

Appendix 1

Checklist: 20 Characteristics of an Organization Addressing the Environmental Imperative

1. *Addressing environmental initiatives on the basis of the organization's central function.*

What does the organization do? What is its purpose? Why does it exist? The answers reveal its central function. A failure to address the environmental imperative as it relates to this function means the organization is subject to the charge of green washing and inauthenticity in its approach.

2. *Recognizing that this is a bottom line enhancer not inhibitor.*

Companies fail, despite being in some cases good corporate citizens, because they don't succeed in the marketplace. The environmental conversation has moved far beyond the spirited but action-short platitudes of the Bruntland Commission's 1987 call for sustainability. Taking seriously the environmental imperative is done from the perspective that this is an enhancer not an inhibitor of the bottom line.

3. *Ensuring that performance is more important than prescription.*

The best path is seeing beyond success stories in other organizations and reaching for those which provide the best environmental performance in one's own organization. Someone else might have put a green roof on their building, but does it make sense for us? Perhaps measures for improved natural ventilation and storm water capture will exceed the performance of a prescribed solution such as a green roof. An investment in a multitude of opportunities using the same dollars may produce environmental benefits far exceeding those of a one-off project.

4. *Being pragmatic even if that upsets both eco proponents and sceptical deniers.*

Stewart Brand's book, **Whole Earth Discipline** is a testament to this observation. At its core it means an organization should trust its business intelligence, its common sense, its capability, and its financial acumen in undertaking initiatives whose strategic timing aligns with process and equipment upgrading, and promises both immediate improvement as well as long term lifecycle benefit regardless of what outside critics and interests might say.



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5. *Relying on scientific and statistical robustness.*

This is stating the obvious but surprisingly is often neglected or only considered after significant resources have been expended. Everyone wants to get on with the task but without a system for measuring success it's hard to tell a legitimate story or to determine those areas where increased effort might allow for greater improvement.

6. *Exceeding regulatory requirements or industry averages by unleashing innovation, competition, and better investment of resources.*

This is an opportunity to engage staff, challenge suppliers, and educate consumers by knowing in advance what the bar is (i.e. the regulatory requirement) and setting targets to exceed it. Waste diversion, water management, and energy use are few of the areas ripe for this kind of challenge.

7. *Avoiding trendy, (formula environmental, or eco-"bling" initiatives) which detract from more significant, though less visible, projects.*

Too many initiatives simply borrow from the latest fad which may have little room for growth, have unintended negative consequences, or look good for a brief moment in an advertising campaign but bring little or no bottom line enhancement. Remember what your core business is and encourage initiatives which directly benefit its long term survival and growth.

8. *Involving everyone not just the decision-makers – sometimes the best sustainability measures are never realized because the people whose job it is to implement them neither understand, nor have the skills to implement them.*

Those charged with maintaining the performance embedded in new technology, infrastructure, and new or retrofitted buildings ensure that the designed systems not only perform more effectively but often surpass the savings opportunities by virtue of the operator's ability to discover new opportunities for improvement. These staff, often at the operator, maintainer level of a building or infrastructure are the life cycle guarantors of sustainability.

9. *Going big and avoiding the frivolous.*

Too often organizations putter around the edge of the environmental imperative, tackling tiny issues like putting out half a dozen bike racks, installing a wind turbine with the capacity to meet the energy needs of one office, or critiquing staff use of the internet on the pretext of lessening their carbon footprint. These are generally frivolous measures which derail an organization from addressing significant items.

10. *Knowing your baseload requirements and tackling demand management.*

You can't improve what you can't measure. Nor do you know where your most significant opportunities reside. Once an organization's energy, water, transportation needs and waste

pattern are quantified and averaged for a multi-year period then and only then is it possible, as a first step to determine how much of this can be reduced through the expedient of tackling demand.

11. Advocating on behalf of industry-wide standards for a level playing field.

At some point organizations are asked to give guidance to policy makers, political leaders, departmental heads and others charged with preparing and implementing measures to improve the environmental performance of an industry. Here's a chance for an organization to lead the parade and at the same time be rewarded for such leadership by consumers, decision-makers, investors etc.

12. Creating and educating internally a robust message about environmentalism.

An organization, regardless of its identity, should realize that a green perspective is part of any professional development process and is a means of increasing profit. At the same time it enhances the skills and earning power of the employee, as well as the major clients of the organization.

