

A green light for green training

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Whatever your view on climate change – and, frankly, it's hard to believe there are still naysayers on that topic – there is little argument that as the world population rockets to nine billion by 2040 there is going to be a scramble for scarce resources.

This is one of the reasons that sustainability is seen as the next business megatrend, following in the 'footsteps' of the quality improvement movement and growth of information technology.

Business is now realising that sustainability is not so much an option but a 'must do', whether as a result of customer, supplier, employee or government pressure. Green business is good business – using less energy, less water and reducing wastage across the board saves money. And, it makes money as evidenced by General Electric's US\$25 billion in sales in 2010 for its Ecomagination range of products and services.

All change requires training. There are new skills to be acquired to effect change, whether supporting new work methods, systems or approaches. However, it is well recorded that 50% to 70% of new initiative implementations fail. 'Going green' is no different. John Kotter, change management authority, devised eight steps for success in this area, but points out that the biggest challenge at every stage is changing peoples' behaviour.

Training must include programs to shape and change attitudes so the behaviours are adopted to support and embed sustainability. We all know companies don't change, people do; and people rarely change based on analysis. People change in response to their emotional response to ideas that are communicated to them.

To get started you don't need a 'burning platform'. You need to understand where you are today and have clarity about your desired state; how and, most importantly, why you want to get there.

At Greenbizcheck, we regularly provide companies with a starting point by providing them with a self-assessment tool that rates the eco-friendliness of an office's business practices. The rating – whether bronze, silver or gold – is supported by clear actions that, if adopted, will result in an increased rating and significant cost savings. Typically, clients enjoy 10% to 40% in savings on energy bills alone.



To realise these gains Greenbizcheck supports these assessments with green change training. This is aimed at helping employees to better understand the impacts these changes can make in terms of business productivity and customer approval, as well as the resulting positive impacts on the environment, which all result in increased employee satisfaction. This engagement of 'hearts and minds' underpins the change and molds the culture. And, eventually, it becomes 'the way things are done here'.

Demand for specific training in all aspects of sustainability is increasing as companies are creating specialist roles and employees see the career opportunities, especially those 'Generation Ys'.

Like the company's chief Information officer, new positions, such as that of chief sustainability officer (CSO), will become a critical to the workplace as all organisations focus on carbon neutrality as they map the life cycle of their products and services. Recently, The Coca Cola Company created a CSO position complete with a Global Office for Sustainability. Tellingly, the appointee is currently the Chief Marketing Officer, North America. With this attention and innovation it is hoped that the growth in population will be matched by growth in prosperity for all.

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