



GREENER FUTURE TEAM

A Greener Future Team (or Green Team) is a group of employees who, together, would like to reduce the environmental impact of their organization. The efforts of the Greener Future Team will not only help the environment but will also improve the organization's bottom line. Organizations that have a Greener Future Team save money by reducing operating costs and improving operating efficiency, spending less on energy and waste management, and enhancing community and public relations. Greener Future Teams can engage employees and foster professional growth through experience in project management, communications and leadership as the team plans their eco-friendly campaigns.



GETTING STARTED

- **Speak to management** to get permission to start a Greener Future Team at your office.
- **Discuss** creating or enhancing an environmental policy as well as funding for the team's environmental initiatives.
- **Send an email** to all staff. Invite individuals who are interested in environmental issues to join the team and attend the first meeting. Be sure to invite employees from all departments including management, administration, and operational and maintenance staff.
- **Ask individuals** to brainstorm before the meeting and bring along their top-ten list of environmental issues to address within the organization.

BUILD THE TEAM

- **At the first meeting, establish the Greener Future Team.** Include individuals who are familiar with the organization's overall operations. Team members usually act in volunteer positions; however, their roles within the team can sometimes be determined by their function within the organization. For example, if the person responsible for purchasing office supplies is a member of the team, they could be responsible for seeking out "**green**" office supplies and determining costs.
- **Be representative** of the overall staff. Include representatives from executive, management, human resources, operations, and/or communications.

➡ *Employee productivity is found to increase by 2% when employees team up from various departments to work on and connect over common sustainability issues.*

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- **Designate a Greener Future Team leader.**
The number one criteria for the team leader is enthusiasm, but he or she should also have good communication skills and be able to give directions to other team members. The team leader should also act as a liaison between management and the team.
- **Schedule regular meetings** and implement the team's action plan once it has been determined.
Note: large organizations may need several months to implement their programs.

“ Our Green Team consists of representatives from all health disciplines as well as from various departments within the organization. The team has the support of our Senior Executive and includes employees and community partners – all of whom support our efforts to establish an environmentally responsible work environment and culture. ”

Heidi Staeben-Simmons
Western Health Green Team Member

ASSESS THE ORGANIZATION'S CURRENT BEHAVIOUR

- **Seek out ideas** from all staff using the “What's your greener future?” form included in your E-Resource Kit.
- **Perform a waste audit** and identify the types and amount of waste generated at your facility (see *Waste Audit*).
- **Identify procurement** and waste management practices, and assess their effectiveness (see *Green Procurement Policy*).

- **Examine current waste reduction practices** and assess their effectiveness. Key points to keep in mind when examining your waste:
 - **Reduce** Did we need to use this item? Is there a more durable alternative that wouldn't end up in the garbage?
 - **Reuse** Was this item used to its full extent? Could it be replaced with a reusable alternative? Are there others (e.g. employees, organizations) that have a use for it?
 - **Recycle** If the item has reached its end-of-life and can't be reused, then is it recyclable? What options are available for recycling this item?
- **Assess the organization's energy consumption.** Review energy bills and consider completing a walk-through of the building to assess current energy savings practices.

ESTABLISH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- **Work with management** to set the program's short and long-term goals.
- **Determine a budget.** Work with management to discuss a budget for the team's environmental initiatives.
- **Determine areas** within the organization to focus on.



LAUNCH AND IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM

- **Plan a kick-off event** and invite all staff to attend. Ask management to launch the program and encourage all employees to participate.
- **Describe the goals and objectives** of the Greener Future Team and how they will be implemented.





- **Describe the roles and responsibilities** of employees and encourage employees to take a voluntary pledge to reduce waste in the workplace.
- **Consider launching a waste reduction and/or environmental challenge.**
- **Highlight the benefits of the program.**
Include the quantity of waste reduced, reused, and recycled; quantity of recycled products purchased; and potential cost savings.
- **Post the organization's Environmental Policy** in a central location.
- **Continue to educate staff** and stakeholders through emails, intranet, lunch-and-learns, etc.
- **Incorporate information** on waste reduction and other environmental initiatives into new employee training and orientation programs.
- **Send weekly tips**, provide updates on progress, and feature individuals who go above and beyond.

WORKING GREEN

The Western Health Green Team is showing us that no matter how big the company, a small team of people working together can make a big difference! Through education, reduction, and recycling programs, they reduced their kitchen waste from 10 garbage bags per meal down to 2 – a reduction of 8,650 bags per year! Yearly fuel consumption was reduced by 256,777 liters – the equivalent of 22 oil trucks. To tackle their office paper waste, they initiated a paperless electronic form system and offered e-newsletters to staff instead of printed copies. To further help reduce paper waste, the Green Team encouraged the use of an intranet document sharing system and ordered 2-sided printers. The end result? An 80% reduction in waste.





TRACK AND MEASURE PROGRESS

- **Use the information** from the waste audit as a baseline for measuring future progress of waste reduction efforts.
- **Monitor program** progress and report the status of the program to management.
- **Calculate any revenue** and cost savings.
- **Measure waste** diverted from landfill.

PROMOTE SUCCESS & MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

- **Share success stories** with management, employees, and the general public.
- **Highlight your “green champions”** – individuals who go above and beyond.
- **Make program adjustments** accordingly.

Some people will be resistant to change and will not be supportive of initiatives within the office or company. Work with them, not against them, and continue to include them in the process. If they continue to shut out positive ideas, don't give up! Some people take much longer to get comfortable with new ideas than others.

GREEN OFFICE SUGGESTIONS

- **Establish a paper reduction program** or a paperless office.
- **Establish an office recycling program:** include beverage containers, paper, and any other materials accepted by your municipality or a private recycling company (see *Office Recycling Programs*).

- **Establish a green procurement policy** (see *Green Procurement Policy*).
- **Establish an energy reduction program:** turn off lights and shut down computers and equipment at night.
- **Encourage alternate modes of transportation.** Reward staff who walk, bike, carpool, or use public transportation and promote anti-idling.
- **Encourage waste reduction** in the kitchen/cafeteria.
- **Stock kitchen** with reusable dishes, cutlery, glassware, and other items.
- **Purchase coffee cream, coffee, and sugar in bulk** rather than individual packets.
- **Encourage staff to bring waste-free lunches** (see *Waste-Free Lunch*).
- **Establish an office donation program.** Donate unwanted furniture, office equipment, and supplies to local charities, schools, employees, or other businesses.