13. Incorporating natural solutions in the built environment not only reduces energy use but enlivens shared spaces so that people enjoy their workplace.

From day lighting to natural ventilation, to colour specific roofing to tree planting and maintenance, a variety of natural or applied solutions exist to meet functional needs within a building, replace mechanical/energy dependent systems, reduce the heat island effect, provide for groundwater recharge, and contribute to the pleasure of a setting for workers and their increased productivity.

14. Re-imagining the surrounding natural environment of a workplace, and any new building construction as ideal locations for a variety of bio-capacity enhancements.

Any organization with property, either built, natural or a combination of those, has the opportunity to restore it for better performance and at the same time ensure that its landscape is a contributing factor to eco system service enhancement from support for pollination, to the carbon capture potential of trees, and even local food production.

15. Advancing inter-operability as a taken for granted feature of human and technology interaction (i.e. when no one is in a room the lights go off!).

Building systems that talk to each other, obey each other's commands, and dictate wiser choices, are one means of integrating multiple functions in a large building or property and ensuring an efficient, streamlined use of water, energy etc. Connecting these various systems provides opportunities to maximize return on energy investment and at the same time curtail its use on non essential features.

16. Exploring local options for your logistics management, just-in-time delivery, of goods and services.

Logistics management guides much organizational decision-making, purchase etc. A rigorous analysis of procurement policies and practices however will reveal the hidden costs embedded in such an



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approach and seek, where possible, more local solutions and those with a reduced environmental impact.

17. Advocating for taxation that rewards environmental leadership.

Taxation is always a vexatious issue in the public forum. Most would rather pay fewer taxes but at the same time want no diminishment of service paid for by those taxes. Taxation that rewards those who reduce their pollution, lower their environmental impact, and eventually add to eco-system productivity, while targeting those oblivious to this imperative, are examples of good public policy.

18. Establishing organizational targets for waste diversion, energy efficiency, on-site water management and re-use and then exceed them.

A 30% improvement target is ambitious but manageable and quantifiable. A universal goal of a 30% improvement on the current status would bring carbon releases in line with pre-industrial levels. The 30% figure also borrows from numbers used by those in the building industry and by climate change policy reduction proponents to describe the improvements possible from a rigorous energy management strategy. It's also a target in line with reported waste diversion strategies in many companies. For water it includes managed rain water and on-site waste water re-use for human and functional purposes, landscaping, food production, and groundwater recharging, as well as xeriscaping.

19. Moving towards a net + eco development in which more is given back to the environment than taken from it.

Adding to the stock of eco system services, advancing eco-productivity, and increasing bio-capacity are all measures required to combat the challenges of an ever expanding eco and carbon footprint. Measures can be undertaken on buildings, infrastructure, countryside locations, indeed anywhere the sun shines and minimum nourishment is available.

20. Imagining the stories you would like told about your organization and then making them happen!

This is a good news opportunity which warms the corporate heart, increases the bottom line success, grows new business, attracts the best talent, and rewards consumer loyalty. What's not to like?

Developing Organizational Targets

The cumulative performance improvement of 30% is realized by a combination of direct reduction on site (using natural solutions, improved efficiency, better technology etc.), along with the re-direction of certain uses for maximum environmental return (rain harvesting, compostable waste re-used on site, etc.), and the regeneration of built and natural features (determining the feasibility of either restoring one's assets, or replacing, but only after due consideration of heritage, the

meaning and memory associated with a place, and when marked improvement in long term sustainable performance is possible).

One's "30% Environmental Performance Enhancement Quota" (EPEQ) could include a combination of:

- Reduced resource use without loss of function or efficiency (better energy management of buildings, increased miles per gallon)
- Restored eco-system service
- Intentional behaviour change resulting in efficiency of resource use, or a more enhanced function.

Its honest appraisal however requires recognition of the rebound effect in which there is an absolute increase in all of that "per-operation" CO² reduction (i.e. introducing compact fluorescent lighting but expanding exponentially the space formerly used for similar functions).

30% Enhancement	Water	Waste	Energy	Misc.
Reduce (natural sources; use less of; efficiency)	+	+	+	+
Re-direct (diversion for other uses)	+	+	+	+
Restore (revitalization; renewal)	+	+	+	+
Rebound Effect (cumulative, and therefore negative impact)	-	-	-	-