



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

[SIMPLY SUSTAINABLE]

A straightforward guide
to sustainable business practices

www.sustainability.mfe.govt.nz

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES...



LEADING BUSINESSES

It's no secret that a successful business is one that has the ability to change in order to meet market demands.

Any business listening to today's market knows that customers, staff and investors are becoming more and more interested in sustainability and how business impacts on society and the environment. Companies are adopting new processes and analysing the impact they're having on the future. By examining your own organisation and developing sustainable business practices, you will not only build a modern business – in tune with your customers – but many of these practices will improve efficiency, save your business money and enhance your business reputation.

...ARE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY



With all the different messages surrounding the concept of sustainability, it is often hard for businesses to understand its meaning and discover its benefits.

In essence, sustainability is about meeting the needs of today, without adversely impacting on the needs of tomorrow. In fact, the key messages of sustainability actually tie in with what are generally considered to be 'sound' business practices, such as building efficiency, minimising waste and maximising resources. After all, anyone in business knows that a more efficient operation saves money and cuts costs. By simply refocusing your view of business and examining how you operate, you will be on the way to developing a sustainable business.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES...



A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Customers and investors are increasingly looking beyond the balance sheet before making a choice about where to place their business.

Creating cleaner business practices can strengthen and build your brand, giving you a stronger identity and a reputation that you can be proud of and promote to customers. This may help to build your market share and even open up new markets.

...ARE COMPETITIVE BUSINESSES

MARKET LEVERAGE



Many large businesses are conscious of enhancing their corporate image and are increasingly choosing suppliers with environmental, social and cultural values and practices that match their own.

Customers are actively selecting and paying more for products that they believe are less harmful to the environment. Government is also applying environmental criteria when selecting a supplier. Throughout this leaflet the Ministry for the Environment has pulled together different discussions and information on where and how sustainable business practices can deliver positive results.



THE EMERGING BUSINESS MODEL

In order to start to develop sustainable business practices, you must take an overview and assess how your business fits into the entire business process – from manufacture to end-user.

This leaflet works hand in hand with Simply Sustainable, an online toolkit developed by the Ministry for the Environment. Simply Sustainable provides you with in-depth information, links to other resources, hints, tips, quick wins and case studies. Explore through the model online and see how you can make a positive impact.

HOW TO DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

STRATEGY – A KEY BUSINESS DRIVER

Whether you have a carefully crafted formal plan, or an informal set of values, your business is driven by its strategy. Businesses are finding that to be successful it is important to have a strategy that reflects their commitment to economic, environmental, social and cultural ideals. Refocusing your strategy will give you a starting point from which to apply sustainable practices across your organisation.

PROCESS – DOING MORE WITH LESS

There are a huge number of ways that businesses can improve efficiency, for example adopting cleaner production techniques, developing resource and energy efficient processes and examining the transportation of goods. As well as creating a lean operation and generating cost savings, these refined ways of working can enhance your reputation, building a positive image both with customers and staff alike.

PEOPLE – AT THE CENTRE OF EVERY BUSINESS

Your people are critical to your business success. Integrating good employment practices into your business, such as family-friendly policies, flexible working and access to training, will help you to create an environment where people feel valued. In today's tight labour market, this could well prove crucial to your ability to attract and retain the right people.

CAPITAL – THE BOTTOM LINE

Obtaining capital is essential to every type of business – whether by selling products, delivering a service or attracting investors. The two-fold capital benefits of sustainability are savings from efficiencies and an improved image. This enhanced reputation can make you a more desirable prospect to both investors and customers.



WORKING SMARTER

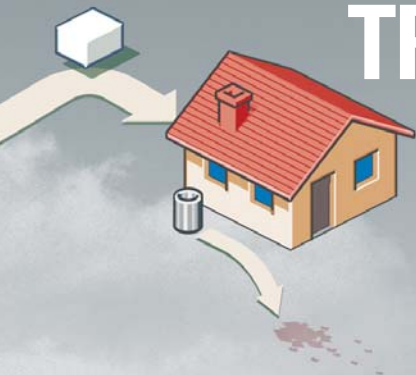
From product design and packaging, to manufacture, transportation and even the running of your office, every element of your business can be reshaped to maximise the resources you use and minimise the waste you produce. Businesses are often surprised at how much can be saved through simple, straightforward changes.

