

BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENT

1999 Business & Environment Series

While strategies to improve environmental performance may differ depending on a company's sector, size and culture, leading companies follow a series of steps to manage their environmental impact. WEI's Business & Environment series helps businesses implement these steps emphasizing peer-to-peer networking and learning and the development of tools and guides that further business environmental performance.

Companies implement business environmental initiatives differently depending on their sector, size and culture. Manufacturing-based companies confront a wide range of environmental challenges, while small or service-sector companies face a narrower range. Larger companies typically have more resources to devote to environmental initiatives, smaller firms may not have full-time environmental staff. Some companies address environmental issues one facility or department at a time, others integrate environmental considerations into all parts of their operations. Whatever the size or circumstance, most companies follow a series of steps to manage their environmental impact.

The **1999 Business & Environment Series** focused on identifying tools for integrating environmental management strategies to gain competitive advantage and evaluate business risks and opportunities. Participants learned and shared strategies with application exercises, peer-to-peer roundtables, and online discussions.

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Session Descriptions

Making the Business Case for Improved Environmental Performance

The value of environmental responsibility to a company's bottom line can be significant. Companies of all sizes and sectors have improved environmental performance and realized

wide benefits by reducing waste, maximizing resource efficiency, and improving product and service design. This roundtable provided case studies that illustrate the financial, innovation, and quality benefits of implementing business environmental initiatives.

Environmental Policy Development: Getting boardroom, CEO, and employee support

Companies committed to reducing their environmental impact start by creating a set of environmental principles, standards and goals. These statements express a company's intentions toward the environment in the design, production and distribution of its products and services. Leadership companies also recognize that to be effective an environmental policy needs to be endorsed by top management and embraced by employees. This roundtable assisted participants with environmental policy development and discussed a variety of educational activities to help employees understand the environmental impacts of their jobs.

Developing eco-audits that link environmental performance to business decision-making

Before a company attempts to reduce its environmental impact it is important to first gain a full understanding of it. This usually involves some kind of environmental audit. At this roundtable participants learned about a wide range of audit approaches that help companies understand the type and amount of resources used and the types of waste and emissions generated. We also discussed how companies use this data to quantify bottom-line benefits and establish priorities for future business decision-making.

Innovative initiatives for toxin reduction, energy efficiency, waste minimization and recycling

At the heart of many companies' environmental commitments is the reduction of toxic chemicals, energy and waste throughout their operations. Leadership companies promote the idea that "waste" represents something they can't sell – in short, lost profit. Minimizing or eliminating waste involves a wide range of initiatives to ensure that all processes from desk-top to dock-door are examined for waste reduction opportunities. This roundtable discussed leadership practices and implementation steps for meaningful waste reduction.

Supply-chain environmental management

Many companies that are "greening the supply chain" find that working with suppliers on environmental issues not only generates environmental benefits but also offers opportunities for cost containment and strategic and competitive advantage. This roundtable discussed the range of business benefits, leadership examples and implementation steps for an effective supply-chain environmental management program.

Emerging Trends: Green Design

Green Design applies to both products and building. Many leadership companies are designing and building environmentally conscious buildings where the life-cycle costs (the total cost of building, owning and maintaining the structure) are equal to or lower than that of a conventional building. Green product design includes a variety of techniques and strategies to increase a product's recycled content or create a system for its reuse or recycling. This roundtable helped participants learn how to implement green design initiatives in their companies.

Business & Environment Steering Committee

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- Pat Eagan, University of Wisconsin- Madison
- Tom Eggert, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Tom Estock, Quad/ Graphics, Inc.
- Deborah Jackman, Milwaukee School of Engineering
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