

Rules of the Green Team

Start with a frank, executive-level discussion about where you are and where you want to be. It is possible that every company could fix the basics and take steps toward reducing its impact on the world.

Rule 1: Executive support - One member of the team must be from the executive staff to show not only executive buy-in but also have access to the management team so that decisions can be made quickly. The goal of this group member is to:

- Listen openly to ideas from the team
- Guide discussions toward actionable plans
- Set expectations for direction of the team and funding

Rule 2: Commitment - The executive team must review suggestions and discoveries of the team with the intention to take action. All your employees will be watching the actions of this team. If every idea is swatted down by management, then you may be doing more harm than good to morale. Make sure that this team is empowered to make real change in your organization.

Rule 3: Diversity - Other members of the team should be from different divisions and groups and hold positions. Have one person from sales, operations, manufacturing/quality, human resources, accounting and maybe even the receptionist. You can designate these members or ask for volunteers to get the most passionate and engaged people involved in your team.

Rule 4: Size - Limit the size of the team to 10 to 12 people. While this number may seem small for very large organizations, it is very difficult to get anything accomplished in very large teams. However, while the team is small, it is possible to have the delegate from manufacturing create his own small team in his group to give him ideas to bring back to the group.

Rule 5: Unleash the creativity of your people - This is one excellent opportunity to tap the resources that companies spend billions to recruit and retain. Encourage the team to think of creative ideas to reduce waste and energy or increase the durability of products. Make it clear that this is not just a cost-cutting exercise but a way to increase the value of your products while having an impact on the planet.

What should the team do?

Answer the following questions. Make sure that you get the opinion of every team member to see the perspective of the employees. It is possible that your company is already doing very good things that do not get attention.

1. Have you completed the basics: recycling programs and doing away with Styrofoam cups?
2. Is your industry or company government regulated to make changes in your facilities or operations?
3. Do you have high brand exposure that would lead customers or shareholders to question your sustainability policy?
4. What investment (if any) are you willing to make to be environmentally responsible?

(Source: Greenbiz.com)

Tips and Ideas for Your Office:

- Cut back on Styrofoam and non-recyclable coffee cups by bringing in travel mugs or having mugs in the office's kitchen.
 - Create a monthly contest to see who utilizes the reusable mugs/utensils the most. Reward with a gift card to a local coffee shop or restaurant.
- For in-house use, print on the back side of used paper.
- Hold a monthly competition to see which side of the office uses less energy. This works best in a business with separate meters.
- Reduce your fleet to save fuel; encourage carpooling.
- Volunteer for sustainability events- there are many events around Earth Day
- Let Bluegrass Greensource help create a recycling program for you!

(Source: Bluegrass Greensource)