Everyday more businesses are moving away from the traditional, linear model (illustrated above) and successfully changing the way they work. As well as carving a solid reputation and position in the marketplace, companies are saving money. We've highlighted a few areas you could examine and change to take your business forward.

• *Resources*

Increased demand for natural resources and raw materials – on both a global and local scale – has caused dramatic price increases. These spiralling costs have made businesses assess the way they use resources. Finding alternatives and examining waste output has proved an excellent cost cutting exercise for many businesses. Recycling more materials – from both production and administration areas – is also a positive step. As well as helping the environment, using alternative resources may even develop more economical ways of working.

MOVING AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL BUSINESS MODEL



- *Goods And Services*

Your success depends on how efficiently and effectively you deliver to the consumer. Taking an environmental and sustainable stance, you can develop a cleaner product and a more professional business that makes better use of resources. By labelling and distinguishing your improved product as cleaner and more sustainable, you can increase your product's appeal to customers and your business' appeal to investors.

- *Recyclables*

Recyclables are products made out of materials that can be recycled. By using recyclable material we can complete the cycle from consumer back to supplier. Changing your raw materials and choosing to make a product from recyclables could open up new markets for your goods and services. For example attracting new groups of more environmentally and socially aware customers.

It's all on our website. Learn how your business can play its part. Examine your business close up and discover where you can make changes to build a modern, efficient and strong business.

THE KEY PLAYERS



STAKEHOLDERS

Adopting sustainable business practices will give your organisation a new direction and focus, with the potential effect of creating a business and brand that evoke strong positive connections with society. This new way of working could give you the ability to build strong relationships with all the key players that have the most impact on your business – customers, investors, staff and the community as a whole.



GOVERNMENT

In countries where businesses are not voluntarily developing sustainable business practices, the government has created regulations and legislation to force change. In New Zealand, the goal of government and the Ministry for the Environment is to work in partnership with businesses and to help organisations move towards a sustainable future.

By providing resources that encourage sustainable development and by actively supporting organisations to take up new initiatives, we can help you build a sustainable future.

THE NEXT STEPS

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Your business is unique, so you'll need to develop a focused and structured plan that incorporates your individual business' personality and offering. The Simply Sustainable online toolkit guides you through the issues and helps you to put together a tailored approach.

With in-depth information, links to other online resources, hints, tips, quick sustainability wins and case studies, you're sure to find facts and information that will directly impact your organisation.

MOVING FORWARD

Begin with what works best for your business – this may mean starting with small steps at first, or maybe taking a giant leap and creating a brand new strategy based around sustainable practices. Right now, you can find five easy steps on the back cover, which will get you on the road to sustainability.

**Take a positive step today and move forward
to a more sustainable future**

Five **easy** steps towards sustainability

www.sustainability.mfe.govt.nz

1. SWITCH OFF WHEN NOT IN USE

Reduce your energy waste by switching off unnecessary lights and equipment, especially when everyone's gone home for the day. A simple, yet effective way to save on your energy bill.

2. GREEN YOUR OFFICE STATIONERY

Save money and support environmental practices by reducing your paper use and buying stationery products which are kinder on the environment, for example paper that is non-bleached or from sustainable forests. Make a difference by specifying "greener" printing options when ordering your letterhead and business cards, and think carefully about print quantities.

3. RECYCLE ALL THAT YOU CAN

Reduce the amount of rubbish you're sending to landfill by recycling. As well as paper, you can recycle plastics, tins, glass, and your food scraps can go into composting.

4. CHOOSE GREENER AND SAFER CLEANING PRODUCTS

Choose products with ingredients that have less impact on human health and on the environment. Many cleaning products end up in local wastewater systems, and eventually in waterways. You can also reduce your rubbish by choosing products with minimal and/or recyclable packaging.

5. CHOOSE ENERGY EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES

Buy energy efficient equipment and appliances. Check out the energy label – the more stars, the more energy efficient the appliance. Many appliances and office equipment now have powersave features too.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10-362, Wellington.

PHONE: (04) 439 7400 FAX: (04) 439 7700 EMAIL: info@mfe.govt.nz



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mo Te Taiao