bureau provides an in-depth library of them. Here are some of the tactics and initiatives to consider in your plan:

- Start upgrading your building by installing programmable thermostats and low-flow faucet aerators and replacing incandescent light bulbs with LEDs.
- Consider bigger projects like HVAC retrofits or renewable energy installations like solar roofing. While these projects have expensive upfront costs, they yield significant net savings in the long-term.
- Buy certified energy efficient appliances and equipment like those from ENERGY STAR.
- Switch your utilities providers to ones that offer renewable energy options.
- Research clean energy tax credits and incentives available in your area.

WASTE REDUCTION – REUSE & RECYCLING

Reducing waste is a win-win for businesses because it's friendly to both the environment and the bottom line. The ultimate waste reduction goal is to get to zero waste, where no waste makes it to the landfill. If zero waste is too ambitious of a goal, you can start with a goal of waste reduction or waste minimization. Here are some examples of waste initiatives to consider:

- Improve your manufacturing processes to produce less waste.
- Comply with strict environmental standards in terms of production materials and the use of raw materials.
- Uncover all recycling opportunities and turn your waste into something another stakeholder can use.

- Improve inventory and store food and materials more efficiently to minimize spoilage and overstocking.
- Aim to be as paperless as possible. Don't send printed direct mail and stop the flow of junk mail by opting out of direct mailing lists.
- Use sustainable marketing swag and promotional items that are useful and reusable like totes and reusable water bottles.
- Teach customers to do repairs rather than dispose of products.

WATER USAGE BEST PRACTICES

The past decade has been one of the driest on record in several parts of the world. Several countries have enacted stringent water rationing for businesses and households. Drought ranks second among U.S. weather-related economic events with annual losses nearing $9 billion. Whether your business is located in a drought-stricken area or not, reducing water usage is an effective way to save money and help conserve valuable environmental resources. Your plan should include water conservation initiatives such as:

- Fix plumbing that leaks and eliminate dripping taps.
- Install low-flow faucets and water efficient toilets.
- Opt for a drought-tolerant landscape design with drip irrigation and rain sensors.
- Reduce landscape water use.
- Engage employees to be more conscientious of their water consumption habits.

POLLUTION PREVENTION & WATER STEWARDSHIP

Companies all pollute at some level, whether it is pollution in the air, water, or soil. Pollution prevention begins with reducing or eliminating waste at the source. Here are some of the tactics and initiatives to consider in your plan related to pollution:

- Modify your production processes to emit less waste or hazardous emissions.
- Use non-toxic or less toxic materials and substances in your products and processes.
- Implement conservation techniques by using less energy, water, and raw materials.
- Reuse materials such as production scraps and byproducts to reduce your waste stream.
- Reduce packaging that is non-biodegradable.
- Use electric or hybrid fleet vehicles or other lower emissions vehicles.

The ultimate goal is to eliminate discharge pollutants and get to something often referred to as zero discharge – the stats of having no pollutants from a point source (e.g., processing plant) to local waterways. Part of zero discharge includes being a good water steward.

- Recycle industrial wastewater—treat any reusable water or other material from wastewater and transfer any potential pollutants to solid phase (sludge).
- Reduce the amount of water needed during production.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING BEST PRACTICES

Your buildings can certainly be more efficient and eco-friendly. When moving, building or expanding, look for buildings that have a high-efficiency architecture. These buildings typically have net-zero and passive construction methods that employ super-insulated shells equipped with solar and geothermal systems to reduce energy usage. Here are some areas to consider:

- Consider solar roofing or solar panels.
- Upgrade insulation, HVAC, and appliances to more energy efficient models.
- Organize workspaces that use natural light to cut down on energy usage.
- Use energy efficient light bulbs such as LEDs.
- Install programmable thermostats to optimally control indoor temperatures.
- Bring in live plants to improve indoor air quality.
- Consider water conservation solutions like motion sensor faucets.
- Install automatic light shut off systems and motion detectors.
- Switch to data center providers that use clean energy.

This short list is just a few examples. The Green Business Bureau lists dozens of initiatives related to green buildings. You should also investigate rebate and incentive programs that may be offered for many of these upgrades or overhauls.

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT BEST PRACTICES

Sustainable products start with sustainable design. Be sure product designs include resources that are renewable and not energy or water-intensive. Make products that are recyclable, renewable and/or biodegradable, and do not contain toxic or ozone-depleting substances. Look for fairtrade partners to ensure your materials are manufactured by ethical suppliers that pay their employees fair and livable wages. Examples of the most sustainable materials include:

- Cardboard and paper
- Recycled plastic
- Bamboo, straw, cork, wool, wheatboard and strawboard
- Reclaimed or recycled wood and metal
- Cornstarch and hemp
- Carbon capture blocks instead of concrete

SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING BEST PRACTICES

According to the EPA, packaging alone contributes to over 23% of the material reaching landfills in the United States. You can significantly reduce your carbon footprint and waste output by changing the way you package and ship your products. Here are some areas to consider for your plan:

- Go with eco-friendly boxes and packaging for storage and shipping.
- Swap out single-use containers for materials that break down quickly and effectively, like corn starch, mycelium, wood pulp and seaweed.
- Don't use undesired "hybrid" combinations of packaging material. Packaging made from two different types of polymers, for example, can render it non-recyclable.
- Use water activated paper tape instead of plastic tape.
- Minimize/reduce the packaging materials.

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT BEST PRACTICES

One of the best ways to make your business more environmentally-friendly is to practice green procurement. Your procurement department needs to purchase products that are sustainable and that are delivered to you with minimal impact on the environment. Whenever possible, make sure you source your goods and services from local suppliers to support communities and cut down on transportation costs. Here are some areas to consider for sustainable procurement initiatives:

- Change your purchasing habits for office supplies, kitchen supplies and cleaning products to be more eco-friendly.
- Consider a shift to reusable tableware in your cafeterias and break rooms.
- From raw materials to tools and equipment, always source sustainably.
- Choose products made from recyclable and biodegradable materials and avoid those containing toxic or ozone-depleting substances.
- Use products that are durable and designed to be repaired and not thrown away.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL BEST PRACTICES

Your employees' commute is one of the greatest offenders of carbon emissions. That includes business travel as well as supply chain transportation. Air travel accounts for as much as 10 to 25% of the carbon footprint of international companies. Here are some areas to consider:

- Reduce commute emissions by enabling and supporting employees to work from home.
- Have all your departments, including your sales, marketing and executive teams reduce the need to travel by hosting video conference calls.
- Organize a carpooling or ride sharing program.

- Encourage employees to walk, bike or use public transit if possible.
- For those who must fly, choose airlines with their carbon offset programs such as Delta Air Lines.
- Encourage employees to buy their flights and hotels on websites such as GoodWings which offsets CO2 emissions.
- Offset your CO2 emissions by investing in carbon offset projects.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Protecting the environment includes working with your local communities, green associations and driving other businesses and people you interact with to be more mindful and sustainable. Here are a few ideas:

- Become an annual sponsor of an event promoting sustainability in your area.
- Place an employee on the organizing committee for the same or another event to achieve maximum involvement and exposure.
- Become an active member of an organization that continually works to improve the environment nationally or in your area.
- Offer a green promotion such as planting a tree for every 10 products sold.
- Donate a percentage of your profit to local environmental and community programs.
- Set up a fundraiser in your community to promote eco-conscious initiatives.

SUMMARY: HAVING A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS

As we've discussed, creating a sustainability plan and program is a major undertaking. It can be broken down into the following steps:

- Identify the sustainability drivers for your company.
- Understand all the potential green initiatives possible at your company.
- Prioritize the top practical sustainability initiatives that make the most sense and are aligned with your strategic vision and purpose.
- Establish goals and timelines that are specific and measurable.
- Schedule your sustainability initiatives and use formal program management to track progress and results.

Developing a sustainability plan sets the foundation for your actionable sustainability program including its organizational structure, accountability, project management, tracking and measurement. Improving your company's sustainability performance is a complex and ambitious undertaking, thus you need a reliable and accurate plan to help you navigate.

Resources

Books

- **Chief Sustainability Officers at Work: How CSOs Build Successful Sustainability and ESG Strategies** | Chrissa Pagitsas
- **Sustainability is for Everyone: Beginning Steps to Creating a Sustainability Program for Your Business** | Lael Giebel
- **Balancing Environmental, Social and Governances Goals: What Banks and Companies Can Do on ESG and Sustainability |** Walid R. Alameddin
- **Reporting on ESG Metrics—Strategies for Transparency and Accountability** | John MaxWealth

Articles

- **How to Create a Sustainability Program: a 10 Step Guide to Creating a Purpose-Driven Business** | *Jane Courtnell, Green Business Bureau*
- **The Playbook for Becoming a Sustainable Business** | *Bill Zujewski*

Websites

Great Lakes Women's Business Council
www.greatlakeswbc.org

Michigan Women's Marketplace
www.miwomen.com

Small Business Administration
www.sba.gov

Upcoming Events

Events provide a venue for women business owners to gather, virtually or in person, to learn and to connect with others.

Michigan Women's Marketplace Webinars (miwomen.com)

April 19, 2023 | A CEO's 5 Vital Signs For Sustainable Business Health
Lu Parsons, Certified Master Life Coach, President | Lu Parsons & Associates

April 26, 2023 | Expert Steps to Create High-Functioning Teams
Annie Rayhill, Founder and CEO | Athena Consultants

May 3, 2023 | Mother's Legacy | 4 Real-Life Lessons—Breaking the Glass Ceiling
A Special Mother's Day Presentation
Professor Amy Keely, CEO | Hunter Hennessy

Other Events

April 25, 2023
Great Lakes WBC Membership Meeting, The Henry, Dearborn, Michigan

SAVE THE DATE!

WBE Forums are Regional and In Person in May and June!
Great Lakes Women's Business Council

Watch your Inbox and WEUpdates for dates, locations, and more information!

- North Indiana
- Central Indiana
- West Michigan
- Southeast Michigan

May 17 and 18, 2023
WE Succeed—Indianapolis, Indiana
Great Lakes Women's Business Council
www.greatlakeswbc.org

September 26-27, 2023
Great Lakes Women's Business Conference
Great Lakes Women's Business Council
Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi, Michigan
www.greatlakeswbc.org

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS