

# Green your Business:

## Toolkit for Tourism Operators



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# Introduction

## Purpose

We have arrived at an incredible moment in the 150-plus-year history of this nation's tourism industry. The marketplace is evolving, the competitive landscape is shifting and at times, new threats seem to appear on the horizon every other month. But through change and challenge comes unprecedented opportunity. Canadian operators large and small can show stewardship and leadership-and significantly reinvigorate their businesses-by embracing a new, greener set of principles, and by extension, the swelling numbers of customers who now follow them.

A growing body of evidence suggests that integrating sustainable practices into your business-whether in the areas of heating, lighting, water usage, landscaping or printing-will ultimately reduce your operating costs. A green strategy will also attract the emerging but fast-growing market of discerning travellers seeking authentically sustainable experiences and services.

The Green Your Business: Toolkit for Tourism Operators-a collaboration between the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), Parks Canada along with author Marr Consulting-aims to provide practical tips and sound guidance to the Canadian tourism industry. We've placed a special focus on small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). Think of this document as a kind of "best practices" handbook, stocked with user-friendly, accessible and practical tips. Readers may undertake as many or as few of the suggestions as their time and resources allow.

## What is Sustainable Tourism?

A sustainable tourism business fulfills economic, environmental and socio-cultural obligations while generating income, contributing to employment, maintaining cultural integrity, and preserving essential ecological processes and biological diversity. Broadly speaking, sustainable tourism is that which aims to enhance the quality and sustainability of natural and cultural heritage-based experiences by:

- ◆ Minimizing the tourism industry's negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts
- ◆ Generating greater economic benefits for local communities
- ◆ Making positive contributions to the preservation of natural and cultural assets.

Sustainable tourism delivers a meaningful experience and thus a high degree of customer satisfaction.

## Canada's Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism

The enclosed toolkit builds upon *Canada's Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism* (Appendix A), a statement of principles jointly authored by TIAC, Parks Canada and the CTC. Released in 2005, the document declares a commitment to an industry that "balances economic objectives with safeguarding and enhancing the ecological, cultural and social integrity of Canada's heritage." While the Code affirms some important, high-level guiding principles, that document does not offer on-the-ground, business-level advice and recommendations for operators. This toolkit seeks to bridge this gap by delivering practical and meaningful actions that SMEs can begin putting in place today.

Note that while we recognize that sustainable tourism hinges on socio-cultural, economic and environmental factors, this toolkit places a special emphasis on the latter. This is because environmental strategies such as waste diversion and energy-efficiency improvements represent the "low hanging fruit" for SMEs. The moves suggested within are tangible and easy to implement, and offer the most direct business case for going green. That said, the authors see the Green Your Business Toolkit as one step in an integrated corporate commitment to sustainability. We expect this document will grow and evolve, and with time and use, more fully embrace a broader view of sustainable tourism. To this end, we welcome your feedback and suggestions via the e-mail address at the end of this introduction.

## A Canadian Perspective

This toolkit acknowledges a number of fundamental facts about Canada. In terms of land mass, this is one of the world's largest countries, with a hugely diverse regional topography. The majority of the nation experiences a long and harsh winter; we also possess a great variety of regional climates ranging from temperate on the west coast, to extremely cold in the north, to desert-like in parts of interior British Columbia. Our nascent arctic tourism industry poses unique challenges of its own with respect to costs, distances and logistics, not to mention complex cultural and ecological sensitivities.

These objective realities have profound implications for how travellers get to Canada and move around once they are here, and the amount of energy required to provide for the comfort of our guests.

While this document advocates for a sustainable Canadian tourism industry, it does not deny these challenges. For instance, it recognizes that air travel will remain a practical necessity for many years to come. This is especially true for properties located in remote parts of the country where ground-based access may be constrained or simply unavailable. The transportation sector will remain the industry's largest source of greenhouse-gas emissions.

However, this document encourages Canadian destination marketing organizations, businesses and operators to reduce their reliance on private vehicles, both for guest transportation and employee commuting. While this toolkit does not specifically address intermodality-the interlinking of air, rail, coach and marine modes-such efficiencies are likely to reduce energy consumption, enhance the seamlessness of travel and shorten overall trip itineraries.

The accommodations sector-the second-largest source of carbon emissions-also represents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. The heating and cooling of North America's buildings, including B&Bs, hotels and resorts, accounts for as much as 40% of the continent's greenhouse-gas emissions. All of these properties can make a difference to both the climate and the bottom line with an energy-efficiency retrofit. In 2007 Willard InterContinental, a luxury hotel in Washington, DC, reported that its sustainability program cut expenses by 20% via reduced electricity, gas and water consumption.

Many utilities and provincial authorities offer financial incentives for programs to update windows, insulation, plus heating and cooling equipment, all of which save on energy costs. Further, many of the operations-side suggestions outlined on the pages that follow are inexpensive, and in some cases, free.

When considering new construction, tourism operators should investigate a third-party green-building certification standard, such as LEED or BuiltGreen. Studies of green buildings suggest that the cost premiums are not as high as often believed, especially with the help of innovative financing options coming available through credit unions and other progressive lenders. The many documented advantages of green buildings include decreased energy costs, improved worker health and productivity, and-perhaps most important for tourism businesses-a strong and positive market differentiation.

## Making the Business Case for Green

As a small business owner or destination marketing agency, you most likely have limited discretionary capital to reinvest in your property, technology or personnel. You must justify investments on the basis of their returns. In our view, greening your business offers at least two tangible payoffs.

First, odds are that your heating, cooling and lighting infrastructure was designed for an era of seemingly limitless and inexpensive energy. Insulation of the time was often inadequate, toilets and showers used needlessly large volumes of water, furnaces ran 24/7, and cars and buses idled at the curb. Canadians and North Americans generally took heat, gasoline, water and electricity resources entirely for granted.

Those days are over. Business-as-usual energy consumption is simply no longer financially justifiable. And that's where we can help. By assessing the way you currently do business against some of this toolkit's recommendations, you will reap savings and economies that will tangibly bolster your bottom line.

The second business justification for greening your operations is the growing market of sustainably minded travellers. Various labels such as "ethical travellers," "future-shapers," or "green consumers," this group's purchase decisions are now being noted across a wide range of markets. Although concerns about price or weather at the destination continue to be important factors in choosing vacations and packages, a growing number of travellers are making purchase decisions based on a prospective destination's commitment to sustainable business practices. Preliminary findings from the CTC's 2008 Global Tourism Watch survey reveal a growing number of consumers in the nation's core markets are interested in sustainable tourism and are willing to pay a premium for sustainable travel products. Of the nine countries surveyed, 60% of travellers (on average) in those countries are willing to pay a one percent to 10% premium for environmentally friendly travel products.

Another international survey (TripAdvisor, April 2007) of 1,000 travellers worldwide found that 40% take environmentally friendly tourism into consideration when making travel plans. TNS Canadian Facts has found in its own survey research that these "future shapers" exhibit a growing awareness of global warming and of matters such as child labour or the plight of indigenous peoples. Many of these travellers plan their trips independently, are Web savvy and are beginning to alter purchasing habits. Beyond their commitment to "green" values, these consumers expect higher standards of cuisine, accessibility to spa and wellness facilities, and other higher value "authentic" products and experiences. This toolkit can help you begin to market to these travellers.

## Who Should Use This Document

We've designed this resource for multiple tourism-sector audiences. Owners and managers will find material addressing the policy, budgetary and strategic aspects of their operations. Staff "champions" will find resources for individual employees keen to lead the green charge at their workplace. The toolkit will also appeal to tourism associations and destination marketing organizations that wish to disseminate some of these ideas amongst members.

## How to Use the Toolkit

This resource is organized around three themes: tourism industry sector, business process, and the needs of SMEs. For example, in the first section, accommodations providers, tour operators, plus hunting and fishing outfitters will find tips and resources tailored just for them. Likewise, business processes such as purchasing, marketing and product development and needs such as water, waste and energy are addressed. The toolkit is not intended to be read back-to-front, nor is it a definitive treatise on sustainable tourism. While the case studies and scenarios scattered throughout are intended to provide inspiration and background, this document focuses squarely on actions, tasks and implementation. So get going. Review the table of contents, find a section that might have a strong application to your business-and jump right in.

If you work in tourism in Canada, there's something for you inside. And please share your thoughts and insights at [info@tiac.travel](mailto:info@tiac.travel) as you begin your own green journey; we'll work to include your own advice in future versions of this document.

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# Making the Switch

If you are reading this, chances are that you have already recognized that the tourism industry is undergoing a profound shift. Owners and operators from sectors as diverse as accommodations, restaurants, museums, hunting and fishing outfitters, and travel agents are all revisiting the idea of "business as usual" and embracing a new range of best practices. Whether you want to save a little energy and money, give back to the community or set your business on a course toward full-on carbon neutrality, you've come to the right place.

## Self-assessment Tool

To get you started on your own sustainable journey, we've assembled a set of questions to help you evaluate your knowledge, values, motivations and practices.

1. Which of the following do you feel is most important to growing the Canadian tourism industry's presence in the world market? Select one or more of the options below.

- Experiential travel
- Nature or wilderness-based tourism
- Aboriginal or community-based tourism
- Industry collaboration and partnerships
- Developing tourism infrastructure
- Niche marketing

2. Which of the following issue(s) are of greatest concern to you? Select all that apply.

- Human Health
- Loss of Culture
- Energy Conservation
- Water Pollution
- Sustainable Forestry
- Poverty
- Air Pollution
- Climate Change
- Wildlife Habitat
- Biodiversity

3. How much do you know about environmental and social issues? Select one of the options below.

- I seek out information on pressing environmental and social issues.
- I know what I hear on the news or read in newspapers and magazines.
- I recognize "buzzwords" but I feel I don't have a full sense of the issues.
- I have little awareness of environmental and social issues.

4. What is it about sustainable tourism that appeals to you? Select all that apply.

- Reducing costs
- Increasing market share
- Ensuring prosperity
- Positioning my company as an "employer of choice"
- Becoming a leader
- Reducing risk
- Generating good public relations
- Increasing employee morale
- Being part of the solution
- Reflecting my personal values in the company

5. How would you assess your current business practices?

- I mostly factor environmental and/or social considerations in my decision-making.
- I sometimes factor environmental and/or social considerations in my decision-making.
- I occasionally factor environmental and/or social considerations in my decision-making.
- Environmental and social considerations are not factored into my decision-making.

## The 4 Rs

Here are four actions to guide you as you reflect on your responses to the questions above.

- ◆ Review: Read over your answers. Really let them sink in.
- ◆ Reflect: Consider that the answers above reflect your values, motivations and understanding with regards to sustainable tourism.
- ◆ Remember: Keep them in mind as you use this toolkit.
- ◆ Return: Come back to the questions at a later date and see if your answers have changed.

## Making a Statement

We adapted the statements below from the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's Code of Ethics. Consider how you might adopt them in your business or organization.

- ◆ encourage protection of natural and cultural heritage resources through education and awareness.
- ◆ I promote appreciation and enjoyment of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and encourage sensitive use of heritage resources and places.
- ◆ I respect and involve local communities by supporting the development of tourism programs and services that preserve social, economic, environmental and cultural integrity.
- ◆ I influence responsible use and enjoyment among travellers of our nature, culture and communities through marketing and education tools.
- ◆ I minimize negative impacts of tourism through pollution prevention, responsible use of resources, and harm reduction of threatened habitats, species and communities.
- ◆ I raise awareness of the value and needs of heritage resources and places by creating educational opportunities for travellers, employees and others.
- ◆ I build partnerships with governments, communities, stakeholders, and travellers to encourage responsible practices.
- ◆ I will contribute to the development of the Canadian tourism industry as a leader in sustainable tourism.

## Take Action

There is no one size-fits-all approach for integrating the principles of sustainable tourism into your business. There are many ways to take action. Find out which approach best suits your style.

### The Self-Starter

Do you take a no-fuss, dive-right-in approach? Then start right away. Pick any two actions and put them into practice. Check out the "Quick Starts" checkmarks throughout the toolkit for immediate actions.

### The Fact Checker

Do you like to have all of the information before moving forward? Check out the "Business Case" sections of this toolkit, which will direct you to the best resources. Once you are into the toolkit, pay special attention to the maroon boxes. These contain bites of background information, including definitions and descriptions.

### The Copycat

Do you like to take the beaten path? Don't reinvent the wheel. Instead, borrow from others. Think green and check out the "Case Study" boxes throughout the toolkit.

### The Planner

Do you like to map out every aspect of your strategy? Skip ahead to the "Strategic Planning" section in the [Business Processes](#) section. And pay close attention to the detailed "how-to's" in the toolkit.

## The Experimenter

Do you like to test out ideas on a small scale? The blue "Try This!" boxes are for you.

## Measuring Progress

To know where you're headed, you need to know where you've been-and the best way to do so is to keep careful track your progress. Diarize or chart your improvements on an ongoing basis, or schedule a time to come back and reflect. For a meaningful evaluation and comparison, establish a baseline of your current situation before implementing a change such as a water or energy retrofit.

# Tools by Tourism Sector

## Food Services

When it comes to sustainable business practices, the food services sector faces a unique set of challenges. That's not to say positive changes aren't within easy reach. From how to deal with kitchen scraps and leftover food to energy use in cooking, your business can help make a positive contribution. (Please note that we adapted much of the material in this section from *Food for Thought: Restaurant Guide to Waste Reduction and Recycling*, published by the City of San Francisco Solid Waste Management Program.)

### Quick Start



Take a minute to stop and smell the trash. Evaluate what your business throws away. Are you maximizing the potential of everything before it heads for the dumpster? Is it possible to reuse or recycle some of your waste? Can you donate or sell some portion to someone else? A large portion of garbage from restaurants is food waste, much of which can be reduced by proper food storage, good purchasing practices and preparing food to order, or can be diverted by simple composting programs and partnerships with local farmers, food banks and shelters. Read on for some detailed tips on how you can reduce your waste and save money at the same time!

- ◆ Consider joining a recognized certification program, such as British Columbia's Green Table Network. Such programs offer a thorough audit of your operation, and an affiliation seal that communicates your responsible choices to your customers.

### Case Study: Smart Cuisine

Toronto Chef [Jamie Kennedy](#) is renowned for the world-class dishes he plates up at his three restaurants, but his patrons go home at the end of the evening with more than just an unforgettable meal; they also leave with a healthy conscience. The restaurateur makes every possible effort to source seasonal ingredients from local producers, which cuts down on carbon emissions from shipping and supports the local economy. As a side benefit, the menus are always evolving to reflect what is in season. Diners are also provided with a copy of [SeaChoice: Canada's Seafood Guide](#) so that they can verify that the fish they order is on the group's "Best Choice" list. Staff is also ready and willing to discuss the restaurant's conservation practices with patrons.

Kennedy's support of local enterprises doesn't end with purchasing; he also supports several non-profit organizations through participating and organizing events such as Feast of Fields and Empty Bowls, and has spoken for causes such as the Endangered Fish Alliance, World Wildlife Foundation, Seafood Watch and the Living Ocean Society. He also co-founded the Knives and Forks Alliance, a group of chefs and farmers with a shared commitment to promoting mixed farming and locally grown produce.

## Food Waste

In the restaurant sector, food is the single largest source of both monetary and ecological waste. Throwing it away is like throwing away money. Here are some ideas for stemming the flow.

- ◆ If customers continually return food uneaten, consider serving smaller portions.
- ◆ Prepare food to order.
- ◆ Ensure your staff prep food by trimming only what is not needed.
- ◆ Make sure that you store food at the proper temperature to keep it from spoiling.
- ◆ Check all food at delivery to ensure none is rotten or damaged.
- ◆ Date all food when it is delivered and rotate your stock to use everything in a timely manner.
- ◆ Reconstitute starchy vegetables that have wilted by trimming off the very bottom and immersing them in warm water for 15-20 minutes.

## Rethinking "Waste Disposal" as "Resource Recovery"

Even when you minimize spoilage and waste, there is often still a great deal of material in line for the dumpster. Much of this can be further diverted from landfills with recycling and composting programs.

### Recycle

These days there are recycling programs pretty much everywhere you go and many will come and pick up your materials. Check out what is available in your area and then start diverting! Place recycling bins next to garbage bins and educate staff and customers with information signs. It's as easy as taking out the garbage with the added bonus that you're doing your part to keep useful materials out of landfills.

### Compost

Compost is recycling of organic wastes. You can compost everything from coffee grounds and filters to eggshells, fruits and vegetables. Instead of throwing all of these kitchen scraps in the garbage, set up a compost bin to create nutrient-rich compost for potted plants and flower, herb and vegetable gardens. If you don't have room for a compost bin or don't have any use for compost, find a local farmer or gardener who can use it. Growing numbers of communities now have organic waste collection. For more information, check out the [Composting Council of Canada](#)

- ◆ Local charities may also have pick-up programs for your old uniforms, furniture and appliances to give these products a new life.
- ◆ Think of grease and used cooking oil resources with a potential second life as biodiesel or other products. Many organizations will even pick them up from you for no charge.

## Reduce your Waste

There are several other ways that you can reduce waste and at the same time reduce your own costs.

- ◆ Place rubber mats around dishwashing areas to cushion any dishes that fall. This also has an added benefit of minimizing employee injury due to slipping on wet floors.
- ◆ Use ceramic mugs and cups for drinks instead of disposable cups.
- ◆ Minimize take-out or take-home packaging; consider recyclable or biodegradable options.
- ◆ Use refillable bulk containers for condiments such as salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard and sugar.

## Cloth v. Paper Napkins

Many food-service providers have successfully reduced their waste by switching to cloth napkins. There are many arguments for and against cloth napkins. Here are some thoughts to keep in mind when deciding which option is right for you:

- 1) What image do you want to present to your customers?  
High-end food services usually prefer cloth napkins to paper.  
Fast-food and take-out food services usually prefer paper napkins.
- 2) Cloth napkins cost more initially, but can be reused.
- 3) When choosing cloth napkins, look for products that come from organically produced cotton, hemp, or flax-this greatly increases the napkins' "green factor" as it cuts down on harmful pesticides and chemical fertilizers used in production.
- 4) Make sure that you choose durable cloth napkins so they can be reused many times before needing to be replaced. This means a cost savings for you!
- 5) Wash your cloth napkins with phosphate-free, biodegradable detergent and use an energy efficient washer-you will really notice the water savings versus a conventional washer.
- 6) When choosing paper napkins, specify those made from recycled material and produced in a bleach-free process. See "Try This!" below for info on Greenpeace's "Shopper's Guide to Ancient Forest Friendly Tissue" for tips on finding green-friendly brands.
- 7) Bleach-free napkins can be composted.
- 8) When choosing paper napkins, talk to your supplier about adding your company name and logo on the napkins, and some indication that it is made from recycled material. Include the percentage of post-consumer content.
- 9) Whatever you decide, let your customer know what you are doing and the reasons why. Check out the [Marketing](#) section of this toolkit for tips on how to do this.

- ◆ Dispense straws from approved sanitary containers instead of using individually wrapped ones.
- ◆ Use reusable coasters instead of napkins.
- ◆ Local schools, churches and daycares may welcome your used buckets, pails and large boxes for crafts and games.

## Where Does Your Food Come From?

More and more consumers are interested in where their food is sourced. Partnerships with local producers will support the local economy and give you fresh, seasonal food unique to your region-something travellers especially value!

### Try This!

Consider starting an organic herb garden in or just outside your restaurant. Customers will enjoy the pleasant aromas and tastes that only fresh herbs can give your recipes. As an added bonus, you can use your compost to help your garden grow.

## Sustainable Seafood

SeaChoice is a non-profit organization that provides sustainable seafood purchasing information to consumers and businesses. The group also provides a ratings system to help buyers to make the best choice. Check out [SeaChoice](#) for more information and to obtain "Canada's Seafood Guide" to help with your own purchasing and customer education.

## Local v. Organic Food

Many people become confused when it comes to organic and locally produced food. Organic food is grown without the aid of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, genetic modification, or antibiotics and hormones in animals. It can be sourced from anywhere around the world. Local food is produced in your local region but is not necessarily organic. Locally grown food supports regional producers and produces fewer emissions related to shipping the food to market.

Ideally, try to find local producers who use organic methods. When this is not possible, choose local for fruits and vegetables that are in season. You may want to go organic when it comes to meat, eggs and dairy products, as many people have health concerns related to these food products.

Whichever option you choose, make sure to share this with your customers, as many people value the use of local or organic ingredients.

- ◆ Consider purchasing "Fair Trade" coffees and teas.

## Try This!

Check out local farmers markets and talk to the producers. You can find a listing of farmers markets across Canada at [Travel to Wellness](#) and [Chef2Chef](#). Or you can find local producers in your area at [CanadianFarmersMarket.com](#).

If you're still at a loss, try the phone book's business pages under farmers markets, natural and organic foods, health foods retail, grocers wholesale, poultry wholesale, food distributors, or arts and crafts retail.

Or Google it! Try searching for farmers market, local food, organic food, food co-operative or food buying club-and don't forget to put in your location to get results close to you.

## The Perfect Cup O'Joe

"Fair Trade" organic and shade-grown coffee is the most responsible coffee choice you can make. Fair Trade means farmers are paid fairly for their beans. "Organic" means that no harmful pesticides were used in cultivation. "Shade Grown" means farmers grow the coffee plants underneath the tree canopy, leaving trees for migrating birds to stop for a rest. Try a cup for yourself-you'll satisfy your taste buds and your responsible conscience.

## Purchasing

- ◆ Minimize packaging by buying products in bulk.
- ◆ Avoid non-recyclable Styrofoam packaging if possible.
- ◆ To reduce packaging, buy meats in bulk and cut them up in your own kitchen.

## Try This!

Check out Greenpeace's [Shopper's Guide to Ancient Forest Friendly Tissue](#). The organization rates brands of facial tissue, toilet paper, napkins and paper towels that are good for the Earth. Talk to your supplier about ordering these brands.

- ◆ Buy non-perishable products in the largest containers available to reduce packaging and the emissions associated with multiple deliveries of smaller quantities.
- ◆ Purchase 100% recycled, post-consumer waste or FSC-certified paper products for napkins, paper towels, menus, promotional materials and toilet paper. Or better yet, move to cloth napkins, warm-air hand dryers and electronic promotional materials.

## What are FSC-Certified Products?

[Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC)-certified paper and products are manufactured from wood fibre that originated in well-managed forests, through verified recycled sources, or a combination of controlled forest-friendly sources. These products are identified by the FSC logo, which assures consumers they meet the highest environmental and social standards. This allows shoppers to select paper or wood products that support responsible and sustainable forest management practices.

## Water

- ◆ When washing foods such as fruits and vegetables, fill a basin with water and wash them in the basin rather than running water in the sink.
- ◆ Run automatic dishwashers only when they are full.
- ◆ Put toilet dams in all your toilets-check out the [Accommodations & Lodging](#) section of this toolkit for more details.
- ◆ Consider "grey water" collection systems for watering gardens.

## Energy

- ◆ Be sure to check with your region's energy utility. Many offer incentive programs such as rebates on upgrades to more energy-efficient fixtures and appliances.

## Power Smart

[Manitoba Hydro](#) is increasing its customers' awareness of potential energy savings through its Power Smart Program, which promotes a wide range of efficiency products, services and programs. The utility helps its customers determine where they can become more efficient and provides information on how to do it. There is also a rebate incentive program to incentivize the purchase of Energy Star appliances as well as other efficiency methods.

- ◆ When upgrading or replacing appliances, specify only Energy Star models.
- ◆ Develop and implement a monthly cleaning and maintenance regimen for all of your appliances. This will maximize their efficiency and ensure they are operating safely.
- ◆ Install plastic strips or curtains in the doorways of walk-in freezers and coolers to minimize the amount of cold-air loss when opening the door.
- ◆ Defrost freezers on a regular basis-this keeps them working at peak efficiency.

# Accommodations

By its very nature, the accommodations sector has a significant carbon footprint. But whether you operate a hotel, bed and breakfast, rustic resort or campground, you have myriad opportunities to make a difference by carefully considering your energy, water, waste, transportation and purchasing decisions. For a quick and easy impact, focus on water-conservation measures. To reduce your emissions while realizing financial benefits, consider upgrades to your lighting, heating, cooling and hot water.

## Quick Start



To get your house in order, begin by making a commitment to sustainability and sharing your goal with staff and guests. A clear vision will help you pursue actions that are the right fit for your enterprise. For an example of this, check out [Canadian Mountain Holidays](#).

### Case Study: The Guilt-Free Getaway

British Columbia's Sooke Harbour House is saving Earth while saving the owners thousands of dollars in operating expenses. How? The oceanside inn offers an entirely edible, organic and seasonal garden that produces gourmet delicacies while simultaneously saving 10% on kitchen expenses. The owners collect and filter "grey water" from showers and sinks before piping it into the landscape. These and other efficiencies help improve [Sooke Harbour House](#)'s bottom line. Most important, guests continue to return because they value the establishment's luxury accommodations and sustainable practices.

## Water

Water is a precious and business-critical resource. Use it wisely, and choose high-efficiency fixtures with care; your guests will expect at least the same level of comfort that they enjoy at home.

- ◆ Fix leaks!
- ◆ Install low-flow showerheads and aerators on all faucets.

### Save on Every Drop

A leaking tap will waste up to 200,000 L of water a year. The average cost of water across Canada is 12.5¢ per 100 L. It will cost you about \$5 to install a new washer in that faucet. That translates into savings of \$250 per year.

Switch to a high-quality, low-flow showerhead. Save 115 to 190 L of hot water per day and \$52 to \$87 per year, excluding heating costs.

### Build a Dam

Commercial plastic toilet dams are extremely cheap and can save water in reservoir toilets. Don't want to pay a cent? Use an empty plastic pop bottle, fill it with water or sand, and place it inside the toilet tank. Voila! You save up to 18,000 L of water per toilet per year.

- ◆ If replacing toilets, specify low-flow or dual-flush models.

## No More Dirty Laundry

Your property may have already implemented a towel and linen reuse program that invites your guests to reduce their own hospitality footprint. If you haven't implemented such a program yet, you may wish to consider doing so for the cost savings alone. Once your program is in place, make sure that your staff is well trained and that the program is consistently applied to avoid the perception of "greenwashing."

- ◆ If guests are staying for three days or more, change their linens every three days.

### What's Working

Daily laundering uses large quantities of water, chemicals and electricity. It also adds a great deal of wear and tear to the towels and linens along with slowing down housekeeping staff. A towel and linen reuse policy saves approximately \$1.50 per day per room. In a hotel of 50 rooms, that translates into annual cost savings of \$27,375.

- ◆ Consider a shorter washing cycle to reduce labour costs, energy and water use.
- ◆ Specify natural, biodegradable, dye-free laundry detergents and fabric softeners-and communicate this "back of house" policy to your guests.
- ◆ Opt for alternatives to disposable dryer sheets such as anti-static dryer balls or cloths.

## Alternative Transportation

Invite your guests on a vehicle-free vacation. While accessibility varies widely in rural and urban destinations, you can promote sustainable transportation options.

- ◆ Offer your guests complimentary loaner bicycles to enjoy during their stay.
- ◆ Encourage guests to explore your district on foot with reusable local maps annotated with attractions and points of interest.
- ◆ Promote public transit as an alternative to the stress and hassle of parking and driving in an unfamiliar setting. Keep transit information on hand, including route maps, timetables and fares.

## Housekeeping

- ◆ Steer clear of chemical disinfectants and bleach-based cleaners that are harmful to fish and wildlife. Use inexpensive solutions made with baking soda, vinegar or other natural ingredients, or specify commercially available non-toxic alternatives.

### Try This!

If you are buying chemical cleaners, your money is going down the drain. There are cheaper and less harmful alternatives. Here are a few recipes for basic cleaners.

All-purpose cleaner: Mix vinegar, salt and four tbsp. baking soda in one L warm water.

Toilet cleaner: Brush with baking soda and vinegar, or borax, to disinfect.

Window cleaner: Add one tbsp. vinegar or lemon juice to one L water; wipe with newspapers.

## Recycling and Composting

- ◆ To reduce the cost and impacts of waste, place a "blue box" in each guest room.

### Try This!

Add a card in each guest room explaining how recycling makes a positive impact on the environment. You might adapt some form of this sample wording:

We thank you for choosing to stay with \_\_\_\_\_. Please join us in our commitment to a clean environment by placing all newspaper, glass, aluminum and cardboard in the blue box provided. Thank you in advance for being part of the solution.

- ◆ Consider composting your kitchen scraps. Check to see if a commercial organic-waste pickup service operates in your community.

## Case Study: Turning "Waste" Into Food

The [Fairmont Royal York](#)-Canada's largest hotel kitchen-generates more than 1,000 kg of food waste daily. Instead of dumping its food scraps, the property composts coffee grounds and vegetable waste for use in a rooftop herb garden. The remaining organic waste is collected daily from the hotel by Turtle Island Recycling and converted into fertilizer. Employing a similar process, The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver cut its landfill waste in half and now saves \$11,112 a year.

## Promote the Local Economy

Explore producers, suppliers and expertise in your own community.

- ◆ When possible, seek out locally produced foods rather than products that have travelled long distances.
- ◆ Partner with local businesses and encourage your guests to support them.
- ◆ Showcase the work of local artists in guest common areas.

## Case Study: The Ultra-Local Experience

The [Grizzly Bear Ranch](#), a wilderness retreat in the Selkirk Range of the Canadian Rockies, sources as much local and regional food and drink as possible. According to the owners, about 85% of the property's food and beverage needs is either grown or produced in British Columbia.

The ranch has integrated another local company, [Kaslo Kayaking](#), into its guest programs. Plus all paid staff and service providers are sourced as close to the property as possible: the owners sub-contract a local grizzly-bear expert to guide interpretative walks for guests and look to the six families living in their remote area for individuals with skills in carpentry, mechanics and other trades.

- ◆ Feature local and handmade crafts, soaps, candies, baked goods and similar gifts.

## Green Your Garden

- ◆ With a \$90 rain barrel, you can reduce water consumption by collecting rainwater to irrigate landscaped areas.
- ◆ Native plants require little water once established, and preserve biodiversity and the authenticity of your region.
- ◆ Use [organic lawn-care methods](#) instead of chemical fertilizers.

## Just Keep Swimming

- ◆ Consider replacing chlorine-based pool sanitation systems with greener alternatives, such as a baking soda and rock-salt solution.
- ◆ Cover outdoor pools at the end of the day to minimize heat loss.

## Camping Out

- ◆ Create a welcoming environment for tenting—a low-impact alternative to trailer camping. Consider a walk-in tenting area in a highly desirable camping location.
- ◆ Offer walking and cycling paths that connect different sections of the campground with popular destinations, such as beaches, shower/washroom facilities, campground store, marina, etc.
- ◆ Source your firewood from deadfall, blowdown and trees felled for site clearing and trail building.
- ◆ Offer guided walks or partner with non-profit groups to provide education on local flora and fauna, particularly on sensitive species or habitats. For example, check out [Friends of Riding Mountain National Park](#).
- ◆ Use native plants, trees and shrubs for shade and noise shelter. Plants are great insulators that can help moderate cooling and heating for different times of day. To find which species are native to your area of Canada, check out the [Evergreen Native Plant Database](#).

## Traditional/Bus Tour Operators

Traditional group and bus tour operators face the challenges associated with transporting their customers often over long distances or to multiple destinations, and typically within a short timeframe. Technological advancements are helping to address these challenges, particularly with the advent of hybrid vehicles and the increasing availability of alternative fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel. But your company may also be able to reduce emissions and cut costs with strategic route planning and staff education.

### Quick Start



For group tours, use hotels that are situated near the attractions and restaurants to which you are travelling. Grouping the locations will allow you to save money on fuel and transportation time, which will in turn leave your customers with more time for sightseeing. In some large urban centres, you may be able to choose hotels and restaurants within walking distance of sightseeing locations. Walking tours save you money on bus transport, slash greenhouse gas emissions to almost nothing, and give your travellers a bonus experience to add to their vacation memories.

### Case Study: The Greasy Rider

[NorthVan Green](#) Tours offers tours of the North Vancouver area and Whistler, British Columbia, with a modified Toyota hybrid SUV. Owner and operator Eric Williamson modified the vehicle's engine to run on used vegetable oil sourced from local restaurants. Williamson offers his customers personalized tours, and along the way stops to "gas up" at local restaurants and concession stands, which also gives him a chance to educate his customers on the benefits of biofuels.

### Transportation

For traditional tour operators, transportation represents the single greatest sustainability challenge. Here are several tips on how you can reduce your footprint while maintaining a successful business.

- ◆ Plan efficient routes that minimize drive time. Try variations of your usual route to see if a shorter or more efficient path exists.
- ◆ Encourage walking and cycling between nearby attractions, restaurants and hotels to give your customers another way to experience their vacation.
- ◆ Ensure that all vehicles are well maintained and serviced regularly. A well-tuned engine will deliver better fuel mileage, lowering emissions and saving you money.
- ◆ Dispose of all hazardous vehicle wastes in accordance with provincial and federal laws.

## Biofuels 101

Biofuels are fuels made from renewable resources such as plant materials. When burned, biofuels produce fewer heat-trapping greenhouse gases than petroleum-based fuels. Two common biofuels that are currently used for vehicles are ethanol and biodiesel.

Ethanol is most commonly produced in North America from corn. Many gasoline companies currently blend gasoline with ethanol (usually 15% ethanol), while more are planning on doing so in the near future. Ethanol production is a contentious issue. When making a fuel decision for your company, review recent information relevant to your local area and make a decision that works best for you both financially and environmentally.

Biodiesel is a small-but-growing segment of the alternative fuels market. While ethanol comes from plant-based sources, biodiesel is derived from vegetable oil or animal fats. Examples include soybeans, canola oil or waste such as used cooking oils. Biodiesel is still a relatively new technology, but one that is becoming increasingly available. When evaluating what is best for your company, make sure you check what facilities exist in your area.

- ◆ Consider purchasing or leasing hybrid electric vehicles for your fleet to save both fuel expenses and emissions.
- ◆ Don't idle vehicles. See the fact sheet below, and share it with your drivers.

## Product Design

- ◆ Design tours to visit regions/attractions/restaurants/hotels that have (or are implementing) sustainable practices.
- ◆ Showcase the local art, food, crafts and shops-support the local economy.
- ◆ Inform potential customers of your sustainable practices through your website and catalogue.
- ◆ Think about where you run tours, and any potential negative impacts they may have on the local environment. Consider the size and number of your groups, or alternative routes or destinations. Remember that damage to the place will in the long run damage your business.

## Vehicle Washing

- ◆ Wash vehicles with biodegradable cleansers.
- ◆ Implement a "grey water" collection system to wash your buses.
- ◆ Consider a "greener" vehicle-washing establishment if the option exists in your area; many of these businesses now offer biodegradable soaps, washing-water filtration and reuse, and water treatment to ensure no chemicals make their way into storm drains.

## Going Nowhere Fast: A Few Facts About Idling

Idling vehicles are not only a major source of greenhouse-gas emissions, they are also a waste of fuel and money.

### *Reasons People Idle:*

- ◆ To heat up or cool down the cabin for passengers
- ◆ Drivers were originally taught not to turn off diesel engines
- ◆ Mistaken belief that idling is easier on the engine, and that turning the engine on and off prematurely wears the starter motor
- ◆ Mistaken belief that restarting a vehicle produces more pollution than allowing it to idle
- ◆ Misperception that the engine must be warmed up before driving.

### *Idle Realities*

- ◆ Idling for more than five minutes for a diesel engine is not an effective way to warm up a bus even in cold weather. The quickest way to warm the engine is to drive at regular speeds. This also cuts down on wear and tear on engine parts from having to work at lower speeds.
- ◆ Modern gas engines require no more than 30 seconds to warm up, even in cold Canadian winters.
- ◆ Excessive idling can actually damage engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and exhaust systems.
- ◆ Frequent re-starting has little impact on engine components such as the battery and the starter motor, yet idling for more than 10 seconds costs more than turning off an engine and restarting it.
- ◆ Depending on the weather, many buses will maintain a comfortable interior temperature for awhile without idling. Schedule tours in a way that passengers and drivers do not need to spend a lot of extra time on the bus.
- ◆ A recent EPA study of school buses found that emissions measured after a vehicle was re-started contained less carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and other pollutants than they did after the bus had idled continuously over a 10-minute period. The analysis indicated that continuous idling for more than three minutes emitted more fine particulates (soot) than at re-start.

# Adventure/Ecotourism Operators

As retiring baby boomers continue to reshape the face of Canadian leisure, the travel industry is witnessing a corresponding shift toward experiential- and nature-based tourism. This new wave of adventure seekers is interested in pristine environments and authentic local cultures—two more great reasons to embrace as many sustainable practices as possible.

## Quick Start



Adventure works up an appetite! Food is often a significant draw for ecotourists. As a food provider, check out the [Food Services](#) of this toolkit for tips on offering sustainable and scrumptious fare. First, think about what your guests eat. Where possible, buy local and/or organic food. Second, examine how your guests eat. Are you using disposable plates, cups, cutlery, and plastic wrap for all your picnics and camp meals? Ditch the disposables and invest in some lightweight camping cookware and utensils. Many attractive and high-quality utensils are now available. Is this something that you could put your logo on and give as a gift to the guests?

## Sharing the Commons

- ◆ **Make local arrangements.** Utilize local guides and suppliers to maximize economic benefits for your host community or region.
- ◆ **Visit national, provincial and regional parks.** Try to incorporate national, provincial and regional parks and monuments into your itineraries. Fees support park upkeep and conservation projects, which in turn help to preserve our natural heritage.
- ◆ **Partner with First Nations communities.** Create opportunities for open dialogue and consultation with First Nations communities. Arrange partnerships with local tours and guides operated by First Nations people. Involve First Nations groups when identifying potential remote campsites to avoid culturally or archeologically sensitive locations.
- ◆ **Educate travellers.** Develop a code of backcountry ethics and conduct, and include it in your opening-day orientation.
- ◆ **Contribute to the community.** Donate to local charities, projects and organizations dedicated to preserving Canadian wilderness.
- ◆ **Give locally.** Offer locally made souvenirs to improve the regional economy, and to add a unique and authentic element to a tour. Examples might include artwork and photographs of local landscapes, wildlife and culture, jewellery made with local materials, preserves, honeys, maple syrup, handmade crafts and quilts, and Aboriginal and Inuit art.
- ◆ **Expand your horizons.** "Learning" travel is a growing sector in the tourism industry. If you don't already offer an educational component in your tour, consider adding one. You might invite a history professor, biologist or archaeologist along on a tour.

## Tour Size: Factoring the Ecosystem Into the Profit Calculator

An important aspect of operating a sustainable adventure tour is determining what group size is the most profitable and the most sustainable. The answer will depend on what is offered in the tour and where the tour goes. When calculating your maximum tour size, consider:

- ◆ Minimizing environmental and cultural impacts
- ◆ Ensuring guides are able to have personal contact with guests
- ◆ Ensuring guides are able to control the situation at all times
- ◆ Improving group rapport
- ◆ Enhancing the enjoyment of the environment and the activities for all guests
- ◆ Increasing guests' opportunities to interact with locals
- ◆ Creating a safe environment-make sure that group sizes in remote areas can be accommodated by evacuation services in the event of an emergency.

Smaller group sizes provide more privacy to guests, and also facilitate the use of smaller vehicles, which can in turn open up access to more remote areas. Experiment with group sizes and speak with your guests about their experience to determine what works best for the environment, the guest experience and your bottom line.

## Wildlife Encounters

Your customers may have the remarkable experience of seeing a nest of hatching birds or a fawn eating lunch. Such spectacles are wonderful memories. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- ◆ **Know your area.** Be aware of the presence of wildlife, and the general locations and common travel routes of animals. Avoid breeding and nesting sites. Consult with local environmental groups or researchers for information on sensitive areas and times of year to avoid visits.
- ◆ **Slow down.** Keep vehicle speeds to a minimum while travelling in wildlife areas.
- ◆ **Talk it up.** Educate staff and travellers through environmental immersion programs and interpretive talks. Invite special guest speakers such as biologists and zoologists to point out signs of nesting.
- ◆ **Don't spook the wildlife.** Unless it's hunting season, minimize noise and disturbances like sudden movements, flash photography, bright-coloured clothing and open fires. These often spook animals.
- ◆ **Keep up with tradition.** Offer your guests opportunities to learn from Native elders about local wildlife and plants.

## Case Study: Mind the G.A.P.

For the better part of two decades, sustainable tourism outfitter [G.A.P Adventures](#) has worked to bolster local economies while minimizing negative environmental and cultural impacts. In 2006, Condé Nast Traveler named the Canadian firm to its 12th annual Green List, citing G.A.P.'s commitment to environmental initiatives, contributions to local communities and the overall quality of the guest experience. The magazine singled out the company for demonstrating "the best ways to preserve the environments and cultures that make this planet worth exploring."

Consider adopting some or all of G.A.P.'s strategies:

- ◆ Create a planet-positive project: "Book a Trip, Plant a Tree"
- ◆ Support local community initiatives
- ◆ Create an ecotourism code of ethics
- ◆ Maintain small group sizes to limit negative social and environmental impacts
- ◆ Incorporate home stays where possible
- ◆ Support the local economy by visiting local restaurants and markets, and staying in small-scale hotels where possible
- ◆ Train tour leaders and travellers in low-impact travel.

## In the Water

The adventure tourism sector relies heavily on water-based activities such as sailing, kayaking, canoeing, snorkelling, whitewater rafting and whale-watching. As such, it also bears a responsibility to preserve and protect this shared natural resource. Here, a few things to keep in mind.

- ◆ **Do not dump**-or allow your guests to dump-any wastewater, sewage or refuse into fresh water. Establish a "take pictures, leave bubbles" policy with your customers.

## Case Study: The Sea of Green

[Ocean Quest](#) is a sustainable adventure tourism operator, offering diving tours to the Bell Island Shipwrecks in Conception Bay and other areas off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. The company works to enhance the long-term viability and sustainability of the tourism industry by preserving the underwater heritage and encouraging all local and tourist divers to adopt their simple motto-"take only pictures, leave only bubbles".

Ocean Quest has proven itself a sustainable-tourism leader by developing new initiatives such as an annual "Youth and the Oceans" conference. The company also participates in beach cleanups, ghost-net retrieval programs, summer environmental day camps, and lobbying against the illegal dumping of oil, toxins and garbage at sea. Parks Canada has recognized the firm's efforts with numerous sustainable tourism awards.

- ◆ **Anchor away.** If anchoring is absolutely necessary, make sure your boats only drop the hook in designated areas. Use soft wraps (e.g. cushion rope) when tying them to trees to minimize damage to bark and branches.
- ◆ **Run cleaner.** Regularly service your boat engines and when the time comes to replace them, do so with more fuel-efficient, cleaner-burning models.
- ◆ **Think veggies.** If you operate a larger vessel with inboard engines, consider [biodiesel](#) as an alternative fuel source. It is made from used vegetable oil and produces fewer emissions than petroleum or diesel-based fuels. Biodiesel can replace or blend with petroleum diesel with little or no engine modifications.
- ◆ **Avoid oil spills.** Use a funnel when refuelling to avoid spillage.

## On the Ground

If your company offers hiking, trekking, cycling and archaeological tours, consider integrating the following best practices into your operations:

- ◆ **Be low impact.** Encourage your guests to use only biodegradable soap in freshwater streams and lakes. Avoid camping closer than 30 m (98 ft) from bodies of water and 100 m (330 ft) from cave entrances.
- ◆ **Stick to the beaten path.** Lessen your impact by using established camps and trail networks. Keep to the middle of tracks, and seek out the highest and driest ground to lessen erosion.
- ◆ **Try the direct route.** When transporting luggage for tours to accommodation sites, consider efficiencies. Take the direct route to the destination rather than following groups as they travel by bicycle or on foot.
- ◆ **Prevent fires.** Avoid open fires and remove all artificial structures after use.

## Smokey Says

Recreational campfires cause many wildfires each year. Follow these steps for responsible fire prevention:

- ◆ Check for local restrictions.
- ◆ Consider the wind conditions. If the wind is strong enough to carry sparks to combustible material like twigs and leaves, don't light up.
- ◆ Use a designated fire pit. If there is no designated fire pit, clear a two m (five ft) circle down to bare earth and set your fire in the centre.
- ◆ Keep your fire small and a reasonable distance away from any flammable materials.
- ◆ Keep water and a shovel nearby, and never leave your fire unattended.
- ◆ Extinguish your fire by stirring water into the ashes until it is cold to the touch-hot coals can reignite the fire
- ◆ **Switch it up.** Change around tour routes to allow regeneration and avoid irreversible damage caused by repeated use.
- ◆ **Leave no trace-Leave No Trace** is a widely embraced global campaign that is teaching active adventurers to minimize their environmental impact.

- ◆ **Teach client care.** Train clients to take care of minor issues such as flat tires to reduce the number of "assistance requested" vehicle calls.
- ◆ **Avoid potty issues.** Use permanent composting toilets or bury human waste at least 15 cm (six in) deep and 100 m (330 ft) from water sources or campsites.

## Horsing Around

If your operation relies on horses for pack touring or riding, you are already minimizing your environmental footprint. Here's how to avoid negatively impacting wild species and habitats.

- ◆ **Avoid introductions.** Minimize the odds of introducing non-native seeds into a sensitive wilderness ecosystem—deliver feed to horses through a nosebag, collect and remove manure, and water animals by trough or bucket.
- ◆ **Erect fences.** Use a portable fence and soft ties when tethering. Pen horses at least 30 m (100 ft) from the nearest water body and in an area at least 15 sq m (160 sq ft) per animal.

## Moving Mountains

In recent years, rock climbing has grown in popularity. Rock formations are precious resources like any other natural wonder. Consider these suggestions when operating climbing adventures.

- ◆ **Chalk it up.** Minimize the use of chalk when rock climbing as it can detract from the natural appearance of rock formations.
- ◆ **Don't be a chip off the old block.** Use soft materials to cushion ropes where they pass around natural anchors. Avoid excessive use of bolts on climbing areas.
- ◆ **Keep them in the dark.** Strong lighting in caves can actually encourage the growth of algae and other foreign species. These can also be harmful to wildlife that dwells in caves.
- ◆ **Go with the flow.** Paths should not block natural water flows and structures should be built to protect sensitive cave formations.

## Let it Snow

Downhill skiing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, heli-skiing, dogsledding and polar treks are all wonderful Canadian pursuits. Just be sure to keep the backcountry as pristine as possible.

- ◆ **Share a ride.** Minimize the use of motorized transport and consider sharing vehicles with other tour operators or accommodation providers.
- ◆ **Make snow.** Aim for good energy, waste and water practices when using snow-making machines.
- ◆ **Find homes.** Animals involved in sledding can enjoy a wonderful quality of life. Work with local animal organizations to find dogs new homes once they are no longer able to participate in sledding.
- ◆ **Take the path of least resistance.** Use established routes and slopes for all snow-based recreational activities.
- ◆ **Diversify.** Climate change will continue to significantly impact snow-based tourism operators. As the seasons shorten, tour operators might consider diversifying their guest offerings. Nature-based and cultural activities can supplement existing activities and provide year-round revenue.

## Case Study: Small But Savvy

[Great Excursions Company](#), a small Regina, Saskatchewan-based group-adventure tour operator, offers guests a wonderful dogsledding holiday in Quebec. As part of its commitment to responsible and sustainable tourism, its management ensures that working dogs are treated ethically. The company uses recycled products and supports local businesses.

Great Excursions has also made a commitment to share its knowledge and to contribute to the preservation of the region's traditional cultural activities via collaboration with First Nations communities.

Finally, recognizing that sustainability is as much a social responsibility as it is an environmental and economic concern, the company provides opportunities for young people with special mental and physical challenges.

# Travel Agents

With increasing numbers of consumers bringing values of health and sustainability to their vacation planning, agents have an unprecedented opportunity to position themselves as "green travel planners" who organize responsible and cost-efficient holidays. This value-added service could set a visionary company apart from the field of traditional holiday-travel agents. Here are a few ideas on how to get started in this fast-growing niche-or how to simply green up your existing operation. Be sure to consult the other sections of this toolkit for advice on incorporating sustainable practices around your office.

## Did you know?

According to a recent TNS Canadian Facts Study, 80% of travellers believe sustainable tourism practices can have a positive and meaningful impact on the world's future. When planning their trips, nearly half of respondents would make the effort to seek out a travel agency that caters to responsible tourism guidelines.

## Quick Start



Begin building a list of sustainable tourism suppliers with websites such as [Green Traveller](#), [Responsible Travel](#), [The International Ecotourism Society](#) or [National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations](#). Use other sections in this toolkit to help identify whether your current travel suppliers employ sustainable practices. Check their websites to see if they have information on their sustainability or environmental practises.

## Choosing Destinations

As a responsible travel agent, you must consider the environmental and tourism impacts on local communities, as well as the activities that your clients will be involved in while visiting a destination.

## Hotel Eco-Rating Programs

[Green Leaf](#)<sup>TM</sup> identifies lodging facilities in Canada, the US and Europe based on their environmental best practices, with lodgings rated on a scale from one to five.

[Green Key](#) by The Hotel Association of Canada is a voluntary, self-administered audit. This rating program is designed to recognize hotels, motels, and resorts that are committed to improving their fiscal and environmental performance. Green Key also gives hoteliers guidance on how to reduce environmental impacts and operating costs.

- ◆ Offer destinations that support local communities by providing jobs to residents and developing projects that improve the quality of life for locals.
- ◆ Encourage your customers to choose community-oriented destinations and familiarize them with tourism-sponsored projects in the host community.
- ◆ Consider "Fair Trade" in tourism-accredited destinations. The fair-trade concept of ensuring producers in developing countries receive a fair share of revenue is now being extended to tourism with the idea that local communities should benefit from tourism activities with fair wages and other long-term benefits. For an example, check out [Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa](#).
- ◆ If you know a popular destination is struggling with a sensitive or damaged environment, try to find an alternative to offer your clients.

- ◆ Beware greenwashing. Avoid tourism suppliers and operators that only pretend to be sustainable.

## Greenwashing

Greenwashing occurs when organizations attempt to make themselves appear green by making environmental claims that are misleading, superficial or blatantly false.

## Transportation

Your clients expect you to steer them to the best transportation for their money and time. Try to offer them options that benefit the planet as well.

- ◆ Consider whether a train could be used as an alternative to a car or plane. Offer your clients rail travel wherever possible-especially in areas where it is electrified-and explain how it can be a sustainable travel choice.
- ◆ If your clients require a rental vehicle, seek out a hybrid or fuel-efficient vehicle. Explain that it is not only eco-friendly, but also cost efficient, since they will save on fuel. Keep on hand a list of car rental companies that offer hybrids.
- ◆ Introduce your clients to the concept of carbon-neutral travel. Try to book flights on airlines that offer a carbon-offset option, or encourage clients to add the cost of offsets to their travel package.

## Carbon offsets

The very process of travel-especially long-haul air trips-contributes significantly to global warming by releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Carbon-offset programs offer travellers an opportunity to "balance out" their individual negative impacts by financially contributing to projects, such as renewable energy development or reforestation initiatives, that will reduce carbon emissions elsewhere.

- ◆ Think about compiling a list of reliable, carbon-offset providers and encourage your clients to purchase carbon offsets when they book a flight or hotel.
- ◆ Try to find a provider who has a user-friendly, carbon emissions calculator for a travel package that includes transportation, accommodations and other activities.

## Carbon Offsetting

Carbon offsetting involves financially contributing to a project that works to reduce emissions in an amount roughly equalling the quantity of carbon produced by a given traveller's plane or vehicle travel. Some airlines offer Web-based calculators to help consumers estimate their flight's emissions; others invite customers to purchase them at the time of booking. Collected funds are typically directed to a project chosen by the airline, or forwarded to a carbon offset provider to underwrite a variety of projects. Check out the [Becoming Carbon Neutral](#) section of this toolkit for more tips on carbon offsets.

# Hunting and Fishing Outfitters

Hunting and fishing outfitters depend on pristine wildlife and fish habitat, and as such are exceptionally vulnerable to habitat encroachment, pollution and resource depletion, and other negative ecological impacts. By embracing best practices, companies, guides and clients can take an active role in securing the future of both the industry and the planet.

## Quick Start



If you are a member of your provincial outfitting association, promote yourself by showcasing the conservation policies you already have in place. Let your customers know whether or not your association has a code of ethics that its members must follow. For example, create a "Code of Ethics" section on your company's website and outline the actions that you take to abide by them. If you have a lodge or other structure, create a large poster of the code and display it in a public area.

## Habitat Conservation

The primary cause of wildlife extinction is loss of habitat, along with risks posed by habitat degradation, fragmentation and poaching. Here are a few things you can do to help safeguard wetlands, forests and other natural areas.

- ◆ Support conservation groups such as [Ducks Unlimited Canada](#) and [The Nature Conservancy of Canada](#). These organizations work on your behalf to conserve the habitat and resources that you rely on for your business.
- ◆ Support and share scientific research related to habitat protection and conservation.
- ◆ Tread as carefully as possible while transporting clients to hunting or fishing spots-always use existing roads or trails. For guidelines, check out [Tread Lightly](#), a US hunting and fishing organization focusing on ecosystem stewardship issues.
- ◆ Clean your boots and gear after a hunting trip to ensure that you and your clients do not inadvertently carry an invasive plant species from one area to another.

## Client Education

As an outfitter, you are in a unique position to teach your clients about best practices, as the majority of your product is based in nature and experienced in small group settings. Pass the time while sitting around in your blind, on a boat or around the campfire by acting as an information source for your clients.

- ◆ Ensure that you and your guides are well informed about endangered or threatened wildlife or plants. Where possible, point out examples to your customers-be sure to observe and not disturb. Take the opportunity to explain their significance and status under provincial and national species at-risk acts.
- ◆ Showcase specific conservation programs for species or habitats in your area. Look into partnerships with local parks, conservation zones and wildlife reserves that may provide knowledgeable experts that can enhance your clients' experience with presentations on the natural heritage of the region.

## Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is a national panel of experts that assesses and designates wild species in danger of disappearing. COSEWIC categories of risk include:

- ◆ **Extinct.** A species that no longer exists.
- ◆ **Extirpated.** A species no longer existing in the wild in Canada, but occurring elsewhere.
- ◆ **Endangered.** A species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.
- ◆ **Threatened.** A species likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.
- ◆ **Special Concern.** A species that is particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events but is not an endangered or threatened species.
- ◆ **Data Deficient.** A species for which there is inadequate information to make a direct or indirect assessment of its risk of extinction.
- ◆ **Not At Risk.** A species that has been evaluated and found to be not at risk.

Definition of "species": any indigenous species, subspecies, variety, or geographically or genetically distinct population of wild animals and plants.

For more information and lists of species at risk, check out [COSEWIC](#)

- ◆ Take time to learn about diseases that may affect the animals your clients hunt. Chronic wasting disease, tuberculosis and brainworm infections are just some of the many diseases that you may encounter. By being able to spot the symptoms, you can assist provincial wildlife officials in containing disease outbreaks and ensure that your hunting resource continues to thrive

### Try This!

Consider inviting an expert along for the trip—university researchers, Native elders and park employees might be suitable candidates. Area conservation groups may also have experts who would be interested in sharing their knowledge.

## Keeping It Local

By supporting and involving the small communities within your region of operation, you can help to ensure their economic viability. For hunting and fishing outfitters that operate in rural and remote areas, these towns can be a lifeline of supplies and staff. The [Giving Back](#) section has more information about how to make a contribution to your local community.

- ◆ Maintaining open lines of communication with local officials in small, remote communities can be key to your success there. Community support can raise your company's profile, which in turn brings more people to the community and helps to sustain the local economy.
- ◆ Look to the local community for employees. Locals typically have the best knowledge of the area and can ensure that your customers reach the best hunting or fishing grounds.
- ◆ Consider instituting an apprenticeship program to encourage local youth to become guides. Passing on information and techniques from older, experienced guides can ensure that younger, new employees can become accomplished guides as well.

## Respect The Regs

The future success of your hunting or fishing business relies upon a healthy environment that sustains healthy wildlife-population levels. Provincial and federal regulations help maintain these conditions, but even more can be done. At a minimum, ensure that you and your customers abide by all federal and provincial laws for hunting seasons, bag limits and size of catch.

- ◆ Be familiar with all applicable laws and guidelines in your province and region. Inform your customers about catch sizes, bag limits and any other applicable laws before they head out to hunt or fish. Explain that these laws exist to ensure that there will be good populations for clients to be able to return to hunt or fish in the area in future years.

### Try This!

Don't know what the local laws are in your region? Try a Google search of the name of your province or territory and "hunting or fishing regulations" to find your area's current laws and regulations. Or go to your provincial or territorial government website and look for the conservation, wildlife or environment department. For fish, check out the [Department of Fisheries and Oceans](#).

- ◆ Practice safe catch-and-release fishing. For guidelines on proper fish handling with catch-and-release fishing, check out [Wild Trout Streams](#).
- ◆ Try practicing barbless fishing. Barbless fishing offers a greater challenge to fishers, as barbless hooks are harder to catch fish on. When practicing catch-and-release fishing, using a barbless hook can ensure easier removal of the hook from the fish, causing less damage to their mouths.

## Leave No Trace

- ◆ Cart out all wastes, including spent shotgun shells and rifle cartridges. Your next group of clients will not be impressed if they come across a small landfill in the middle of pristine wilderness.
- ◆ Check out other sections of this toolkit-[Transportation](#), [Accommodations & Lodging](#), [Food Services](#)-for tips on how to make other aspects of your business sustainable.

## Attractions and Venues

Whether you are hosting a conference for 30 or 3,000 delegates-or specifying lights for a small rural museum versus a large international centre-you have myriad opportunities to make smarter choices. Read on for a few ideas you can apply today in your business.

### Quick Start



Set out containers to collect paper, aluminum cans, glass and other recyclables. By making the bins easy to spot, the containers can be a highly visible sign of your efforts to embrace sustainability. Consider allowing customers to use or purchase reusable mugs and cups, or offer a discount to encourage them to contribute positively to their experience and to the environment.

### Indoor Attractions

#### *Events*

Conferences, meetings, trade shows, banquets and concerts tend to have a significant environmental impact, simply because they concentrate people in one location. However, these large events also present a unique opportunity to tightly control energy, materials and water consumed, as well as waste produced. Consider these "low-hanging fruit" options:

- ◆ Select a host city that is close to the majority of the participants and that offers a well-developed public transportation infrastructure.
- ◆ Choose hotels that are within walking distance of the event venue and/or have green policies and/or certification.
- ◆ Institute a "no idling" policy-with event-branded curbside signage-for vehicles picking up and dropping off participants at the venue.
- ◆ Offer participants the option to attend the event via videoconferencing.
- ◆ Post all information related to the event on a website well in advance; avoid sending out print materials by mail.
- ◆ Distribute information electronically to event participants in advance. Offer a streamlined print package for onsite registrants and print double-sided on FSC-certified paper, which comes from sustainable sources, is produced without using chlorine and often includes a high percentage of post-consumer waste content. If possible, print with vegetable-based (preferably soy) ink.

#### Try This!

Contact the destination marketing organization (DMO) for the region where the event is being held and ask for a list of local printers that can provide chlorine-free paper with a high post-consumer waste content and/or FSC-certified paper and/or waterless printing.

You can also visit the [Forest Stewardship Council](#) for a list of FSC-certified printers.

- ◆ Provide presentations and handouts on a reusable flash drive.
- ◆ Supply recycling bins for discarded print materials.
- ◆ Serve organic, locally produced food and beverages.

- ◆ Provide water coolers with reusable glasses rather than bottled water.
- ◆ Use ceramic dishware and metal cutlery as much as possible.
- ◆ Incorporate local artists and performers into your event's opening ceremony or reception.
- ◆ Provide locally crafted or handmade items as gifts for speakers, delegates and guests.

## Make Your Event Carbon Neutral

Why not make your next event carbon neutral? First, identify as many efficiencies as possible from electricity, heating and cooling, ground and air transportation, food and beverage services, paper and other materials. Then purchase carbon offsets for the remainder. For information on carbon neutral-events and online calculators to measure emissions, check out the [David Suzuki Foundation](#).

## Case Study: An Unconventional Convention Centre

Since 1996, the [Québec City Convention Centre](#) has worked to embrace sustainable practices across the full range of operations-from purchasing decisions and eco-friendly kitchen options to waste and energy management and event packages. Here are just a few examples of the strategies the centre has put into action:

- ◆ The building is heated with high-efficiency, natural-gas boilers.
- ◆ The organization constantly identifies opportunities to reduce, reuse, recycle and renew everything from paper selection to carpet fibres and dishware.
  - ◆ The building combines extensive use of natural light with energy-efficient lighting fixtures and a natural cooling system.
- ◆ Bathrooms are equipped with electronically activated urinals and sinks.
- ◆ A system monitors the water quality.
- ◆ The facility uses local and organic products.
- ◆ Food is served on porcelain dishware instead of disposable containers, with biodegradable or recyclable dishware for snacks.
  - ◆ Management offers attendees coffee-break milk, juice and sugar in bulk-rather than single-serving-containers.

These efforts have paid off in many ways. The Québec City Convention Centre was awarded the EcoGeESte (2003) and Stellaris (2004) prizes for slashing its greenhouse-gas emissions in half while reducing its per-sq-m energy consumption by 30%. It's important to note that the convention centre also does an admirable job communicating these wonderful initiatives to the public.

### *Museums, Galleries and Historic Sites*

Canada's cultural and historical attractions not only brim with experiences for visitors, but present wonderful opportunities to increase awareness of environmental and socio-cultural issues in support of sustainable practices. Try to implement a few of the following strategies.

- ◆ Convey site-specific information on large, permanently mounted boards rather than via printed pamphlets, and use e-mail. Consider LCD screens for dynamic, onsite information such as a schedule of daily events, and use Web and e-mail for digital newsletters.

- ◆ When printed material is unavoidable, use recycled paper with a high post-consumer waste content, or FSC-certified paper. Print double-sided using vegetable-based ink and ensure these logos are visible to represent your organization's values.
- ◆ Collect used maps and guides with a drop-box at the exits; reuse them for other visitors.
- ◆ Share your successes with your guests-consider creating a small model or similar visualization tool to convey how your recycling, water conservation or renewable energy practices work.
- ◆ Educate visitors about your area's greater socio-cultural context. Offer guests pointers on how to minimize their impact-particularly with respect to sensitive cultural sites.
- ◆ Help visitors to understand local culture, customs and social norms.
- ◆ Offer hands-on opportunities for volunteers, which will help foster a deeper connection with your area's people and customs.

## OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS

### *Theme Parks and Festivals*

- ◆ Use biodegradable disposable containers or reusable cups and plates.
- ◆ Place recycling bins in multiple, convenient and visible locations.
- ◆ Invite local green groups and charities to set up booths onsite to collect donations while educating the public regarding recycling, water conservation and other sustainable practices.
- ◆ Establish rewards or incentives to encourage guests to return recyclable bottles, cups and dishes.
- ◆ Encourage food providers to use ceramic dishes.
- ◆ Purchase in bulk to reduce packaging materials.

#### Try This!

Produce reusable mugs with your logo and sell them as part of the admission fee-save the cost and time involved in picking up and discarding disposable items.

- ◆ Serve beverages in bulk and encourage people to bring reusable mugs.
- ◆ Encourage traders and vendors to use non-toxic cleaning products.
- ◆ Use signage to increase awareness about water conservation and/or waste reduction.
- ◆ Use automatic taps to reduce water consumption by up to 70%.
- ◆ Consider solar thermal systems to preheat hot water.
- ◆ Work with your public transit authority to provide shuttle services and convenient transit options.
- ◆ Minimize the use of onsite vehicles and use electric- or biodiesel- powered vehicles.
- ◆ Provide secure parking for bikes to enable visitors to bicycle, rather than drive, to the site.

#### Try This!

Offer a discounted entrance fee to people who arrive by public transit or active transportation and charge for parking-these all help to encourage sustainable and healthy modes of travel.

## Case Study: Edmonton's Low-Footprint Festival

For four days each August, the [Edmonton Folk Music Festival](#) welcomes 20,000 music fans into a city park with no paved pathways or roads. Here are a few things the organizers do to keep the event green.

- ◆ Provide a bike lock-up service.
- ◆ Install temporary walkways to minimize damage to the park.
- ◆ Collect garbage during the festival: EnviroPower, a group of youth volunteers, scours the park picking up garbage.
- ◆ Collect recyclable items to minimize waste sent to the landfill.
- ◆ Restore the grass and remove facilities and equipment in a timely manner.
- ◆ Serve food on ceramic dishes; a \$2 deposit encourages diners to return the plates. Biodegradable cups are made of cornstarch.
- ◆ Erect solar panels outside retail tents to power cash registers and other electrical appliances.

### *Golf Courses*

Some considerations to reduce the impact on the environment from golf course development and maintenance include:

- ◆ Plant more drought/saline-tolerant turfgrass species to reduce irrigation requirements.
- ◆ Whenever possible, plant or restore native vegetation around buildings and off fairways.
- ◆ Store winter melt and rainfall for summer irrigation-consider a water feature or provide a below-ground cistern.
- ◆ Utilize a "grey-water" management system to recycle water from the clubhouse, pro shop and maintenance facilities to reuse for irrigation.
- ◆ Minimize evaporation and water use by watering early in the day or late in the evening.
- ◆ Whenever possible, leave grass clippings and other organic materials in place or compost them.
- ◆ Minimize the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- ◆ Maintain a buffer zone between all water bodies and areas of pesticide and fertilizer application to protect water quality.
- ◆ If available, participate in a provincial pest management accreditation program.
- ◆ Erect bird or bat houses for native species and to help control insect populations.

For more details and ideas, check out:

- ◆ [Royal Canadian Golf Association](#) (turf management and environment)
- ◆ [United States Golf Association](#) (environmental principles for golf courses in the US)
- ◆ [The R&A](#)
- ◆ [Environmental Institute for Golf](#)
  - ◆ [Green Ontario](#) (golf courses and the environment)

## Protected Heritage Places

Parks and other protected heritage places preserve the natural ecosystem as well as provide an array of opportunities for visitors. Whatever the kind of park-municipal, provincial or national-the ongoing activities to both preserve the ecosystem and serve visitors must work in harmony with each other. Issues of waste, water, transportation and energy are everywhere and can become magnified in cases where businesses, cottages and campgrounds are located inside park boundaries.

### Case Study: Renewable Energy On Cape Chignecto

**Cape Chignecto Provincial Park**, the largest of Nova Scotia's provincial parks, offers deep valleys, sheltered coves, rare plants and remnants of old-growth forest. In 2008, the park opened a new, off-grid interpretive centre powered by a series of photovoltaic solar panels. The centre will feature interpretive displays and programming, and an upper-level observation deck as well as satellite communications. There are no drive-up sites in the park. Walk-in campground and trail systems provide safe access while limiting the impact on the surrounding environment.

### Best Practices of Parks Canada

Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas; these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.

Parks Canada is leading the way in our communities in the protection of natural and cultural heritage, through the facilitation of memorable experiences and learning opportunities, and as a model of environmental leadership. Sustainability principles based on cultural and economic influences, as well as environmental leadership, have systematically been integrated into its policies, programs, legislation and operations.

The following examples highlight one of the three areas of sustainability-the technologies and programs for greening operations in Parks Canada:

- ◆ Green buildings: Gulf Islands National Park Reserve's Operations Centre has received a Platinum rating from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. The centre is 75% more energy efficient than before thanks to photovoltaic electricity, ocean-based heat pumps that provide heating and hot water, and a rainwater collection system that has reduced potable water consumption by 60%.
- ◆ Power from wind: Fort Battleford National Historic Site in Saskatchewan uses a 50-kW turbine that provides 100% of its the energy.
- ◆ Power from moving water: Glacier National Park generates electricity using the natural flow of rivers and creeks to provide power to remote day-use areas.
- ◆ Green toilets: At St. Lawrence Islands National Park, composting toilets are ideal for remote sites, while solar-powered vents reduce odours.
- ◆ Recycling centres: These are in place across Parks Canada's sites and are a highly visible means of demonstrating environmental stewardship.
- ◆ Dark sky preserves: Designated by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, these wild places have restricted lighting and promote ecosystem protection as well as energy savings. Enjoy the night sky at Point Pelee National Park, Fort Walsh National Historic Site or Elk Island National Park.

Some of the 2007-2009 strategies:

- ◆ Meet targets for sewage effluent quality, water conservation, solid waste diversion, management of contaminated sites and legislated limits to growth.
- ◆ Develop water-quality guidelines for protected heritage areas.
- ◆ Increase the number of represented terrestrial and marine regions.
- ◆ Introduce a green-building policy for Parks Canada Agency; purchase ethanol-blended fuel for federal vehicles (where available).
- ◆ Designate new places, people and events from Aboriginal history, ethno-cultural communities history and women's history.
- ◆ Provide recommendations or certification to built cultural heritage sites based on Guidelines for Historic Places.
- ◆ Facilitate visitors' experiential connections with Canada's protected heritage areas and national parks.
- ◆ Develop and deliver educational programming in and around national parks and historic sites.
- ◆ Develop legislative proposals to better protect national historic sites, federal heritage buildings and archaeological resources under federal jurisdiction.

Some accomplishments from [Parks Canada's 2007-2009 SDS](#):

- ◆ Assigned all national parks to one of six bioregions based on landscape, species and stressors.
- ◆ Conducted self-assessment in all national parks of existing monitoring projects and outlined a strategy to address gaps.
- ◆ Raised awareness and fostered understanding of the number of person-visits to heritage sites according to heritage presentation.
- ◆ Developed an ecological-integrity reporting framework about highway-related impacts such as vehicle-caused wildlife mortality, habitat fragmentation, pollution, invasive species, and construction and maintenance impacts on ecologically sensitive areas.
- ◆ Studied the feasibility of making townsites models of environmental sustainability, including sewer design in Wasagaming, as well as potable water intake, assessment and design of a sewage effluent lagoon in Waterton Lakes.

### *Water Parks & Pools*

Numerous opportunities exist to reduce water consumption and embrace greener business practices while maintaining sufficient volumes for a positive guest experience.

- ◆ Reduce overall water consumption through water reuse, "grey-"water systems and water storage for later use.
- ◆ Install an onsite water treatment and filtering system to increase your ability to reuse water.
- ◆ Minimize the use of chemicals. When used, control and monitor the amounts.
- ◆ Try using salt water instead of chemicals.
- ◆ If you drain water to a natural water body, be sure to treat it up to natural standards in advance, and remove oil and chemicals.
- ◆ Consider a solar thermal system to heat the water. With energy costs rising, such a system may pay for itself sooner than you think.
- ◆ Install ultraviolet light to break down chlorine.

## Ultraviolet light v. chlorine

Ultraviolet technology is a non-chemical approach to disinfection. In this method of disinfection, nothing is added to the water, making it simple and inexpensive. It also requires very low maintenance. How does it work? Ultraviolet purifiers use germicidal lamps that are designed and calculated to produce a certain dosage of ultraviolet light.

Advantages of using UV light for water treatment:

- ◆ No chemical consumption, storage or transportation issues.
- ◆ Low energy requirements.
- ◆ No harmful by-products.
- ◆ Minimal moving parts.
- ◆ Disinfects better than chlorine, killing more waterborne microbes than chlorination.
- ◆ More cost effective than chlorination.

Downside of using chlorine:

- ◆ By-products of chlorine production are toxic to aquatic life.
- ◆ Chlorine is a hazardous substance. Storage, transportation and handling present a potential safety hazard and potential liability.
- ◆ Chlorine is much less effective in killing viruses than in killing bacteria, and is not as effective as UV light in killing both.
- ◆ Chlorine can damage pool infrastructures, rusting ventilation systems and corroding pool liners.

- ◆ Where feasible, cover swimming pools when not in use to limit evaporation and reduce heat loss.
- ◆ Use biofuel or biodiesel instead of petroleum-based fuel.

### *Ski and Snowboard Resorts*

Climate change already impacts the bottom line of winter sports operations around the world. For this reason alone, emissions-reduction programs in this sector should be viewed as a business imperative as much as an environmental or moral obligation. Here are a few starting points, as well as advice on broader sustainability strategies.

- ◆ Optimize the performance of snowmaking systems by installing energy-efficient air compressors, designing a better piping system and repairing air leaks in air compression systems and water leaks in the piping system.
- ◆ Cool water used in snowmaking systems in a water-cooling system or tower to reduce evaporation.
- ◆ Try to restrict snowmaking activities to times of reduced energy demand.
- ◆ To power buildings and lifts, purchase renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, small-scale hydroelectric or methane-based power.
- ◆ Specify metal halide fixtures for night skiing instead of less-efficient, high-pressure sodium lamps.
- ◆ Establish energy-efficient lighting and install timers on heaters in all buildings.

- ◆ Provide shuttles or public transportation to the ski hill for guests and employees.
- ◆ Develop an anti-idling policy in the parking lot.
- ◆ Wherever possible, use biodiesel and biofuel in vehicles and heating systems.
- ◆ Use less polluting, four-stroke engine snow machines.
- ◆ Turn off lights when ski runs not in use.
- ◆ Identify sensitive areas-inform visitors and limit the traffic in these areas.
- ◆ Re-vegetate damaged areas.

### Case Study: Shredding Emissions at Whistler Blackcomb

[Whistler Blackcomb](#) is radically reducing its environmental impact by focusing on reducing emissions, waste management, land use and water conservation.

On the waste-management side alone, efforts to reduce, recycle and reuse have paid off in a 60% reduction in the amount of waste being sent to the landfill. The company's [approach is comprehensive](#)-from purchasing less packaging and materials to recycling more than 80,000 beverage containers per year and more than 25 types of materials from light bulbs to ski poles. Used items such as ski equipment, desks and office equipment, dishes, furniture and clothing find new homes through the Mountain Materials Exchange or are donated to charities. A composting program at several of the area's restaurants diverted 100 tonnes of organics from the landfill over three years. The composting program has now been expanded to include paper towels from the on-mountain washrooms.

The company's eco-trophy case is packed with accolades, including the BC Tourism Award for Environmentally Responsible Tourism, the Silver Eagle Award for Excellence in Waste Management in the North American Ski Industry, and the First Choice Responsible Tourism Award for Best in Mountain Environment.

For more details and ideas, check out:

- ◆ [Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention](#) (pollution prevention at ski resorts)
- ◆ [National Ski Area Association](#) (sustainable slopes)
- ◆ [Keep Winter Cool](#)

# Tools by Business Processes

## Product Development

Product development is about creating something that your customers and potential customers want, whether it is a new experience or a retrofit of an existing one. And these days, travellers want their experience "green." According to a 2007 study by TNS Canadian Facts, about a third of survey respondents would switch from a "non-green" holiday offering to that of a competitor who demonstrated a stronger commitment to sustainable tourism. Don't let your next big opportunity slip through your fingers!

### Quick Start



Grab your copy of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism*. Whenever you begin developing a new product, make sure you review the code again as a refresher. If you set out to incorporate sustainable practices the moment you begin to develop new products, you can save the potential costs of having to change the product in the future. Keeping costs low contributes to your economic well-being and ensures your prosperity.

### Do Your Homework

- ◆ It may sound obvious, but it needs to be said: before you invest in a new product, make sure you'll be able to sell it. Undertake some market research and speak to your existing customers about their interests and values.
- ◆ Perform a competitive analysis: which of your competitors offer similar products that include a greater element of sustainability?

### Try This!

When evaluating the competitive landscape, remember to consider local, regional, national and global organizations/competitors. Examine what they do, and make decisions based on industry best practices and how they could fit into your situation.

### Design and Package Your Product

- ◆ Incorporate sustainable practices as well as product design and development into the planning process. Find the "hook," and build on that. Appeal to your customers' wants and deliver the product to them in ways they understand. Aim to meet and/or exceed their expectations.
- ◆ Promote viewing, understanding and preserving threatened habitats and endangered species.
- ◆ Thinking sustainably is about thinking locally. Play to your region's strengths, and build your product in ways that preserve and promote your area's ethnic diversity, traditional knowledge and cultural activities. Use authentic local experts, stories and resources to support your offer whenever possible.
- ◆ Ensure the highest standards of environmental stewardship are met both en route and at destinations.
- ◆ The old adage, "Give a person a fish, he will eat for a day. Teach a person to fish, he will eat for a lifetime," rings true for sustainable tourism. Create opportunities for your customers that are infused with sustainable practices and they will hopefully return home with a feeling of personal good that will carry on to other activities in their lives.

## Buddy Up

- ◆ Seek out strategic partners that are equally committed to sustainable practices, or consider starting an informal information exchange. You can share and borrow ideas, and potentially consider co-marketing arrangements.

### Case Study: A Perfect Mountain Marriage

[Trail of the Great Bear of Alberta](#), a cross-border co-marketing group focusing on Rocky Mountain destinations, has forged an innovative partnership with Parks Canada. The two organizations collaborate to support park goals and promote responsible travel through a variety of initiatives. [Parks Canada](#) coordinates and distributes visitation to minimize negative impacts, while Great Bear is a part of park planning, strategy development and delivery. The group also:

- ◆ Uses park interpretive planners and guides
- ◆ Builds park messages into its publications and programs
- ◆ Creates tour packages based on ecosystem-oriented experiences
- ◆ Makes financial contributions to park interpretation
- ◆ Participates in and initiates relevant research.

### Case Study: No Ordinary Outfitter

[Uncommon Journeys](#) offers low- to no-impact hiking, canoeing and dogsledding expeditions into the Yukon backcountry. What makes the company so uncommon? Owners Rod and Martha Taylor build environmental considerations into each of their company's offerings. The couple's wilderness base camp can be moved without leaving behind any evidence of its passing. All guides are trained in "leave no trace" practices and teach environmental ethics for Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership Schools. Finally, each tour has a greater purpose beyond simple adventure; guides collect important data on the region's flora and fauna, which the company forwards to the Yukon Territory's Department of Renewable Resources. From there, the data ultimately helps protect the territory's landscapes and wildlife.

## Promote Responsibly

- ◆ Your promotional materials typically represent your customers' first interaction with you. Reinforce your organization's values by specifying 100% recycled, post-consumer paper or FSC-certified paper, and print with vegetable-based inks or choose waterless printer companies. Make sure you communicate your green choices with appropriate use of logos and explanatory text.

### Print Your Vegetables: The Scoop on Nontoxic Inks

Vegetable-based inks replace petroleum solvents with vegetable oil—such as soybean or linseed oil. These inks, available in bright colours, help to significantly improve local air quality by reducing the quantity of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released during drying. Vegetable-based inks offer a number of other advantages:

- ◆ Improved worker health
- ◆ Make recycling easier
- ◆ Reduce toxic waste
- ◆ Biodegradable
- ◆ Extend lifespan of printing equipment
- ◆ Economical in the long run
- ◆ Derived from a renewable resource
- ◆ Enhance printability characteristics

For more information, check out [cleangreenprint.com](http://cleangreenprint.com).

## Scenario: A New Chapter for Aventures des Laurentides

Business is good at Aventures des Laurentides, a medium-size adventure-tour company operating out of Québec City. Ryan, the company's owner, is looking to expand his company's repertoire. Ryan is already working to minimize his company's environmental impact, so he wants to make certain that any new offering meets or exceeds the best practices for sustainable tourism.

Aventures des Laurentides is a lean operation, and Ryan doesn't have a big market research budget. He decides that any new product will have to interest his current customers, so he creates a survey himself, includes a modest incentive, and e-mails it to all his current and past clients.

Meanwhile, Ryan goes to scout a few new bike-tour routes—part of a new line of active, low-carbon tours he is developing. He plans ahead, calling up some local bike businesses for ideas. Then, instead of driving the proposed route, he rides it himself, saving fuel and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions.

Across two successful decades, Ryan has partnered with a long list of service providers and other businesses. Ryan wants to ensure that every part of his new line of sustainable tours is as responsible as possible, so he seeks out hotel, restaurant and attraction allies that share his principles.

While riding on his potential new tour, Ryan comes across a local farm and greenhouse that grows produce used in the adjacent restaurant. A little further up the road, he finds a small bed and breakfast that is located in a restored heritage building. The B&B's owners educate their customers about the historic significance of the building, along with other sites in the area. Ryan adds both businesses to his itinerary.

As Aventures des Laurentides prepares to launch its new series of discovery holidays for travellers seeking nature- and culture-oriented adventures, Ryan's team develops a line of Earth-friendly marketing materials. They print brochures on FSC-certified paper using vegetable-based inks, and develop a website with a flexible content management system that allows the consumer to customize his or her holiday. The whole process reduces paper, streamlines administration and sets a new bar for Ryan and his peers.

# Marketing

While it's important to green your operations in an effort to move toward sustainability, it's just as crucial to know your customers and communicate your efforts to them. According to Bob Willard, author of *The Sustainability Advantage*, consumer demand has driven environmental efforts in 18% of small Canadian businesses and 25% of medium-size enterprises. Your website, printed materials, advertising and signage should all communicate your values-while meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Keep your messages brief, clear, relevant and fun. Your clients will feel that they are making a difference, too.

## Quick Start



Detail your sustainability policy and/or efforts on the "About Us" page of your company's website. Tell your customers the practices you've put in place, and the policies and values behind them. Snap some photos and include a slide presentation, quotes and/or testimonials.

### Try This!

Before you launch your marketing campaign, check out what your competitors are doing-and not just the guy down the street. Many countries are aggressively moving ahead with sustainable tourism practices, and your new competition could be located halfway around the world. To get a competitive snapshot, check out [this article from National Geographic](#); it ranks 115 global destinations for their sustainable practices.

## Promote Your Sustainable Practices

- ◆ Research all the market-related instruments at your disposal, including contests, awards, pilot projects and third-party certification programs.
- ◆ Create marketing products targeted at your customer segments (advertisements, brand-building keepsakes, etc.); try to evaluate their effectiveness.

### How DMOs Can Help

In a recent study, 77% of surveyed Canadian travellers indicated that they believe it is the responsibility of businesses that market and sell tourism to ensure that sustainable and responsible choices are made available to potential travellers.

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) can play a critical role in encouraging small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to reflect environmental and social values in their operations. Some examples of DMOs include city, regional and provincial tourism organizations, visitor & convention bureaus, as well as chambers of commerce. DMOs can also assist sustainable SMEs in promoting their products and services as responsible travel options for those seeking guilt-free and small-footprint holidays.

Find out what your DMOs are doing to foster sustainable tourism and participate in its programs. If your regional organization is not engaged in this area, encourage it to do so.

## Connect with Allies

- ◆ Two heads are better than one; so are two companies! Collaborate with others-think cross-promotion and co-marketing-to leverage your combined resources, expertise and reputations. This strategy affords you access to new markets, strengthens your brand, reduces costs and increases customer loyalty.

### Case Study: The Greening of Fundy

The [Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership](#) encompasses 60 New Brunswick- and Nova Scotia-based operators. The members collectively support sustainability and conservation initiatives through a variety of marketing programs, including a code of ethics, a sustainability "mystery shopping" program, a set of guidelines for environmentally responsible tourism, and an eco-business program for all their business members.

## Avoid Greenwashing

- ◆ "Greenwashing" occurs when organizations attempt to make themselves appear green by making environmental claims that are misleading, superficial or blatantly false.
- ◆ Any benefits of greenwashing are likely to be short-lived and counterproductive; customers will ultimately discover the truth, and the damage to your brand and company may be irreversible.

### The Six Sins of Greenwashing

Environmental marketing agency Terra Choice offers the following quick guide to greenwashing to help you spot it and avoid the practice yourself.

**Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off**-committed when a product, company or service is classified as "sustainable" based on a single factor, without attention to the big picture.

**Sin of No Proof**-committed when a claim cannot be substantiated by accessible information or independent certification.

**Sin of Vagueness**-committed by a claim that is broad or poorly defined, with a high probability that its real meaning will be misunderstood. Examples include: "chemical-free," "non-toxic," "all natural" or "green."

**Sin of Irrelevance**-committed by a claim that is true but unhelpful to consumers. The most common example in products is a "CFC-free" label. Chlorofluorocarbons (an ozone-depleting substance) were banned in 1987.

**Sin of Lesser of Two Evils**-committed by a claim that may be true but only serves to distract the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the product category as a whole. For example, "green" insecticides and herbicides may be a slightly better alternative to others in their product category, but in the big picture context are truly no better for the environment.

**Sin of Fibbing**-committed by a claim that is completely untrue.

## Clarity Counts

- ◆ Give your customers clear and accurate information about your sustainability policies and goals. Be as specific as possible, and try to make the information meaningful.

## Get Listed

- ◆ The internet is brimming with blogs, portals, indexes and purchasing networks devoted to green business practices and sustainable tourism. Apply to get listed and connect directly with other organizations that have like-minded consumers. Here's a quick sampling of some of the opportunities just a few clicks away.
  - ◆ [Social Purchasing Portal Canada](#): A responsible purchasing organization working to create local economic and social value in eight Canadian markets.
  - ◆ [Sustainability Purchasing Network](#): A learning resource assisting corporate, not-for-profit, academic, government, public sector, labour and co-operative organizations with sustainability purchasing efforts.
  - ◆ [Ethiquette](#): A Quebec-based service highlighting responsible product and service choices for consumers.
  - ◆ [Responsible Travel](#): This consumer portal offers "the largest selection of responsible holidays" on the Web.
  - ◆ [Green Ontario](#): A regional network of ecotourism operators and sustainable tourism enterprises.
  - ◆ [It's a Green Green World](#): A global listing of eco-friendly hospitality destinations.

### Try This!

You can find even more places to register your business online. There are several industry-sector specific lists and rating systems for everything from accommodations to restaurants. To get started, try a Web search using keywords such as "sustainable tourism," "responsible travel," "eco-friendly," "ecotourism" and "ratings."

## Scenario: The Reinvention of a Cowtown Classic

After 30 years spent operating a successful Calgary restaurant, Luigi Parducci and his son Marco decide that they want to make a few changes.

Noting an untapped opportunity in the fast-food market, the co-owners of Luigi's Pizza commit to transforming their family eatery into an eco-friendly dining experience. They begin with their signature product, specifying locally sourced whole grains for their dough mix, and topping the baked pies with fresh organic cheese and as many locally sourced ingredients as possible. They replace their gas-guzzling delivery vehicle with a fuel-sipping Smart Car, and begin purchasing 100% recycled, post-consumer paper products, including take-out pizza boxes.

"I realized that our pizzeria, while small, could be part of the solution," says Luigi.

Emboldened by their initial changes, and after receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from customers, father and son begin a green retrofit of the restaurant. They replace the worn vinyl floors with sustainably harvested bamboo, install ceiling panels made in part from recycled aluminum cans, and swap out the toilets with dual-flush models. Luigi's kitchen is already set up with energy-efficient commercial ovens and refrigerators, so the owners look to their energy footprint and decide to purchase renewable electricity through a wind-power supplier.

"Calgary is a city that draws in many young people and young families—a generation that values health and the environment," explains Marco. "All we needed to do was sit down with Dad and talk numbers. He saw the potential right away."

On the Luigi's Pizza website and on all printed materials—such as takeout menus and boxes—the Parduccis communicate their green steps to their customers. They use plain jargon-free language that doesn't exaggerate or overstate their achievements.

Marco knows that increasing numbers of tourists and consumers are deliberately seeking out businesses that embrace sustainable practices. As the market grows, the partners want to make sure they are positioned where these customers will find them. So Marco works to have the restaurant added on websites featuring sustainable businesses. He also investigates affiliation with a new and prestigious "green-seal" program, one that publishes an online directory of its members.

Calgary's daily newspaper profiles the "new" Luigi's Pizza, and green travel bloggers take note of the place as well. Luigi and Marco revitalize their business, and get together with their staff to brainstorm other new and creative ways to make their little corner of the world even more sustainable.

## Training and Education

You can adopt sustainable values into your company's policies and practices, but your efforts will only really begin to pay off when you integrate your employees into the process. Think of your team members as partners, champions and detectives. As they are on the frontlines with your customers every day, they are ideally positioned to not only carry your sustainable principles forward to your clients, but also to identify untapped efficiencies and opportunities across your organization. Empower your staff, communicate your efforts to your customers and watch the benefits multiply.

### Quick Start



In just a few minutes, you can realize savings for your business and help the environment at the same time. Set aside some time each week-even an hour-to consider the small, simple actions that you can take toward sustainability. Devote time to considering your practices and you will be on your way.

### Seek Out the Leaders

- ◆ Odds are, you already have one or two enthusiastic sustainability advocates on your payroll. Canvas your employees, and bring them into the loop on your sustainability initiatives from the get-go. You'll end up with greater buy in, an improved sense of ownership and strengthened morale.

### Spread the Word

- ◆ Make small signs to serve as visual reminders, such as: "Please turn off the lights as you leave."
- ◆ Circulate fun environmental tips via e-mail, through an employee bulletin or blog.
- ◆ Consider including a "values of sustainability" segment in your employee orientation program.

### Knowledge Is Power

- ◆ Contact local organizations as well as heritage and conservation centres to see if they can provide experts to deliver workshops and seminars on environmental and social topics.
- ◆ Coordinate brown-bag, lunch-and-learn seminars with interesting speakers. Workshop and seminar topics might include composting, wildlife conservation, community economic development initiatives, active transportation strategies, and small-scale, climate-change solutions.
- ◆ Send staff members to participate in external learning opportunities such as conferences.

### Green Your Team

- ◆ Establish a "Green Team" or "Sustainability Team" to support your sustainability program. Such teams are typically comprised of enthusiastic and committed employees who believe in the value of sustainable tourism. Almost every organization has at least one of these "cheerleaders"-empower these natural leaders to help guide your policies, and they will respond by influencing other employees to get on board.

### Find Your Champion

- ◆ Identify your "Eco-Champion"-the most committed and enthusiastic individual under your roof. You might ask this person to draft and communicate your company's sustainability goals and objectives, research appropriate community projects and evaluate existing programs within your organization.

## Tell the World

- ◆ In today's competitive labour market, social responsibility and environmental values can strongly influence recruiting and retention efforts. According to the Conference Board of Canada, 71% of surveyed individuals want to work for companies that commit to social and community concerns. Be sure to communicate your company's sustainable values to existing and potential employees through your recruitment advertising.

### Case Study: Sustaining the Business From the Bottom Up

[Canadian Mountain Holidays](#)-a helicopter skiing and hiking company based in Banff, Alberta-deeply involves its employees in its environmental stewardship efforts. The company's 17-member Second Nature Committee includes staff from multiple divisions and departments, and is tasked with helping to integrate sustainable practices in planning, operations and training, and to share the policies with other staff and guests.

- ◆ Include a section in your marketing materials and website that details your commitment and actions. Don't forget to include any awards or honours your company has received for its practices or contributions.
- ◆ Celebrate your successes and be sure to honour employees who demonstrate above-and-beyond-the-call commitment to stewardship.

## Scenario: A New Breed of Banquet Hall

Chloe and Claude recently purchased Salon Vert-a small Québec City banquet and meeting facility named for the colour of its walls. The husband-and-wife team hopes to cater to the corporate and special-event market. But the pair wants the "green" in its new company's name to run deeper than its paint job. Indeed, the new owners want to transform the firm into a sustainable enterprise.

Chloe and Claude inherit eight existing staffers with the acquisition, and quickly hire four more. They call an all-hands staff meeting and invite team members to share ideas on how Salon Vert might incorporate social and environmental stewardship into its operations. They lead the discussion with the following questions:

- ◆ What is your vision for Salon Vert's sustainable future?
- ◆ What first actions would you like to see taken?
- ◆ How would a company-wide sustainability program make you feel about working here?

Following an upbeat and productive meeting, Chloe, Marion, Jacqueline and Guy together form an in-house Green Team. The group includes representatives from management, event coordination, sales and administration. Since many of the sustainable practices Salon Vert hopes to implement will involve facilities, the group invites Gilles-the part-time building engineer- to participate as well.

All members of the Salon Vert Green Team agree to:

- ◆ Participate for a minimum period of six months
- ◆ Attend meetings with no more than three absences for the term
- ◆ Share ideas and take ownership of projects
- ◆ Act as a liaison between their departments and the team
- ◆ Train staff in their departments in new practices and policies

- ◆ Create learning opportunities such as Lunch & Learn seminars or workshops
- ◆ Facilitate employee recruitment and orientation sessions
- ◆ Ensure all new hires are trained in the company's new practices

The Green Team elects Marion-one of Salon Vert's event coordinators-as its Eco-Champion. An avid gardener and cyclist, Marion spends much of her personal time mentoring a small catering co-operative comprised of individuals with intellectual disabilities. At regular intervals, she circulates updates on the team's progress and proposes community-volunteer programs.

Chloe and Claude have created a respectful workplace culture that reflects the values of both their team members and their customers. After a year, the couple's efforts are already paying off via decreased energy and waste costs-and a "green leaf" award from their industry's national professional association.

## Administration

Often, much of your actual business happens behind the scenes. Here are some ideas to make your organization's administration more efficient and sustainable.

### Quick Start



Turn the clean side of discarded printed pages into notepads. Why use new paper when your recycling bin is full of single-sided scrap? Better yet, print double-sided whenever possible. Just set the default values on all computers to automatically print double-sided and you're done.

### How to Introduce Sustainability to your Office

#### Case Study: Natural Cycle

[Natural Cycle](#) is a bike-courier company dedicated to human-powered vehicles. As a worker-owned co-operative run by a team of young people in Winnipeg, it offers city-wide courier services with a negligible carbon footprint, benefiting both the local economy and the environment.

Most cities have bike courier companies. Find one near you at the [International Federation of Bike Messenger Associations](#).

#### Try This!

Discourage your employees from printing unless absolutely necessary—most printing happens out of habit more than anything else. But if you do need to keep paper records, take these steps to reduce your impact and save a little green:

- ◆ Shred sensitive files and recycle.
- ◆ Reuse paper for scrap or reprinting within the office.
- ◆ Reuse file folders for other paper documents.
- ◆ Choose paper with at least 30% recycled, post-consumer content.

### Last One Out, Hit the Switch

- ◆ Turn off lights, computers, scanners and printers at night, and set computer monitors to automatically sleep during the day after a period of inactivity—it won't cost a thing. In fact, it will save you money.

#### FLICK OFF Campaign

FLICK OFF is a movement to reduce the heat-trapping greenhouse gases that cause climate change. It was initiated by Key Gordon, a Toronto advertising agency, to encourage Canadians to decrease energy use through simple steps like flicking off lights and idle computers. The campaign is rooted in the idea that remarkable things can happen when people come together. Check out [FLICK OFF](#) to pick up practical tips as well as your own Action Kit, and get the ball rolling at your office.

## The Power of a Bar

Electronic equipment and other appliances continue to draw power even when they are turned off. Rid your office of "vampire" power by plugging equipment into a power bar that can easily be switched off when the equipment is not in use. Choose a bar with surge protection to protect your equipment from power fluctuations.

## Reach For the Stars

- ◆ When replacing office equipment, look for [Energy Star](#)-qualified brands and models.

### (Scenario) Case Study: River City Music Festival

Desirée keeps the books and manages the office for the River City Music Festival—an annual event and year-round arts organization based in Winnipeg, MB, that draws bluegrass fans from across Canada and the US. One day, she receives an e-mail from a friend that catches her eye. The note is a collection of easy "how to make your office sustainable" tips.

With all the buzz about sustainability, Desirée gives the message a closer look. She likes the idea of streamlining her job, reducing paper waste and shrinking the festival's carbon footprint.

The festival relies heavily on local courier services to send packages and envelopes all over Winnipeg. So Desirée looks up a few bike-messenger companies, and enquires about pricing and services. She discovers that the companies price out about the same as her current vehicle-based courier, and switches over.

Like any business or organization, River City Music Festival generates a great deal of paperwork. E-mails and some other documents are saved electronically but quite disorganized. Desirée feels they can do better, so she researches electronic file management systems and finds one that meets their needs.

Desirée spends a good deal of time manually processing invoices and cutting cheques. Wondering if there is a better way, she researches electronic bill payments for business. She quickly finds a company that offers a software program and service that allows her to pay bills to vendors, suppliers and service providers no matter how small they are. No cheques, no paper, no postage.

Since the festival now pays its suppliers directly, Desirée wonders if it makes sense to offer the same convenience to festival patrons. She works internally with her marketing and management team, and creates an incentive for patrons to purchase tickets and merchandise online. Her colleagues investigate several options, including a discounted admission for those purchasing online or a freebie to redeem at the festival. Consumers soon begin welcoming the convenience of the paperless transaction.

Desirée dramatically reduces the "paper churn" through her office—helping the planet, saving costs and sparing her a few mundane and repetitive tasks.

# Purchasing

Every business stands at the centre of a web of relationships with suppliers and subcontractors that provide raw materials, food, professional services and other vital inputs. To truly integrate sustainable values into your organization, you must bring like-minded businesses into your network. Where gaps remain, encourage your suppliers to join you in your quest.

## Quick Start



The big question is always: "Where do we start?" If you can only do one thing today, choose one product you use in your business-be it coffee, toilet paper or printer paper-and purchase it responsibly with the help of a certified products purchasing guide such as [EcoLogo](#).

## Big-Picture Goals

- ◆ Responsible purchasing is all about "putting your money where your mouth is." Use your spending power to support the "Fair Trade" movement, to improve environmental, social and economic conditions within your region and to differentiate your business from your competition.

## The Eight Steps of Responsible Purchasing

1. **List all your purchasing needs.** Doing so will help you set your priorities.
2. **Identify your motivation.** This can range from a desire to appeal to a new clientele, to a need to cut costs, to aspirations of becoming a more ethical employer.
3. **Prioritize purchases.** Set realistic goals. This may mean deciding to focus your energies on paper products as the most convenient and economical option because your supplier is willing to cater to your needs.
4. **Define your goals** and success indicators. Here is a list to get you started.
  - ***I will buy local products and materials.*** Doing so reduces carbon emissions from transportation and supports the local economy.
  - ***I will stop buying products that include dyes, chemicals, chlorine, colouring and/or allergens.*** Ensure the safety and environmental health of your employees and customers by opting for natural alternatives.
  - ***I will favour certified products that have been designed and produced according to environmental and social criteria.*** Certified products take the legwork out of responsible purchasing.

## What's in a Label?

Labels help to identify products as meeting a particular social and/or environmental standard. This in turn should help you-the purchaser-make the most informed decision. A product with an eco- or fair-trade label has already been vetted through a rigorous process.

The [EcoLogo](#) program certifies products that have met a specific set of environmental performance criteria. The organization maintains a database of over 7,500 qualified items.

The [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) is an international certification and labelling system for paper and wood products that originate in either responsibly managed forests or verified recycled sources. FSC offers a listing of both certified paper stocks and printers across Canada.

TransFair Canada is a non-profit organization responsible for implementing fair-trade standards as outlined by Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International. A TransFair-labelled product assures the purchaser that a minimum guaranteed price was paid directly to the producer co-operatives, in addition to a premium the producers can invest in community development and sustainable production practices. For a list of fair-trade products and Canadian distributors, check out [Transfair Canada](#).

- ***I will support social enterprises and co-operatives.*** These organizations generate value for communities that extend beyond pure financial profit.
- ***I will speak with my service providers and identify eco-friendly and ethical products that I would like to purchase from them.*** Doing so allows you to stick with an existing relationship while applying ethical criteria to the products you already buy. This kind of action has a ripple effect. You are not only educating your suppliers but also helping them carve out a niche in their market.
- ***I will incorporate organic and/or local food items into my operations.*** Ditching chemical-laden food and beverages from your menu or even your office kitchen can translate into better taste, a happier planet and healthier people. Joining an agricultural co-operative gives you the benefit of cost sharing for better food and supporting local farms.
- ***I will evaluate whether the products I'm already using are safe for the environment and people's health.*** Reading labels and talking shop will help you figure out which, if any, of your existing products you can keep.
- ***I will buy in bulk.*** Less packaging means less waste and reduced costs. Products with less packaging can save suppliers money on shipping-savings that are subsequently passed onto you.

## Case Study: An Alpine Accomplishment

In 2007, [Canadian Mountain Holidays](#) reported on the success and future goals of its vision for sustainability. The company's hospitality department developed a Purchasing Policy for Waste Reduction. It has since worked with suppliers to reduce waste at the source. One such scheme allowed the firm to eliminate over 2,000 pieces of unnecessary packaging-for 1,000 pairs of gloves-that were previously destined for landfill. During the 2004-2005 ski season, CMH, in partnership with its ski supplier, eliminated 1,800 pieces of plastic from its ski shipments.

5. **Develop responsible purchasing criteria as the basis for decisions.** Having an overarching principle or set of criteria can help you keep on track and work toward achieving your sustainability goals. Try to keep an open mind. Paying a modest premium for a sustainable product at the front end can translate into a higher return on your investment in the long run.

6. **Develop strategies to help you achieve your goals.** Brainstorm how you will go about buying the products and services you have identified. Where will you look to find them? Will you talk to your current supplier first? Will you conduct a search for certified products/services in your area?

### What is a Social Enterprise?

Social enterprises are born from the principles of community economic development that reinforce the values of equity, fair wages and sustainable practices. A social enterprise is a mission-driven for-profit or non-profit organization that trades in goods or services for a social or environmental purpose.

The following organizations offer information and directories of social enterprises across Canada.

[Canadian CED Network](#)  
[Social Purchasing Portal Canada](#)  
[Enterprising Non-Profits](#)

### The Scoop on Co-ops

Many social enterprises are co-operatives. Worker co-operatives are employee-owned companies. The other kind of co-operative you are likely to be familiar with are member co-operatives. Companies like Mountain Equipment Co-op and your local credit union allow individuals to become shareholders by purchasing memberships.

Check out the [Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation](#) for links to co-ops in your area.

7. **Identify a timeline for implementation.** Be realistic. It will take a bit of time to transition. Having a timeline will help you to stay on track.
8. **Choose a champion on your team to be in charge of implementation.** Someone has to actually implement the plan and monitor progress. Who will it be?

## Scenario: A New Program on the Prairie

Janet and Joan co-own Little House on the Prairie, an established bed and breakfast located in a heritage farmhouse near Saskatoon, SK. The pair caters to travellers seeking an "authentic Prairie experience." Though Janet and Joan's B&B was the first of its kind in the area, the competitive landscape is changing, and the partners are now looking for new ways to differentiate their property. The duo decide to position its offering as a sustainable property, and to begin by purchasing eco-friendly, fair-trade, organic and/or locally made products for guests to enjoy.

Janet and Joan have committed to responsible purchasing and are ready to get started! They itemize their needs by frequency of purchase. Here is what they come up with:

- ◆ Breakfast foods
- ◆ Household products (e.g. toilet paper, tissues, etc.)
- ◆ Cleaning and laundering supplies
- ◆ Office and paper supplies
- ◆ Complimentary items (soaps, shampoos, etc.)
- ◆ Landscaping supplies and plants
- ◆ Towels and linens
- ◆ Décor and artwork that reflects a prairie aesthetic
- ◆ Small and large appliances (check out the [Energy](#) section of this toolkit for more information)

The owners believe that locally made products will help their B&B attract more first-time and repeat guests. They also believe their business will stand apart if they embrace an authentic Prairie aesthetic in everything from personal care products-such as a natural, hemp-based hand soap in guest rooms-to the native grasses and wildflowers they plant in their outdoor garden. They decide to focus on in-room complementary items and landscaping, both highly visible to guests.

Excited about the numerous possibilities of a sustainable positioning, Janet and Joan set the following goals for their business:

- ◆ We will buy local to meet our supply needs in our two priority areas.
- ◆ We will favour social enterprises and co-operatives when purchasing from local suppliers.
- ◆ We will buy complimentary guest items that are free of dyes, chemicals, chlorine, colouring and/or allergens.
- ◆ We will buy plants and landscaping materials to create an authentic Prairie aesthetic.

The entrepreneurs decide to measure success based on the following:

- ◆ Positive feedback from guests and employees
- ◆ Tracking total funds allocated to local products and services
- ◆ Monitoring increases in sales.

Janet and Joan develop a "decision matrix" to help them evaluate purchasing decisions based on:

- ◆ Low cost
- ◆ High quality
- ◆ Locally or regionally sourced
- ◆ Authenticity
- ◆ Made with natural ingredients or materials.

Since May through August is the property's busiest and most profitable time of year, Janet and Joan decide to implement their plan right away. With only five months to go, they opt to do the legwork now so that they can reap the benefits come summer.

Joan quickly finds Firefly Soap Worker Co-operative, a regional personal-care product manufacturer, through a local community economic development agency. FireFly is a unique social enterprise giving five disenfranchised women an economic opportunity they would otherwise not have. All of them are descendants of soap-making grandmothers, and the co-op uses all-natural ingredients such as hemp, mineral salts and coriander.

Meanwhile, Janet has a great rapport with the property's existing suppliers, and looks to add a few more native plants to the courtyard entryway. She elicits the help of Mary-one of Little House on the Prairie's seasonal workers. Mary has a wonderful green thumb and helps her identify prairie flora for the garden.

# Operations

Any effort to reduce your business footprint will involve a close look at mechanical systems and operations—the "nuts and bolts" realm of heating, cooling, power, ventilation and waste handling. Before you plunge in and start making changes, it helps to know your current situation. Here's how to establish a baseline and how to take easy first steps to improving it. For more detailed information on any of these strategies, check out the other sections of this toolkit.

## Quick Start



Do you currently track how much power and water your business uses, which products you buy or how much waste your enterprise creates? If not, start now: use a binder to keep copies of all bills for electricity, purchasing, waste, gas and any other consumption-based expenses. Review this binder monthly as new bills come in to track progress and monitor consumption. Once you have a baseline, start looking for efficiencies. Share your progress with employees so they understand how their actions help make a difference.

## You've Got The Power

Are you a high-energy person? That's great when it comes to fitness and getting things done, but less ideal when it comes to your operations. Check out the [Energy](#) section of this toolkit for tips on how to reduce consumption and save money.

- ◆ Obtain a summary of your energy usage from the "account history" section on your utility provider's website. Look for trends in consumption.
- ◆ Could you supplement your electrical needs with small-scale, renewable energies, such as pre-heating your hot water with a solar thermal panel? Could you purchase renewable energy certificates?

### Try This!

Do a Web search for "renewable energy certificates" or "green power" to find how to purchase from sustainable energy providers. These providers are growing more popular every day.

- ◆ Examine the type and quantity of your lighting, and review the efficiency of your appliances and equipment. Consider replacing fixtures with efficient options, and upgrading inefficient appliances such as refrigerators.
- ◆ Are computers and imaging equipment set to sleep when they are not being used? Do you flip off power strips at the end of the day?

## Take the Temperature

- ◆ Check for drafts and gaps in insulation, and around doors and windows.
- ◆ Are window blinds kept closed during the heat of the day? Keep the sun out and you'll use the air-conditioning less.
- ◆ How efficient is your furnace? If the unit is over 15 years old, consider investing in a high-efficiency model to save you money and reduce your emissions.
- ◆ If you don't already regulate your temperature with a programmable thermostat, have one installed as soon as possible. These fairly inexpensive devices can make a big impact on your utility costs.

## Trash Your Old Ways

- ◆ Give a second thought to your garbage. Add up the number of bags that are being carted off. Are there opportunities to slim down and save some money? Keep track of how many bags of garbage you throw out per week. Set a target and work towards it.
- ◆ Ask yourself how much of your trash could be diverted through recycling or composting.
- ◆ If you conclude that a lot of your waste is connected to purchasing decisions, it may be time to re-evaluate and order less.

## Procure With Care

- ◆ Sit down with your list of inventoried supplies. Assess the full lifecycle of each product by answering the following questions:
  - ◆ Origin: How far has the product travelled? Is it manufactured or distributed locally?
  - ◆ Content: Is it made from synthetic or natural materials? Is it built with new or reclaimed resources?
  - ◆ Use: How will it be used? Does it have multiple uses? Can it be reused?
  - ◆ Disposal: Can it be recycled? Will it break down? Can it be donated elsewhere?
- ◆ Consider the food items used for meetings, staff lunches or in restaurants. Is the food grown locally or has it travelled from overseas? Is it provided by independent businesses, including social enterprises and co-operatives?

## Down The Drain

- ◆ What does your water meter tell you? Examine consumption levels over the years. Set a target and work towards meeting it.
- ◆ How many litres per flush? Have toilet dams been installed? Could you replace old toilets with new low-water versions or dual-flush models?
- ◆ Investigate leaking taps and toilets. Fixing drips pays off immediately. Just one faucet dripping once per second wastes over 21 L per day. That's over 7,600 L per year!
- ◆ Could "grey water" from sinks and bathtubs be collected and reused for plants, landscaping or toilet water? Regulations vary; investigate the legalities of using grey water in your area.

## Breathe Easy

- ◆ Paint and sealants can emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) as they dry and cure, which negatively impacts local air quality and can also trigger an asthma attack in chemically sensitive individuals. The next time you have your walls touched up, specify a low-VOC brand.
- ◆ Medium-density fibreboard—a common furnishing material—can off-gas harmful chemicals such as formaldehyde. Look for solid-wood furniture finished with low-VOC varnish or paint. Better still, look for furniture made with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified material.
- ◆ If you are considering a renovation, surfaces such as tile, hardwood and polished concrete are better for indoor air quality than carpets and rugs, which can trap allergens.
- ◆ If windows are dressed up with upholstery, they can be a source of dust. The same is true of blinds. Whatever your treatment, ensure they are regularly taken down and cleaned.
- ◆ Ensure the ventilation system in your building is checked and maintained seasonally.

- ◆ Determine what cleaning products are used onsite. Bleach and ammonia are toxic, while fragrances and other common additives can create issues for individuals with chemical sensitivities.

## Beyond the Walls

- ◆ Have you considered drainage in your design? What about tree shading for building heating/cooling purposes?
- ◆ Are chemical pesticides used in landscaping? Could pest-deterring plants be placed strategically throughout the grounds?
- ◆ How much of your landscape is concrete? Grass? Groundcover? Native plants and shrubs?
- ◆ Do you collect rainwater or grey water for irrigation?

## The Human Dimension

- ◆ Do you collaborate with local community organizations?
- ◆ Can you source more of your staff members and subcontractors closer to the workplace? Do you offer internships or skill-building opportunities?
- ◆ What percentage of your purchases support local businesses?
- ◆ Do you encourage or provide opportunities for staff to volunteer in the community?
- ◆ Is money reinvested in community-building ventures? Are funds donated to charities?

## Scenario: Things Are Looking Up For Fenelon Falls

For more than a decade, Fenelon Falls Interpretive Centre has offered living history and nature programs to those visiting Ontario's popular Kawartha Lakes region. In an effort to make a fresh commitment to sustainability, an in-house team of staff and volunteers launches an audit of the non-profit's operations.

After examining the power bills, the audit team discovers that the building is consuming an ever-increasing amount of energy. The team notes that the lights in the centre are older fluorescent and incandescent types. They decide to gradually replace these with Energy Star-qualified bulbs. The team then takes an after-hours stroll through the centre's offices and finds many computers and lights left on overnight. At a subsequent staff meeting, team members remind their colleagues to "flick the switch" at the end of each day.

The team commits to lowering the centre's energy bill by 10% within a year. It decides to track energy consumption on a monthly basis, and identify other measures that could reach that goal.

The audit team next consults the building's natural-gas bills. One of the team members mentions that the back half of the building always feels chilly in winter regardless of where she sets the thermostat. Upon investigation, the team discovers old and drafty windows and doors in that wing of the building. With a limited initial budget, the team reframes, replaces, and puts weatherstrips around the door frame, but does not yet have the funds to replace the windows. As a temporary solution, the team re-caulks the drafty windows. The team also opts to install a programmable thermostat.

The team sets another target to reduce the gas bill by 10% in one year. It earmarks the saved funds for new, triple-glazed windows and, eventually, a high-efficiency furnace.

Next up: The centre's dumpsters. One team member offers to monitor how many trash bags per week go out to the curb, and what's inside them. She soon finds that many of the centre's visitors toss their drink bottles and cans into the garbage. The team immediately places more recycling containers in highly visible and well-trafficked locations. Waste bills drop immediately.

The team then takes stock of the centre's sky-high summer water bills, and find that the trail leads straight outside the building to the landscaping, which requires almost daily irrigation. As a first step, it stops watering in the afternoon and switches to an early-morning irrigation schedule. It also replaces sprinklers with a drip irrigation system and invests in barrels to harvest rainwater from downspouts. As the team continues monitoring the water bills, it notices an immediate cost savings from these measures.

Next, the group looks for opportunities to save water inside the building. After speaking with the maintenance supervisor, it finds that all of the toilets use more than 10 L of water per flush. It elects to replace the fixtures with new low-flow models. The investment pays back quickly. Now the team is looking to use the money saved to underwrite further upgrades.

The team already feels its centre has a significant and positive impact on the local community and economy, as all employees and volunteers live in nearby communities. The facility also offers many free education days. Since the local social impact is already quite strong, the team focuses on global changes. It decides to use the Web to share its expertise in delivering authentic and interactive programming with other similar interpretive centres in other countries. Over time, the society begins developing relationships with similar operations, contributing to the larger sustainability community.

## Technology

Technology and business are so entwined, it's hard to imagine a time when computers and the internet didn't exist. Technology remains a potent tool for realizing economic efficiencies and advancing a sustainability agenda across your enterprise. Videoconferencing and electronic payments can save time and money through reduced travel, paper and postage. Energy costs associated with your digital office can be mitigated by settings that automatically sleep idle computers. And while hardware upgrades can turn desktops into doorstops, there are growing options to responsibly dispose of your still useful, but outdated, computers via charitable donations or e-waste recycling programs

### Quick Start



In 30 seconds, you could save \$100 on your yearly electricity bill. Configure your firm's computers to put themselves to "sleep" after a given period of inactivity. Savings can range from between \$25-\$75 per computer per year.

### Connect and Learn

Use your organization's website to connect your consumers directly with your community-increasing the profile of your region's merchants, suppliers and other businesses. Help your customers plan their vacations via links to local community sites. You might also use interactive kiosks in public spaces to convey the history of the local area through video, or perhaps a looping PowerPoint presentation. Another idea: headsets might provide narration while people walk through the community, allowing your customers to learn more about the sites that are directly in front of them and their importance to the local community.

Message boards can also help you build relationships with your customers and your own community. Message boards on your website can give people who met while on vacation a chance to come back and chat with the friends they made-both fellow travellers and locals who may have led them on tours or who may have helped them with directions.

### How to Be Sustainable & Tech-Savvy

Here are a few suggestions to help you save time, money and the environment.

- ◆ Be Efficient. Ensure that all the equipment you use is as energy efficient as possible.

### Try This!

Got junk? Maybe not. The Freecycle Network is a grassroots and entirely non-profit movement of people who are giving-and getting-stuff for free in their own cities. It's all about reuse and keeping usable stuff out of landfills. Membership is free and so is pickup. No hauling fees. Check the [Freecycle Network](#) to find a local network in your city or province.



## Energy Star Products

The international Energy Star symbol is an easy way for consumers to recognize products that have been certified as the most energy-efficient available. The links below lead to listings of all Energy Star products. Consider this a sustainable buying guide.

[Computers](#)

[Monitors](#)

[Imaging Equipment](#)

For more information on Energy Star ratings as well as lists of other rated products, check out [Energy Star Canada](#).

## Green Conferencing

You can now have a face-to-face conversation without leaving your desk.

- ◆ Money matters, and so does time! Audio, video and/or Web conferencing are great ways to save both. [Intercall](#) offers a cost-savings calculator as part of its Web-based conferencing services.
- ◆ Out with the outbox. Trying to get a 10-MB PowerPoint presentation through your outbox to a client for an important conference call? Try [Slideshare](#).
- ◆ Reach out and call someone, for free. Download [Skype](#) and talk, chat or make overseas video calls for as little as nothing.

### Try This!

Get more done by saving time otherwise spent travelling to and from meetings. Check out the following meeting and conferencing technologies.

[Intercall](#)      [Live Meeting](#)

[MShow](#)      [Web Ex](#)

- ◆ Just the fax. No machine. Save trees, energy and money with electronic faxing. Check out: [efax.ca](#), [FAXAGE](#) or [TrustFax](#).

## Electronics Recycling Across Canada

The [Electronics Recycling Association of Canada](#) has plenty of good information on the kinds of electronics that can be reclaimed or recycled. It also coordinates pickups that you can schedule using its online form or drop-off locations in major cities including Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver.

Home Depot, Canadian Tire, Future Shop and Best Buy have jumped on board and are now offering bins in their stores for unwanted or used batteries and other electronics.

[Mountain Equipment Co-op](#) has taken a step forward to limit its impact on the natural environment by initiating a battery recycling program within each of its stores across Canada.

[reBoot Canada](#) is a non-profit organization that offers refurbished computers and technical training to charities. It now has locations in Toronto, Vancouver, Peterborough, Montreal, Fredericton and Dartmouth.

- ◆ When in doubt, PDF it! A handy technology, Portable Document Format (PDF) files can help you send everything from your personal grocery list to secure documents.

### Try This!

PDF software is available for free! You can download and install PDF writers to any computer. They will appear as a printer that you can select in the printer options box. So instead of printing another paper copy of that invoice you can print it to PDF and e-mail it to the customer. [PDF-creating software](#) is free.

## Scenario: The Digital Co-Op

Northwest Passage Travel Co-operative (NPTC) is a nationwide, employee-owned co-operative of travel agents operating out of Victoria, Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia. The group relies heavily on technology to manage its day-to-day affairs. As part of its commitment to eco-friendly and responsible practices, NPTC is working to become sustainable and tech savvy at the same time. Kara, the group's in-house environmental champion, is leading the change.

Since the co-op runs three different offices, NPTC wants to ensure that all of the group's equipment—everything from the photocopier to the lunchroom fridge—is as efficient as possible. Kara is tasked with buying new equipment; her first stop is the Energy Star website, which ranks the various products that she would like to buy.

Before the group cuts the first cheque, though, Kara calls a meeting that allows all members to chat about what they absolutely need, what they can do without, and how they might make more cost-effective purchases. With members spread across three different locations, NPTC needs a way to maximize its communication while minimizing commuting times and transportation costs.

Kara helps the co-operative members compile a list of "must-haves" and a list of "do-withouts." Into the latter category she relegates the fax machine; she instead sets the co-op up with a Web-based fax system.

Kara is keen to look for deals and savings wherever possible. When the co-operative decides to purchase a new refrigerator, Kara sources an energy-efficient fridge that's eligible for a rebate through BC Hydro's Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program.

Kara helps find new homes for the group's outdated equipment through FreeCycle. She also places some of the company's older computers at local schools, as well as community and seniors' centres. Now NPTC can feel good that its older technology is still being put to good use in the community. Only two obsolete desktop computers remain, and Kara comes up with a list of electronics recycling options in BC's Lower Mainland.

NPTC distributes a fair number of travel itineraries and brochures. Kelly, the co-op's champion of client services, suggests that PDF technology would allow them to share brochures with clients in a very professional and eco-friendly way. Kara in turn notes that e-mail and PDFs would prove a great way to send paystubs and T4s to staff as well. Before long, the whole organization is sharing information and documents seamlessly and instantly among staff and consumers, saving time, paper, postage and emissions.

# Business and Strategic Planning

Your business plan is the cornerstone of your operation. It's your roadmap for where you want to go and how you plan to get there. It is also the perfect place to adopt the values of sustainability—from your marketing plans and ongoing operational costs to the way you approach employee training as your company grows. When you embrace sustainable thinking in your business and strategic planning, the direction becomes real, a little at a time. It becomes a good news story that you can share with customers, investors, staff, suppliers and the general public.

## Quick Start



Review the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism*. Choose one of the eight guidelines, incorporate it into your business's strategic plan, and make one commitment based upon it. No matter what action you take, you'll find success if you and your team make a full commitment and stand behind your objective. Start by making the decision to integrate sustainable practices into your operations and the core values of your company. Start small, show successes and build on every action you take.

## How to Integrate Sustainability into your Business Planning

- ◆ **Learn.** Review the Code of Ethics and discuss what it might mean to your business.
- ◆ **Buy in.** Determine the level of commitment within your organization to develop sustainable practices. Check out the [Education & Training](#) section of this toolkit for tips on ways to do this.
- ◆ **Tally it up.** Assess your current practices—both negative and positive. This will help define your starting point. Check out the [Operations](#) section of this toolkit for a helpful auditing tool.
- ◆ **Connect with stakeholders.** You can raise awareness, promote appreciation and enjoyment, and influence expectations by connecting directly with your various stakeholders. Let them know what you are up to, and ask for their input.

### Try This!

Connect to your customers through websites, advertisements, newsletters, catalogues and your frontline personnel. Provide them with information on what you have done and are planning to do. Single out this information by placing it on a separate "Sustainability" page that is linked from your home page. To get ideas on what customers want, or to get feedback on things you're already piloting, provide appropriate contact information and create the option for two-way communication—this builds customer loyalty.

Remember to connect with your other stakeholders, too. Make a phone call or go out to lunch with your service providers to come up with a collective game plan. If they currently don't operate with any sustainable practices, offer to help them get started. Pass on the information that you have learned. After all, the more people with the social, economic and environmental state of the community and world in mind, the more sustainable practices will become the mainstream—and you can be in the lead.

- ◆ **Write a policy.** A sustainability policy will help you to clearly define and communicate your organizational values and goals as they relate to your company's environmental, socio-cultural and financial performance. The policy will help guide your decision-making, management and operations.

## Case Study: Gray Line West

**Gray Line West** is a Vancouver-based motorcoach operator offering sightseeing and charter tours in Banff, AB, and Victoria, BC. Armstrong Hospitality Group-Gray Line's parent company-has made a commitment to innovative, sustainable tourism policies and programs. Here's a snapshot from the firm's policy:

"By minimizing environmental impact and promoting awareness of natural resources, heritage, and culture, we offer our guests an experience that's truly connected to the land and communities where we operate."

"Our commitment to sustainable development includes:

- ◆ Recycling and pollution-reduction initiatives
- ◆ A cross-functional internal team focused on "green" programs
- ◆ Encouraging regional economic development
- ◆ Providing financial support to conservation organizations
- ◆ Supporting the communities where we operate through charitable giving."

- ◆ **Focus on priorities.** Your first course of action might be to identify and eliminate money drains. After all, a sustainable enterprise is environmentally, socially and financially sound. You may find that the red ink on your bottom line is also costing the environment and customers.

## Built In

Remember that savings resulting from one action-for example, fuel or electricity savings resulting from an energy-efficiency upgrade-can be reinvested into another. That's what can happen when environmental stewardship and social responsibility become part of the framework like any other business process. In a sense, it is "built in" to your bottom line.

- ◆ **Aim for the bull's eye.** Setting goals and targets can help you move more quickly toward a tangible outcome. A structured approach will also save you time.
- ◆ **Think strategically.** Choose an integrated approach to planning so that every dollar invested into your programs can somehow contribute to achieving the three elements of sustainability: economic, social and environmental.
- ◆ **Innovate and evaluate.** In order to know what does and doesn't work, try rolling out a few actions and then step back and take stock. This will also allow you to change direction if you see that a particular strategy is not working. Share your successes!

## Scenario: Emerald Tours

Nick and Dina Cavanaugh own Emerald Tours, a caravan tour operator based in Halifax, NS, that targets the many thousands of visitors who come each year to explore the Maritimes.

The family business is poised at the frontier of a new era, in more ways than one. The next generation of Cavanaugh's-brothers Paul, Tim and Ashley-are taking over the business and are keen to develop new practices to improve the bottom line. The brothers want to integrate their own values and ethics into the company with a triple-bottom-line approach that includes economic, social and environmental considerations.

After the brothers read the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's Code of Ethics, they decide to get down to work. Guideline eight -Contribute Globally-in particular resonates with Paul. After researching on the Web, he notes that many of tourism businesses promoting sustainable practices are located overseas. The brothers decide to contact some of these operators; they feel they will benefit from their experiences, and in return they could offer their own knowledge to their new global partners. Over time, they conclude, these relationships could develop into joint marketing campaigns or possibly multi-country packaged sustainable tours.

Paul comes across a bus tour operator in Europe and a hotel in Central America that are each willing to give him some starting advice and share their sustainability reports. The first tip they give Paul is to get his employees on board with this new plan.

Ashley hosts an all-hands meeting to take the temperature of the staff's interest and values. He finds a mix, including a keen desire by some to be stewards and to model good practices for other tourism businesses. He also senses there may be learning opportunities for employees wishing to take a more active role. Generally, most of the employees seem excited by the new direction. Paul circulates the sustainability reports shared by his new European and Central American friends, and solicits the staff for ideas.

Using a simple auditing tool, Tim assesses the company's current energy, transportation, purchasing, waste and community practices. He immediately sees great waste-reduction potential. As a vehicle-based tourism company, Tim is keen to find ways to reduce transportation impacts.

The Cavanaugh brothers next identify their target audiences. In addition to staff, they identify the following key groups:

**Customers.** Emerald Tours keeps in contact with its customers through an electronic newsletter, comment cards distributed at the end of tours, and a feedback form on its website. All of these channels help the management understand what customers are looking for when it comes to environmental and socially responsible practices.

**Service providers.** As an established company, Emerald Tours has many long-term relationships with local guides and suppliers. As much as possible, the Cavanaugh brothers want to retain these providers.

**Local communities.** The Cavanaughs are keen to invite these communities to play a collaborative role in their business development. They're not yet sure what this role will look like, but it could be in the form of sharing resources or creating partnerships.

Tim then looks at the fleet's considerable fuel consumption. Paul calculates the economics of fuel to be as follows:

- a fleet of five caravans
- a fuel economy of 15 L per 100 km
- at 130¢ per L
- travelling 1,000 km per roundtrip
- one time each month
- \$11,700 per year in fuel

The Cavanaughs commit to finding ways to improve their fuel economy. They begin by creating a goal and recording monthly expenses to establish a baseline and to track their future progress. The whole team at Emerald Tours wants to set attainable goals. It opts to focus on three areas:

**Goal 1:** Establish an internal stewardship team to help oversee sustainable initiatives.

**Goal 2:** Reduce carbon emissions via alternative fuels.

**Goal 3:** Support Maritime businesses through purchasing, partnerships and marketing.

In developing a strategy to achieve Goal 2, Tim concludes that Emerald Tours can convert its diesel-engine vans to biodiesel. He researches options for converting the engines, and works out a contra arrangement with several restaurants and diners located along the company's trip routes. Emerald Tours will supply the customers and in exchange, these food establishments will provide used vegetable oil to fuel up the vans. Tim knows this strategy also advances Goal 3, to support local businesses and create partnerships.

The Cavanaugh brothers set a timeline of one year to check on their progress. When it comes time to evaluate, they will apply some of the questions from their initial audit to see how far they have come. They plan to share this information with their various stakeholders to let them all know what progress they have made, and the resulting impacts.

## Giving Back

Sustainability is about more than just sorting the glass from the plastics; it's also about strengthening local economies and building community. It's about respecting workers, acting ethically and treating those around you fairly. It's about giving something back. Whether you choose to participate in a fundraiser or volunteer work party, promote local artisans or simply write a cheque to a local charity, your organization can make a big difference. Listed below are a few suggestions to start you on your way.

### Quick Start



Organize an employee team-building event to overlap with a community outreach program or fundraiser. For example, plant trees in local parks, assist at community shelters or join a Habitat for Humanity crew. Events such as these can boost employee satisfaction while supporting local community initiatives.

- ◆ Consider offering your staffers paid volunteer time. Make sure to reward or recognize employees for their community contribution, whether it is done through the company or on their own.
- ◆ Cross-promote community offerings by: advertising in locally owned shops and restaurants; supporting local artisans; promoting local events to visitors.
- ◆ Build the local economy by offering a mentor program, or internships, for young people. Create job opportunities for economically vulnerable local communities.
- ◆ Volunteer in your community to promote your business and build relationships. Creating a relationship with the community may lead to loyalty and commitment.
- ◆ Coordinate volunteering initiatives in partnership with other companies and local organizations.
- ◆ Move beyond philanthropy or sponsorship, and actually help build new initiatives. Partner on local or neighbourhood improvement initiatives.
- ◆ In-kind and monetary donations are important, too.
- ◆ Contribute to the community through social enterprises and independent business.

### Case Study: A Lasting Legacy

Naturalist, activist and author Mary Majka is a champion of New Brunswick's nature, culture and heritage. Her volunteer involvement began when she immigrated to Canada from Poland in 1951 and continues to this day. Her list of accomplishments includes publishing a book about Fundy National Park, founding the Albert Country Heritage Trust, and co-founding several stewardship-related organizations. She was instrumental in the creation of the Machias Seal Island Bird Sanctuary and the Mary's Point Shorebird Reserve, and helped save several heritage buildings that are now important tourism sites. Mary has devoted her life to sharing her love and passion for Canada's Maritimes. Her efforts have helped draw innumerable visitors to New Brunswick, making it a beloved destination the world over.

## Scenario: Labrador Skies Outfitting

As a hunting and fishing outfitter based in Gander, NL, Labrador Skies Outfitting offers its clients access to thousands of square kilometres of wilderness teeming with salmon, black bear, caribou and moose. But while their business may be in the bush, owners Terri and Greg focus their enterprise on the small communities of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Terri and Greg believe that young people need extra support and that their province's isolated rural towns need real opportunities to prosper. So they have launched a mentorship program aimed at young men ages 16-22. The apprentices learn about the natural environment, species identification, conservation practices, and traditional hunting and fishing techniques. After successful completion of the six-week training program, Terri and Greg offer their associates two-week internships on guided expeditions.

Labrador Skies operates as part of Newfoundland & Labrador's broader community and culture. The company is in the business of authentic, natural experiences, and the principals take this to its natural extension, drawing on the expertise of First Nations, Innu and Métis people to integrate traditional conservation principles, share traditions and teach about the area's unique cultural and natural history. In doing so, Labrador Skies preserves not only game populations, but also indigenous traditions.

On multiple levels, the company is a sustainable success story.

# Tools by Need

## Energy

Looking for the biggest bang for your buck? Start introducing energy-conservation measures, and watch your savings grow. As one of the most significant costs for many businesses, energy is used mainly for lighting, heating, cooling and operating appliances such as refrigerators, ovens, washers and dryers. According to the Rainforest Alliance—a global organization working to protect biodiversity—energy is believed to be the second-highest operating cost for hoteliers, next to payroll.

### Quick Start



Start saving money without any expenditure. Turn off the lights! Lighting typically represents a big chunk of your energy consumption. Begin by turning off lights in unused rooms. Take advantage of natural light during the day.

### Computer-Based Lighting Control

Encelium, a multinational developer of energy-management and control systems for commercial buildings, recently upgraded 1,500 light fixtures in a University Health Network building in Toronto. The new system allows employees to dim a specific light or group of lights in their workspace via software on their desktop computer. Software-controlled motion sensors switch off lights in rooms once workers leave, while other sensors monitor natural light levels and automatically dim interior fixtures to save energy. The system cost about \$200,000, and it saves the organization \$47,000 in annual energy costs.

To learn more about this success story, check out the Government of [Ontario's Energy Efficiency Awards](#).

### Compact Fluorescents, Halogens or Incandescent Bulbs?

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) cost more than regular light bulbs, but can use 75% less electricity and last 10 times longer than incandescents. One compact fluorescent bulb can save you three times its cost in electricity. Halogen lighting has light output that is similar to a regular incandescent bulb but that uses up to 40% less energy. The wattage rating tells how much electricity a bulb consumes. For example, a 22-W CFL has about the same light output as a 100-W incandescent. Around 92 to 95% of the energy created by standard incandescent bulbs dissipates as heat; just five to eight percent creates light.

## Alternative Power Suppliers

Several provinces now allow you to purchase your power from "green power suppliers" that utilize the existing grid. In doing so, you might pay a small premium on your electricity bills, but you will be supporting more sustainable choices and showing decision-makers that there is a demand for renewable energy.

### Green Power

Before you sign up with a green power provider, it is important to understand how the business works. Unless you have a wind turbine attached to your establishment, you are not drawing green energy directly for your electricity needs. You will continue to draw power from the grid as you always have. However, by purchasing green energy credits, your green power supplier feeds a corresponding quantity of renewable power into your province's grid from renewable generation facilities such as wind farms. You continue to receive your conventional utility bill, and also receive one from your green-power provider.

Still wondering how it all works? Try out this fun little [energy game](#), courtesy of the Science Alberta Foundation, to learn more about renewable energy.

## Top Four Tips for Conserving Energy in Lighting

1. Turn off lamps during the day when you can use natural light.
2. Use energy-saving compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) instead of incandescent and halogen light bulbs. You can find CFLs in all shapes and sizes for different purposes.
3. Install motion-sensor switches to illuminate seldom-used spaces-such as supply rooms and stairwells-only when they are occupied.
4. For outside lighting, use halogens or the new generation of LED lights, both of which use much less energy than standard incandescent lights. Where appropriate, install motion sensors to automatically turn on the lights when someone walks by.

## Top Four Tips for Conserving Energy in Appliances

1. Choose appliances that carry the Energy Star rating. See the [Technology](#) section of this toolkit for tips on buying rated appliances.

### Energy Efficiency

[EnerGuide](#) is a Natural Resources Canada program that helps consumers purchase the most energy-efficient equipment on the market. The majority of electrical appliances, heating and cooling systems and all new light-duty vehicles sold in Canada carry EnerGuide ratings. It's a great tool for you to compare the electricity and fuel consumption of products before you buy.

2. Turn off all idle computers and peripherals. At minimum, turn off the monitor-which is the same as turning off a 75-W light bulb, and represents about 60% of a computer's total power consumption.
3. Save your ironing for one session, as most of the power used is to initially heat the iron.
4. Wrap your hot-water tank with an insulating blanket and reduce energy losses by 25 to 40%.

## Front-loading v. Top-loading Washing Machines

Although front-loading washing machines cost a little more than traditional top-loading models, they use about half the quantity of water per load. Further, front loaders force more water out of clothing and linens-reducing drying time and electricity consumption. Finally, front-loading machines are easier on laundry-they gently tumble items, rather than twist them around an agitator-and this in turn lessens premature wear.

## Top Four Tips for Conserving Energy In Washing

1. Rinse in cold water. Hot or warm water will not make a difference in cleanliness.
2. Preserve the colour of clothes and energy by selecting cold or warm water for the wash cycle.
3. Looking to buy a new dryer? Choose a model with a moisture-sensing feature that automatically turns the machine off when clothes are dry. Better yet, invest in a clothesline and hang to dry.
4. Turn off the dishwasher when the wash cycle is complete, and prop open the door to let your dishes air dry.

### Try This!

An Energy Star-qualified 2004 model refrigerator will save you more than 1,026 kWh of energy when compared with a 20-year-old refrigerator.

To strike a useful comparison, with each 100 kWh of savings, you can operate your dishwasher 40 times for free. So by upgrading your vintage refrigerator, you can run your dishwasher more than 400 times for nothing. That's more than a year of free dishwashing!

## Top Four Tips for Conserving Energy in Fridges

1. Vacuum the refrigerator coils twice a year to increase efficiency.
2. Position your fridge five to 10 cm from the wall to allow for adequate airflow behind.
3. Defrost your freezer regularly to save energy and keep it working more efficiently.
4. Replace old refrigerators with a newer energy-efficient model. A 20-year old fridge uses 70% more energy than a contemporary model.

## Case Study: Turning Down the Blue Flame in Salmon Arm

Salmon Arm Recreation Centre is located in the British Columbia city of the same name—a popular tourist destination on the shores of Shushwap Lake. The building's two natural-gas boilers generate warmth for space heating, pool water and hot water for showers and other domestic uses. After a comprehensive audit, the centre undertook a number of energy-efficient upgrades to reduce natural-gas consumption.

- ◆ A new control system fired the boilers at a rate matching load and outside temperature.
- ◆ Pool-area temperatures were set at the same level as the pool water. This reduced the evaporation rate from the pool and dropped the pool water-heating load accordingly.
- ◆ Operators set the system to adjust the nighttime temperature to 13°C in all areas except the pool; in active sporting areas, they reduced the temperature to 17°C.
- ◆ Technicians installed a new direct digital control (DDC) system at a cost of \$58,000.

Salmon Arm Recreation Centre used 32% less natural gas in 2002 over 2000, and saved nearly \$40,000. At that rate, the investment will be paid back in 18 months.

To learn more, check out [success stories at Terasen Gas](#).

## Top Four Tips for Conserving Energy in Heating and Cooling

1. Remind your guests to turn off in-suite air conditioning units when they leave their rooms, and to close doors and windows when the air conditioner is operating.
2. Fans usually use very little electricity. Install ceiling fans to supplement or even replace air conditioning.
3. Caulk around windows, doorframes, sills and joints, and add weatherstripping between the fixed and movable sections of doors to keep your facility warm in cold climates and cooler in hot weather.

### Try This!

Install a programmable thermostat for your water heater and save two percent on your heating bill for every 1°C that you lower the temperature.

4. Install your air conditioner in a shady location, if possible, to conserve electricity and to help the unit operate more efficiently. Other no- or low-cost techniques include strategically placing trees and shrubs to help shade the building, and keeping drapes and blinds closed during direct sunlight to help cool rooms. Check out the [Outdoor Environment and Landscaping](#) section of this toolkit for more great tips.

### Try This!

Switch to a solar pool heater, which costs roughly \$3,000 to \$5,000, but can be a cost-effective purchase when you consider equipment, installation and fuel costs for a traditional heater.

## Further References

Check out these organizations for more great tips and information on conserving energy and saving money.

[Toronto Hydro-Electric System Ltd](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: Grants and Incentives](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: Financial Assistance for Commercial and Institutional Organizations](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: Tips and Resources for Saving Energy](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: How Energy-efficient Appliances Can Save You Money](#)

[Saskenergy: Home Energy Tips](#)

[Ontario Ministry of Energy: Tips to Help You Conserve Energy and Save Money](#)

[Greenpeace Canada](#)

## Waste

Have you ever noticed the quantity of garbage generated by your operation and considered the time and money you have to spend to send it to a landfill? You can divert most of that waste by removing recyclable items, batteries and e-waste; composting food and yard organics; donating items to charities; even selling gently used items. The path to a zero-waste future starts today-with the small things.

### Quick Start



Check with office supply and retail stores as to whether they accept used printer, fax or photocopier cartridges. Some companies will arrange free pickup if you are purchasing a replacement.

### Case Study: A New Tide at the Bay of Fundy

[Petit Passage](#), a family-owned business located near Digby, NS, has offered whale-watching tours in the Bay of Fundy since 1994. The company's commitment to waste reduction and diversion is exemplified in its ambitious onsite composting and recycling program, which separates paper, glass and plastic. The management also reuses some materials and gives a second life to items such as ice-cream containers. It has designed waste-collection stations with clear signage, and places them near its café along with collection bins for customers. The many tourists and residents that wait near the café for the ferry to Long Island also take advantage of these containers. The company's commitment to environmental stewardship also extends to an on-board sewage-holding tank on the boats it uses for cruises; the tank allows them to pump sewage into a land-based septic system for treatment rather than pumping it out to sea.

You can find more success stories at Dalhousie University's [Eco-Efficiency Centre](#).

### Try This!

Label recycling bins or use bins in different colours that are quickly recognizable, and place them in easy-to-find spots. You can even place blue recycling bins in guest rooms to encourage recycling. Provide a list of specific materials that can or cannot go into each bin and place them where they can be seen by guests and clients.

## The 4Rs - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover

Canada's landfills are reaching capacity and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find sites for new ones. By following the 4Rs in order of priority listed below, you can help reduce the amount of waste, conserve resources and reduce emissions—all while saving money.

### Reduce

Plastic products, including packaging materials, contribute 7% by weight and 30% by volume to municipal solid waste. By reducing the quantity of unnecessary products and non-recyclable or difficult-to-recycle materials, you can save money while helping to reduce waste sent to landfills.

### Reuse

If you reuse some products for their original purpose or find a new function for them, they are no longer waste. Reusing a product allows you to save money, plus it offsets the energy that would otherwise be required to haul the product to the landfill, recycle it or manufacture a new one.

### Recycle

The majority of waste sent to a landfill can be either recycled or composted. About a third of our waste is paper and paperboard while another third is yard and kitchen waste. The rest is divided among glass, metals, plastics, textiles, wood and other materials. Recycling keeps raw materials in the system and saves energy and resources. For example, recycling one tonne of newspaper saves 19 trees, three cubic metres of landfill space, 4,000 kWh of energy, 29,000 L of water and 30 kg of air pollution.

### Recover

This last 'R' is geared more toward industry, in which materials or energy are recovered from waste that cannot be eliminated, reused or recycled. This provides savings in raw materials and provides a second life to existing materials.

Check out the [Waste Management Guide For Small and Medium Enterprises - Canadian Version](#)

## Top Six Tips for Reducing Waste

1. **Think longevity.** Try purchasing durable, high-quality items that last for a long time and can be repaired. By spending more to buy quality appliances, furniture, etc., you save money because they last longer, plus you reduce the amount of waste you have to haul to the landfill.
2. **Pay the rent.** Why spend money on appliances that you rarely use? Consider renting instead, or cost-share with another business.
3. **Think reusable.** Instead of purchasing disposable products that get tossed into the garbage, invest in reusable containers, plates, cups, cutlery—even for outdoor activities (when feasible).
4. **Bulk up.** Consider purchasing packaged products in bulk. Reduce your costs while reducing the amount of packaging that ends up as landfill. You can also ask vendors to avoid products that have excessive amounts of packaging.
5. **Embrace digital.** Decrease your use of paper by providing information in electronic rather than print format. When printing is necessary, print double-sided and in small quantities as you need it.
6. **Skip the paper towels.** Look at installing hand dryers or use linen towel dispensers in washrooms instead of paper.

## Hazardous Waste and E-waste

Batteries, paint, used motor oil, pesticides and many cleaning products are examples of common hazardous wastes. These items contain toxic ingredients and require proper disposal. Be sure to separate them from your regular garbage and do not pour them down the drain or into the storm sewer. Electronic or e-waste, such as computers, monitors, video games and keyboards may contain lead, mercury and other toxic materials.

To find a hazardous waste or e-waste collection depot in your area, search the internet by name of your city plus hazardous waste or e-waste collection. You may also find out where to take your paint and tires as well. For an example, check the [Alberta Recycling Management Authority](#).

## Tool: Decision Tree-When to Reuse or Recycle

Before you toss out an item, run through the questions in this decision tree to see if you can find a new life for the product and save it from ending up in a landfill.

1. **Can you reuse the item?** Examples include refillable ink cartridges for your printer, food-storage containers that can be washed and reused, or paper that has been used on one side only and can be used as scrap paper.
2. **Can you repurpose the item?** Many plastic storage containers can be reused to store other items. Another great example is the plastic bags often used to wrap things in shipping boxes. Instead of balling these up and throwing them out, they can be used as garbage bags. Try using your imagination to find inventive ways to reuse items for new purposes.
3. **If the item is broken, can it be fixed and reused?** Items such as furniture and appliances take up a lot of space in landfills. Before you simply throw out a broken item, check whether it can be repaired. Many times the cost of repair is cheaper than a replacement. Furniture can also be given new life by a fresh coat of paint or new fabric.
4. **Might someone else use the item?** Check with your suppliers to see if they will take back shipping containers and boxes for reuse. There are also several charitable organizations that will pick up unwanted items for free. [The Salvation Army](#), [Goodwill](#) (in some Canadian locations) and the [Canadian Diabetes Association](#) accept donations of everything from clothing and sports equipment to furniture and vehicles. Local schools may also have a program for accepting used computers, and audio and video equipment. Check out [Habitat for Humanity](#) before you throw out any building materials or appliances. You'd be surprised how people can give new life to an item you thought was destined for the dumpster.

## Try This!

If you don't have time to find a charitable donation program in your area, try printing a couple of signs and placing them in a high-traffic area advertising "Free Stuff!" There are also several organizations where you can place your ads for free. For example, check out [usedcanada.com](#). Or find a home for your unwanted items with [Freecycle](#). You may even find a few used items for yourself.

5. Sometimes the sum of an item's parts is greater than the whole. Some items may no longer be useful to you or anyone else in their current condition, but they may have value in pieces. For example, reusing electronic equipment parts is a burgeoning industry. Construction materials are also highly coveted. Next time you are renovating, take a few minutes to take items apart carefully so they can be reused. Items such as lighting fixtures, bricks, pipes, plumbing fixtures, carpet and lumber can all be reused. Check out [Habitat for Humanity](#) for more info.
6. None of the above? Consider recycling as a last resort. Most Canadian municipalities now offer recycling programs. Check out your municipal government's website for information on accepted materials. Likewise, divert hazardous materials from landfills by taking them to collection depots. Chemicals such as bleach, paint and oil should not be dumped down the sewer, and their containers should not go to the landfill. Take these leftover chemicals and their containers, as well as items such as batteries, to your local hazardous waste depot where they can be safely disposed.

### Try This!

Save money and resources by using widely available rechargeable batteries, many of which can be reused up to 1,000 times. To find a collection site for the disposal of rechargeable batteries and cell phones, check out [Call2Recycle™](#).

## Water and Wastewater

Many Canadians take fresh and abundant water for granted, but throughout much of the world, it is an increasingly scarce resource. In this section, we will share some simple strategies for reducing your reliance on fresh water for purposes that are well suited for "grey water" or rainwater instead.

### Quick Start



Establish how much water your enterprise is using now. Check past bills or monitor your water meter to get a handle on consumption and determine your best opportunities for saving water and money. The largest potential sources of waste include toilets, showers, washing machines, kitchens, swimming pools and landscaping. Consider installing meters in each of these operating areas to pinpoint water consumption. This will help you figure out where you can realize your biggest savings.

### About Grey-Water Management Systems

A grey-water management system collects wastewater from laundry, kitchens and/or baths, and reuses it for flushing toilets or outdoor irrigation.

Benefits of reusing grey water:

- ◆ Reduces the use of fresh/potable water by up to 30%
- ◆ Can save you money on water costs
- ◆ Lessens strain on septic systems and water-treatment plants
- ◆ Reduces the use of energy and chemicals in water purification.

Check online for easy-to-install, micro grey-water management systems, which recycle, filter and store bath and shower water for reuse in toilets.

- ◆ Implement a program in which guests are allowed to choose whether to have their linens and towels replaced on a less-frequent basis. Post a discreet message in rooms explaining the program and ensure housekeeping staff understands and adheres to guests' wishes.
- ◆ Check toilet tanks for leaks. One leak can set you back \$100 a year and waste as much as 28 bathtubs full of water every month. To check, place a few drops of food colouring in the tank and wait 20 minutes. If the water in the bowl changes colour, you have a leak.
- ◆ Install low-flow or dual-flush toilets whenever possible, or place plastic pop bottles filled with sand in the toilet tanks.
- ◆ Use a front-loading washing machine, which reduces the amount of water required. Run only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher.
- ◆ Use automatic water taps to reduce the amount of water used.

## Scenario: Stemming the Leaks in Rain City

Simon's Community Market and Restaurant prepares and sells organic food and produce to local-food enthusiasts in Vancouver, British Columbia. Dan, the owner, works hard to promote sustainable agricultural practices through his business, which is located in an older building near the city's famous Granville Island district. But he also wants to further reduce his operational impact by implementing a number of water-saving initiatives.

Before making any decisions, the restaurateur requests a water audit from the City of Vancouver. The audit reveals that Dan is wasting a great deal of water via eight older toilets that date to the building's construction in the 1950s. Every time a staff member or customer trips a flush lever, 18 L of water head down the drain. The auditor also identifies a variety of other water-reduction tips and techniques that, if implemented, would save Dan a great deal of potable water.

With the audit report in hand, Dan's partners and employees sit down to discuss priorities and next steps.

The Simon's team decides to begin with the easy and low-cost conservation opportunities identified in the report. It installs faucet aerators, which can reduce water consumption by 40%, on all kitchen and bathroom sinks.

Next, it examines the toilets. Since outright replacement of the old 18-L fixtures would require a significant upfront investment, the business decides to move gradually. It fixes leaks and installs dams in each tank to temporarily reduce the water used with each flush. Just placing the toilet dams in each tank reduces the quantity of water used by four L. The team also adds a regular check for toilet and tap leaks as part of its maintenance calendar.

Simon's Market and Restaurant is saving to buy and install ultra-low-volume toilets, which use only six L per flush. Once the new fixtures are installed, the company will be using 190,000 L less water a year. Other long-term goals include a high-efficiency dishwasher, which would not only reduce the amount of water used but also reduce energy costs through decreased hot-water consumption. The eatery commits to documenting and publicizing its progress, so customers can learn about water-saving initiatives. Dan's commitment may even prompt his patrons to rethink how much water they use in a day.

## Transportation

Canada's sheer size-and the vast distances between destinations-presents a truly daunting challenge for domestic, sustainable tourism. Some of the issues such as air travel are complex, and beyond the scope of this guide. (For a fuller discussion, check out the [Carbon Offsets](#) section.) In the meantime, you can do your part by encouraging your employees to switch to sustainable commuting methods, and by urging your clients to consider alternatives to motor vehicles for local transportation, if available.

### Quick Start



When transporting your clients, do you look at the full range of options or do you automatically reach for the car keys? Consider the possibilities-bus, train, walking, cycling, pedi-cab, water ferry. There are many to choose from, even if it's for only portions of travel within a tour or stay. Mix it up for your clients and help them to experience the area they are visiting from different perspectives.

### Zero Emission = Free Admission

[FortWhyte Alive!](#) offers environmental education and outdoor recreation programming on more than 240 ha of prairies, lakes, forest and wetlands in Winnipeg, MB. A network of trails links FortWhyte with the city's existing walking and cycling paths; to encourage visitors to use them, FortWhyte actively promotes an inventive "Zero Emission = Free Admission" policy. To wit: anyone who walks or cycles into the property enters for free. On its website, FortWhyte proudly connects the practice to its mandate of promoting and encouraging actions that lead to sustainable living.

### Walk the Talk

Assume for a moment that your customers have chosen your company over others based on your commitment to sustainable practices. Now imagine them arriving at your property and seeing employees arriving at work alone inside large vehicles. Then picture them arriving to see a full bike rack, employees walking in from the local public-transit stop, and preferred spots for carpools designated in your parking lot. These seemingly little things make a big difference; they prove that you are not only talking the talk, but also walking the walk.

## Tool: Decision Tree

Use this decision-tree tool to help your enterprise come up with some green commuting practices.

### Green Commuting Practices

**Active (human-powered) transportation:** Examples include walking, cycling, running, in-line skating, skateboarding, ice skating (e.g., on a canal). It can also involve combining active modes of travel, such as walking or cycling, with public transit for longer distances.

**Carpooling:** An arrangement in which several participants travel together in one vehicle. They also share the costs and often take turns as the driver. It can be an informal arrangement between co-workers, friends or neighbours, or a formal ridematching service provided at the workplace. Carpooling is an ideal cost-saving arrangement, particularly for those individuals who commute long distances to and from work each day, or who have limited access to public transit.

**Public transit:** While one of the most efficient forms of moving many passengers at the same time, it is restricted to areas with sufficiently large populations. Examples of public transit include buses, rail systems, trolleys, trams, ferries and water taxis.

**Telecommuting (or telework):** Allows employees to work remotely via computer, fax, telephone, videoconferencing, VOIP and other forms of digital communication. Some of these methods, such as videoconferencing, can be used in place of other work-related travel such as meetings, training and conferences.

#### 1. Are there pedestrian and cycling-friendly routes to your location?

If the answer is yes...

- a) Could you designate a sheltered, secure area for bicycle parking (indoor room, chain-link-fence cage, etc.)?

Yes: Affix bike racks inside the sheltered, secure area and restrict access with a key, combination lock or swipe-card entry. If employees typically pay for vehicle parking, a nominal monthly or annual charge could be applied to bike parking to help offset administration costs.

No: Approach nearby businesses or facilities to cost-share or access their bicycle compounds.

- b) Are showers and change areas available in your facility?

Yes: Allow those who use active modes of transportation access to showers and a change area to put on fresh work clothes.

No: Look at facilities around your location to see if access to a shower could be arranged for a nominal fee, such as a nearby gym or a larger employer with built-in fitness facilities.

I Don't Know: If you are located in an urban centre, check your city's website-try the transportation or public works section-for information on cycling or walking. Municipalities often include active transportation resources online, including maps, designated routes, links to commuter cycling groups, and so on.

2. Is employee parking provided at your location?

If the answer is yes...

a) Do you charge for parking?

Yes: Ensure that employees are paying the market rate so that the driving option is on a level playing field with sustainable forms of transport. For example, if a parking spot is available at the workplace and costs less than a monthly bus pass, it serves as a disincentive for employees to change their travel behaviour from driving.

No: If parking is free, consider a "transportation allowance" for green commuters. This should be equal in value to the subsidy provided to drivers through free parking.

b) Could you support carpooling by providing an information bulletin board for employees to find carpools in their area and/or by designating the most convenient or desirable parking spots for carpools?

Yes: Choose a visible bulletin board or spot near the lunchroom or another busy area and designate it as the carpool bulletin board. Encourage employees interested in carpools to post their location information to find other employees in their areas.

Pick the best parking spots in the lot and mark them visually with colourful signage to show they are reserved for carpools.

No: Check with employees to see if carpools already exist, or if anyone is interested in starting one. Word of mouth or e-mails can travel through a workplace quickly to develop employee interest in the option.

If the answer is no...

Consider making your place green-commuter friendly through physical infrastructure and policies that support using active modes of transportation, carpooling, public transit and reducing business travel through videoconferencing, webinars and other electronic forms of communication.

3. Is it possible for some of your employees to telecommute even occasionally? Do you and/or your staff travel to multiple work locations for internal meetings?

Telecommuting doesn't always mean working from home; it can mean phone or videoconferences instead of centralized meetings. Telecommuting can save valuable time for employees that would otherwise be spent driving or flying to and from meetings. Occasional days for employees to work from home can also be good for your employees' social and mental health, which can improve their productivity.

## Try This!

If you are located in an urban centre, incentivize your employees to use public transit. For example, you might consider subsidizing public transit passes. Many medium and large urban centres offer a discounted monthly bus-pass program for participating employers. A portion of the subsidy is often provided by the transit authority. Check your city's **transit website** under the **fares** section to see if they offer such a discounted monthly adult bus pass program for workplaces. For example, through its Employ-E Transit Discount, Edmonton Transit System will match a 12% discount with the employer, resulting in a 24% discount on the cost of an adult monthly bus pass at that workplace. At the current cost of \$59 for an adult monthly bus pass in Edmonton, this means the cost to the employer would be \$7.08 per month per employee. The rates vary by city, e.g., Winnipeg Transit's EcoPass program offers a sliding scale of discounts while the OC Transpo's ECOPASS program in Ottawa offers up to 15% savings annually through its transit pass payroll deduction program.

If the tourism operator provides subsidized parking to employees, the employer's portion of the cost to provide a discounted bus pass will be substantially less than the cost of providing parking.

Ensure your employees are aware of the federal tax credit available to those who purchase monthly bus passes. For details, check out the Government of Canada's [tax credit for public transit passes](#).

Be creative with your transportation allowance for active commuters. In lieu of cash, you might provide gift certificates to sports- and outdoor-equipment stores in an amount equivalent to the cost of employee-subsidized parking.

### 4. Can you offer flexibility in your shift schedules for work start and finish times?

Flexibility in shift schedules can work well to encourage employees to take public transit to and from work as they can fit their work schedule to coincide with transit schedules. Flexible work times can also be an advantage to active commuters as it can give them some extra time to walk or bike to work.

## Top Five Tips To Enable Sustainable Transportation

1. Support and encourage walking and cycling for your employees' commute by providing shower and/or change-room facilities and secure bike parking. Participate in an employer-subsidized bus-pass program, if appropriate and available.
2. Set up an informal carpooling program for your employees or sign up for a regional program, if appropriate.
3. Use videoconferencing and similar technologies to lessen the need for business travel for you and your employees.
4. When using motorized transport to move your clients, evaluate the purchase of hybrid vehicles (cars, vans, buses) or converting your vehicles to biodiesel power.
5. Offer your clients the chance to cycle, walk or ride public transit as part of their travel experience. Offer access to bicycles, helmets and locks, maps and other relevant information. Or form a partnership with a bicycle rental company that will deliver and pickup from your location.

## Further References

Check out these organizations for more great tips and information on making sustainable transportation choices for your business:

[Transport Canada's Commuter Options: The Complete Guide for Canadian Employers](#)

[The Canadian Telework Association](#)

[Commuter Connections](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada: Active Transportation](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: Tips and Resources for Drivers](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: Purchasing a Fuel-Efficient Vehicle](#)

# Outdoor Environment

Your company's grounds and gardens play a crucial role in your sustainable journey. Thoughtful landscaping can save costs, help filter pollution and improve stormwater management-which will in turn benefit local ecosystems and habitats. Sustainably designed landscapes and outdoor environments not only telegraph your values to visiting customers and guests, but also provide a healthy, relaxing setting for your employees to enjoy-even in an urban setting.

## Quick Start



Use native vegetation as an alternative to grass. These plants require less fertilizer and water to grow, and also can create natural habitats for insects and wildlife. Check out Evergreen's [Native Plant Database](#) to learn about native plants for your province, or speak with someone at your local greenhouse.

## Landscaping

- ◆ Consider using organic fertilizers and repellents in lieu of chemicals. Instead of synthetic fertilizers, use [compost](#) from kitchen scraps, leaves and grass clippings.

### Try This!

Planting marigolds around your yard works as a natural bug repellent; the flowers give off a fragrance that flying insects prefer to avoid.

- ◆ Consider removing your lawn and replacing it with hardier native plants that require less water, or equally low-maintenance ornamental grasses.
- ◆ Be careful not to clear or eliminate existing plant cover, which can lead to erosion.
- ◆ When mowing, leave the grass clippings behind. They help the soil retain moisture and act as a natural fertilizer. For small lawns, save energy costs and get some exercise by switching to a push mower.
- ◆ Avoid introducing non-native species. Some provinces require landowners to eliminate noxious weeds from their property. Consult local government resources, guidebooks and online references to ensure you don't inadvertently introduce an invasive species to your property.

### Try This!

How have invasive species spread so far and wide? Well, they often "hitch a ride" on clothing, boots or vehicles. If your business involves travel around the countryside, stop to check your boots, clothing and vehicle undercarriage for any plant material that you might have unwittingly acquired along the way. Halting the spread of invasive species promotes biodiversity and helps to conserve native species.

### Try This!

Don't have the time or the staff to look after your green spaces? Try offering up your vacant flowerbeds to a local seniors centre, school or community youth group. These groups may welcome the opportunity to offer their members activities such as planting flowers and groundskeeping in your gardens or to provide learning opportunities for students. Encourage your staff to help out as well-it can be a great exercise in community relations for your business and your workers can enjoy a breath of fresh air over their lunch.

## Green Roofs

Want to see the future of greenspace? Look up. An increasing number of homeowners and businesses are planting green roofs, and reaping the benefits.

Green roofs:

- ◆ Improve local air quality
- ◆ Enhance energy performance
- ◆ Reduce costs associated with heating and cooling
- ◆ Create habitat for butterflies, birds and other pollinators
- ◆ Improve stormwater management by absorbing up to 80% of rainfall
- ◆ Act as natural noise barriers and absorb outdoor sounds.

If you are considering a green roof, you should ask an expert for advice specific to your situation. Ask local landscape contractors and designers if they have experience working with green roofs. Three organizations that offer general information about different kinds of green roofs, retrofit installations, plus suitable plants and maintenance are:

[Green Roofs for Healthy Living](#)

[City of Toronto \(green roofs\)](#)

[Green Garage](#)

## Water

Your landscaped areas—think trees, shrubs and flowerbeds—require irrigation. Here are a few tips to reduce the amount of water required to keep your grounds looking beautiful.

- ◆ Consider installing a ["grey-water" system](#). Treated grey water can be used on lawns and gardens, lessening the need for potable water and reducing your water bill.
- ◆ Water the lawn no more than once weekly, depending on rainfall and temperatures, and only when needed. Lawns require no more than 2.5 cm of water weekly, including rainfall.

## Water Efficiency

The Toronto Botanical Garden harvests rainwater to irrigate, saving a significant amount of potable water and money. The setup captures rain falling on the roof garden and stores it in a large cistern. The organization also conserves water with waterless urinals and low-flow toilets. Taken together, the improvements have reduced potable water consumption at the gardens by 21%.

- ◆ Try to water early in the day. Under the hot sun, you can lose as much as 30% of your water to evaporation.

## Try This!

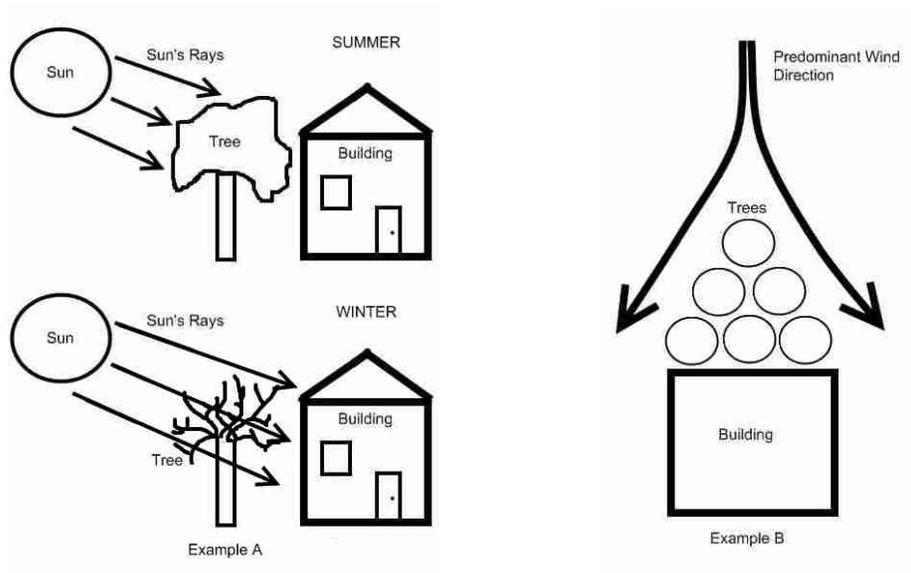
Set up a rain barrel and collect rainfall as your water source for watering your grounds and plants. Screen the barrel to keep out mosquitoes. Rain barrels are easily available at garden centres or you can make one yourself with an old barrel.

- ◆ When you irrigate, soak the lawn down to the roots. Doing so allows you to water less frequently.
- ◆ Consider a drip irrigation system that will distribute the water exactly where it's needed.
- ◆ Keep grass at least five cm high to better retain moisture, and mulch around plants to reduce evaporation.
- ◆ Selectively plant drought-resistant varieties over time.
- ◆ Reduce water runoff by planting trees.

## New Development

If you are developing a new site, remember that smart landscape planning can contribute significantly to cost savings on your energy and water bills. Well-designed landscapes also create a welcoming environment that highlights your stewardship and environmental commitment to clients and guests.

- ◆ When designing the site layout, orient structures to make the best use of sunshine, breezes and other passive energy sources. This can help to reduce energy heating and cooling costs.
- ◆ Consult with a landscape professional for site planting ideas that can:
  - ◆ Create shade to block out the sun in the summer and reduce cooling costs (Example A)
  - ◆ Allow sunshine in the winter and cut down on heating costs (Example A)
  - ◆ Block cold winter winds and reduce heating costs (Example B).



- ◆ Consider identifying, preserving, protecting and reusing historical or culturally interesting elements and buildings.
- ◆ As much as possible, try to cluster your facilities in previously developed areas and/or minimize disturbing vegetation.

## Try This!

If you are considering a new fence, think about a living fence made of trees, shrubs, hedges or even bamboo. Living fences can offer you a unique look for your property; they also provide habitat for wildlife and help sequester carbon dioxide.

## Top Five Tips to Create a Sustainable Outdoor Environment

1. Take advantage of regional climate, sun angles and wind to maximize both solar gain in winter and shading in summer.
2. Use permeable materials such as gravel, block paving or "grass" pavers instead of asphalt or concrete to allow water to percolate into the ground.
3. Adjust the blade height on your lawn mower. Most grasses suffer when too much is cut off at once. A short lawn increases evaporation from the soil. Mow it often enough so that you're never cutting more than a third of the blade's length at one time.
4. Keep information available for guests about important local and native species in the region, such as guidebooks, park information, etc.
5. Make your own fertilizer. Use [kitchen scraps](#), grass clippings and leaves to create your own mulch and add nutrients to your lawn and flowerbeds.

## Further References

Check out these Canadian websites for more advice on natural and organic lawn care:

[Organic Lawn Care Project](#) (Manitoba Eco-Network)

[Reducing Pesticides](#) (City of Toronto).

## Scenario: Bringing Glory to the Grasslands

Stan owns the Cloud Hills Wildlife Museum & Gift Shop, located in a heritage building near the entrance to Saskatchewan's stunning Grasslands National Park. The museum's grounds are beautifully manicured, but they demand significant and ongoing investments of time, energy and resources to maintain.

Stan has been thinking about the ecological impact of his plantings. He knows he is on the doorstep of a spectacular natural preserve, but at the same time he is reluctant to make any dramatic changes that might detract from the beauty of his property.

The entrepreneur has a casual chat with the park warden, who explains that many threatened and endangered species of native plants grow on the region's mixed-grass prairie. Stan decides that next spring, in lieu of non-native ornamentals that require extensive watering and care, he will plant a small native prairie garden highlighting species that can also be found in the park. Park staff note that he will not have to water the natives; the flora should thrive under normal rain conditions. They also agree to give Stan ideas for what to plant, and information that he can distribute to customers who enquire about his garden.

Stan expands his native prairie garden into an area formerly covered with turf, but leaves a large stretch of grass for his guests to enjoy for picnics, a game of Frisbee or running around with the dog. Even though he will be hanging onto some non-native grass, he resolves to maintain it in a more sustainable way. First he takes the sprinkler system off its timer, opting instead to evaluate each week whether or not the lawn requires watering. He will also run the sprinkler either first thing in the morning or in the evening after supper, and instead of leaving it on for just a little sprinkle he will make sure that the lawn gets a deep soaking.

Stan also invests in a couple of rain barrels for his downspouts. He sites them in conspicuous spots and paints them to match his building. The move tells his customers that he is making an effort to reduce water consumption, but doesn't impact the attractiveness of his grounds. Stan figures the barrels will hold enough to water all the various potted plants around the property, and even the prairie garden during dry spells.

After speaking with a landscape specialist at his local greenhouse, Stan decides to plant some native coniferous trees on the north side of the building to cut down the bitter wind that chills the building in the winter. He also decides to plant a couple deciduous trees on the south side, which will provide ample shade in the summer from the hot prairie sun, but will allow the sunlight through during the winter when the trees have no leaves.

# Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air quality impacts the health and comfort of everyone who steps inside your doors, from staff to guests. Airtight buildings improve energy efficiency by minimizing heat loss, but without adequate ventilation, they can concentrate stale interior air and compound health issues. Meanwhile, medium-density fibreboard-based office furnishings, carpet glues, cleaning products, photocopiers and laser printers all add volatile organic compounds to the mix. How do you improve energy efficiency without compromising your guest experience and employee productivity? Read on.

## What are VOCs?

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are organic chemical compounds that readily evaporate at room temperature. Some VOCs have distinct odours, while others are completely scentless. They originate from a variety of sources including paints, varnishes, solvents, cleaning products, carpets, photocopying equipment, upholstery fabric, pressed-wood furniture, fuel oil, cosmetics, glues and many other common household and workplace products. Exposure to VOCs can cause eye and nose irritation, headaches, nausea and dizziness. The fumes can also aggravate asthma and allergies. Some VOCs have been linked to different types of cancers and central nervous system damage.

## Quick Start



Incorporate plants into your indoor environment. Plants bring a touch of colour and life to an indoor space; they also absorb air pollutants. This means potentially fewer employee sick days and a welcoming environment for customers.

## Natural Air Filtering

Certain plants do an excellent job of filtering airborne pollutants. You may wish to consider some of the following species for your indoor environment.

**Areca palm:** boosts humidity, reducing overly dry air from forced-air heating systems.

**Bamboo or reed palm:** filters formaldehyde released by building materials, cigarette smoke and some household products.

**Boston fern:** filters both formaldehyde and xylene-found in certain solvents.

**Janet Craig dracaena:** widely used in homes; filters benzene from vehicle exhaust fumes.

**English ivy:** effectively removes airborne mould as well as formaldehyde and benzene.

**Spider plant:** filters formaldehyde and carbon monoxide—a colourless, odourless and deadly gas that can be produced by heating devices, gas ranges, fireplaces and vehicle engines.

**Peace lily:** filters benzene, xylene and toluene-found in solvents used in many common building, office and household products.

**Dwarf date palm:** can help strip formaldehyde from the air.

**Snake plant:** can remove formaldehyde and carbon monoxide from the air.

**Dracaena:** filters carbon monoxide and trichloroethylene, which can be given off by certain paints.

Visit [Green Living](#) magazine for a full list of houseplants that can help provide cleaner indoor air.

## Try This!

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals publishes a [list of non-toxic indoor plants](#) that will not harm curious children or animals.

Where do indoor air pollutants come from? What can you do about them?

### Floors

**Carpet:** Carpet provides an ideal environment for dust mites to grow, plus synthetic carpets can emit VOCs from glues and petroleum-based products.

- ◆ Try to decrease your use of carpet in areas where dampness can create problems with mould growth, such as bathrooms, basements, kitchen areas or near hot tubs. If carpets do get wet, be sure to dry them out completely.
- ◆ Vacuum carpets regularly, preferably using a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to cut back on dust.
- ◆ When purchasing new carpet, consider natural fibres-such as wool, silk or hemp-that are coloured with natural dyes, or low-VOC-emitting carpet.

**Hardwood:** There are many good options when it comes to hardwood and similar types of flooring materials, including bamboo and cork, which both come from renewable resources. When using hardwood flooring, avoid using virgin wood; instead, choose a product that has been FSC-certified or recycled.

- ◆ Use low-VOC stains or polishes on hardwoods.
- ◆ When installing flooring that requires adhesive, look for low-VOC options.

**Tile, Stone, and Concrete:** Polished and sealed concrete floors are becoming increasingly popular, and can be finished with a variety of glosses, colours and textures. Not only are such floors energy efficient, there is very little waste from making cement compared with similar tile and stone floors.

- ◆ Tile, stone and concrete are all great flooring options for good indoor air quality as they do not promote dust mite growth and are low VOC.

**Vinyl:** Avoid vinyl flooring; both the material and its adhesives can emit VOCs as well as carcinogenic compounds. Further, the production of the material involves very toxic processes, and it emits deadly and toxic gases when burned.

### Walls

- ◆ Look for low- or zero-VOC paint, and consider low-VOC wallpaper adhesives.
- ◆ Consider other non-toxic wall finishes. For example, check out National Geographic's [Green Guide](#) for reviews of milk- and clay-based wall products.

## Lead Paint

You needn't worry about lead in today's paints, but if your building was built before 1960 there's a chance that there is, or was at one point, lead paint on your walls. In most cases, lead paint has been removed or covered up and shouldn't be a problem. It becomes a serious health concern only if old paint begins to chip or flake; you can breathe in lead-contaminated dust from the walls, which can damage your lungs. For this reason, be sure to dust and vacuum frequently in buildings that still contain lead paint, and consider taking steps to either remove the lead paint professionally or to have it safely sealed up. Do not attempt to remove it yourself.

For more information including how to do renovations in buildings with lead paint, go to [Health Canada](#) and check the links on that page for additional resources.

## Try this!

When purchasing paint, read the label carefully to find information about the VOC content, which is listed in grams per litre, and can vary from 5 to 200. Choose one with a lower VOC content and higher percentage of solids or pigments.

For a list of low-VOC paints, check out [eartheasy](#).

## Windows

- ◆ Blinds and upholstery window treatments can be a source of dust.
- ◆ Consider covering windows with natural and washable fabrics such as cotton, silk, wool and hemp. Blinds and shades made of easily dusted natural material, such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified wood or bamboo, are great alternatives.

## Furniture

Furniture can contain glues, particleboard, pressed wood, plywood, polyurethane foam and finishing chemicals, all of which can emit formaldehyde and other VOCs for months after delivery. Dust mites can thrive in upholstered furniture.

- ◆ Try to avoid buying foam-type furniture or furniture made of medium-density fibreboard as well as dyed materials, as these can all emit VOCs. Instead look for solid wood that is FSC certified and natural materials that have not been chemically treated.
- ◆ Use wood furniture that is finished with low-VOC or water-based stains and sealants.

## Office

- ◆ Place printers and photocopiers in a well-ventilated room, preferably separate from your employees' general working area. Avoid a poorly ventilated basement or back room.

## Bathroom

Since the humidity in bathrooms is higher than in other parts of the building, they are the best place for moulds and other biological contaminants to grow. As a result, bathrooms are also popular places to use harsh cleaning products, which can emit unhealthy chemicals.

- ◆ Keep bathrooms dry and well-ventilated.
- ◆ Cover bathroom walls-especially around showers and sinks-with ceramic tile whenever possible. Not only can this surface be washed and dried easily, but it is an effective moisture barrier.
- ◆ Check often for signs of mould around showers and sinks-on the ceiling and in corners. Mould can colonize any place where water collects, such as around a sink or tub.
- ◆ Try to fix leaks as soon as possible to avoid water seeping into walls or floors, where it can develop into a mould problem.
- ◆ Install exhaust fans in washrooms with showers and encourage people to turn them on when the shower is on and leave it running for 15 minutes after showering to clear lingering humidity, which can also promote mould growth. Some exhaust fans have timers to ensure they run long enough after a shower, but then turn off when it's time to save energy.
- ◆ Try to minimize the use of air fresheners, candles and incense, as they can release chemicals into the air. Instead use natural air fresheners such as lavender and high-quality candles that don't emit toxic chemicals.

## Kitchen

Kitchens can be a source of wonderful scents that fill the air and whet your customers' appetites, but food-prep areas can also be a source of airborne pollutants.

- ◆ Install a proper ventilation system in the kitchen-especially those equipped with gas stoves-to carry airborne pollutants out and away.
- ◆ Perform regular mould inspections; moisture can also be a problem in a kitchen.

## Basement

Many indoor air-quality issues originate with basements, which typically house fuel-burning appliances such as boilers, water heaters and furnaces, and chemical storage cabinets. Dampness can also be of concern.

- ◆ Ensure that fuel-burning appliances are well maintained and inspected yearly. Make sure you have a carbon-monoxide detector and test it frequently.
- ◆ Try to keep the humidity low in the basement to discourage the growth of mould. This can be done with dehumidifiers, and by reducing carpeting in areas that might be exposed to water.
- ◆ Store cleaning products, paints and other VOC-laden chemicals in airtight containers. Consider disposing of them permanently through a hazardous-waste depot in your area.

## Cleaning Products

A clean, dust-free and mould-free workplace is a healthy workplace. Just be certain that your cleaning products aren't making matters worse for your staff and guests.

- ◆ Try using mild, low-VOC cleaning products. Try to avoid products that contain bleach or ammonia.

### Try This!

Check out one of these organizations for non-toxic cleaning products and homemade alternatives:

[eartheasy](#)

[Guide to Less Toxic Products](#)

[Environmental Law Centre](#)

Also look for cleaner products that are approved by [EcoLogo](#).

## Ventilation

- ◆ Consider opening the windows on pleasant days to provide your workplace with a breath of fresh air.
- ◆ Ensure that your building's ventilation system is cleaned and maintained annually. This will not only improve the quality of incoming air, but also maximize the system's efficiency.

### Heat Recovery Ventilators

Heat recovery ventilators harvest the warmth of stale, moist, outgoing air and use it to pre-warm the fresh air coming into a building. This system can recover up to 85% of heating and cooling energy. For more information on how HRVs work, check out Natural Resources Canada's [How a Heat Recovery Ventilator Works](#).

### Try This!

Before buying an air-filtration device, read information sheets from [The Lung Association](#) and [Health Canada](#) for guidance on what to look for in a filtration device that will suit you best.

## Further References

Check out these organizations for more great tips and information on indoor air quality.

- ◆ [The Canadian Lung Association](#)
- ◆ [Office of Greening Government Operations, Public Works and Government Services Canada](#)
- ◆ [Health Canada, Indoor Air Quality](#)
- ◆ [Children's Health Environmental Coalition](#)

## Socio-cultural

Social responsibility is much more than a buzzword. Each of us must consider the widest range of impacts that our actions and operations may have on the people who live, work and play where we conduct our business. Reach out to local communities, seek their input, create meaningful opportunities for them-and you will add far more than you take away.

### Quick Start



Articulate your company's commitment to making a positive impact on the communities and cultures affected by your business. This will help guide decisions and communicate priorities internally to employees and externally to community stakeholders and clients.

### Case Study: Pacific Northwest Expeditions

[Pacific Northwest Expeditions](#) is a family-owned company working to bring about positive social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts. In keeping with this philosophy, the company has developed a statement to guide its business practices:

"We strive to be sensitive to local culture and the impacts our activities can have on the communities in which we operate. We continue to consult with local people within these communities to aid us in our planning and decision-making in the delivery of our sea-kayaking programs. Considerations are given to potential impacts, such as loss of privacy, invasion of culturally significant places or sacred sites."

### Top 10 Ways to Create a Positive Socio-Cultural Impact

Many believe that the potentially negative social and cultural impacts of tourism are ultimately justified by the positive economic effect we have on the communities we visit. The reality is not so simple. Often, after taxes are applied, local communities retain only a tiny percentage of total tourism expenditures. But you can help build consumer awareness and demand for socially responsible tourism by working to raise industry standards.

1. **Deliver the real deal.** Work with local artists and performers and draw from small-scale, community-based programs. If you promise clients a genuine travel experience-meaningful interactions with the local population, plus exposure to customs and culture-that's what they will expect.
2. **Remember the locals.** Provide opportunities to learn and understand more about the culture and customs through qualified and experienced local guides.
3. **Connect guests with hosts.** Visitors often travel to learn about people from another area, so work with your local communities to create opportunities for guests to know their hosts.
4. **Tread lightly.** Apprise clients of your region's unique socio-cultural considerations, and offer advice on minimizing negative impacts on sensitive sites and cultural norms. Coach your clients in cultural sensitivity. Advise them to ask permission before photographing local people, dressing a certain way, observing cultural traditions or adopting local practices.
5. **Think hands-on.** Encouraging volunteers to become involved in local projects creates a much deeper connection with the people and culture of an area.
6. **Skip the tacky-tacky.** Try to find authentic souvenirs and crafts to share with your guests. Handmade items or products made from natural resources of an area generally provide "right livelihood" work.
7. Hire locally. Promote tourism training and development opportunities for area residents.

8. Remember that "cheap" is no bargain. Encourage visitors to adopt a "fair price policy" when purchasing local goods and souvenirs.
9. Make a real contribution. Support or get involved in neighbouring community-building events and initiatives. Speak with local community organizations about how best you can involve your clients in community projects and social activities.
10. Spread the love. Engage local businesses-tour operators, hotels, restaurants, guides and others-throughout your enterprise. Ensure that the economic benefits of tourism are shared in an equitable way.

## The Responsible Traveller

In conjunction with [Sustainable Travel International](#), Modern Traveler magazine recently developed a great little guide called Cornerstones of Modern Travel. Share these insights with your clients.

	<p><b>Modes of transportation</b> Consider walking or cycling during your trip, using public transportation, renting hybrid vehicles and choosing to travel by train rather than plane when possible.</p>
	<p><b>Offsets &amp; environmental policy</b> Calculate and offset the carbon dioxide emitted by your travel and buy your trip from companies with policies that consider environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts.</p>
	<p><b>Dollars spent locally</b> Ensure that local people benefit from your trip by spending money in community or locally owned businesses and working with tour operators and lodges that employ local people.</p>
	<p><b>Environmental conservation</b> Choose a trip that strengthens the conservation efforts for, and enhances the natural integrity of, the places you visit, including protected areas and wildlife habitats.</p>
	<p><b>Respect for local culture</b> Immerse yourself in and accept the differences of other cultures, learning about their customs and social norms before you visit, and speaking their language when possible.</p>
	<p><b>Natural resource use</b> Reduce, reuse and recycle, and consider the efficient use of water, energy and building materials as well as the method of waste disposal used by your tour operator or lodging.</p>

# Becoming Carbon Neutral

You can't open a newspaper these days without reading about climate change and greenhouse-gas emissions. And indeed, governments, organizations, businesses and individuals are all looking to reduce their "carbon footprint"-the total amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases emitted over the life cycle of the products, goods and services that we use. Most emissions originate with the burning of fossil fuels. Activities such as driving your car, travelling by plane or bus, burning fuel to heat or cool a building or produce electricity, and manufacturing goods all create heat-trapping carbon emissions.

## Quick Start



The tourism industry is both a vector and a victim of climate change. For a quick study of the issues in play, check out the [Icarus Foundation](#) and the [United Nations World Tourism Organization Davos Conference Declaration on Climate Change and Tourism](#).

## Case Study: A Greener River Runs Through It

Each year, nearly four million people visit [The Forks](#), a bustling stretch of restaurants, shops and sights along the riverfront in downtown Winnipeg, MB. The guests create a significant footprint-from traffic, energy used to heat and cool buildings, water for toilets, landscaping, food services and garbage. The district hopes to reduce its carbon emissions as close to zero as possible by the year 2010-an initiative the group calls "Target Zero." Listed here is a handful of the actions and strategies already underway:

- ◆ Explore feasibility of converting used oil from restaurants' deep fryers to biodiesel to power tractors and other equipment at The Forks.
- ◆ Utilize wind energy. A meteorological tower presently measures the amount of wind that could potentially be captured. If the resource proves reliable enough, The Forks will erect the first urban wind turbine in Manitoba.
- ◆ Compost all types of organic materials: grass clippings, leaves, tea bags, fruit rinds, eggshells and much more, and use the resulting soil onsite. The group is also looking to start a composting facility that other nearby businesses and residents could share.
- ◆ Explore the possibility of installing cisterns to harvest the water running off The Forks Market roof. This water might then be used to flush toilets or irrigate landscaping.
- ◆ Reduce or offset carbon emissions from vehicles driven onsite by improving bicycle infrastructure, encouraging transit and alternate modes of transport, and planting more trees to sequester, or "soak up," the carbon.

## Defining "Carbon Neutral"

Becoming carbon neutral means balancing the amount of carbon released to the atmosphere with an equal reduction, or "offsetting," of emissions elsewhere.

A common approach to doing so is to first establish a baseline by **calculating** your emissions, to then **reduce** those emissions as much as possible through efficiency retrofits and upgrades, and finally to balance your remaining emissions by **offsetting**.

## Steps to Become Carbon Neutral

Ready to look at what this involves? Read on for suggestions on how to get started.

- ◆ **Determine Your Carbon Footprint.** To reduce or offset your greenhouse gas emissions, you need to know how much carbon is produced by your business and where the emissions originate—you need to establish a baseline. You may wish to focus on one area of your business—such as transportation or heating and cooling—rather than your entire operation. Consider what level of detail and accuracy is appropriate for your business.

### How to Calculate Carbon Emissions

This is a brief overview. For a more detailed approach, see *Hot Climate, Cool Commerce: A Service Sector Guide to Greenhouse Gas Management*, published by the World Resources Institute.

#### *First Step: Gather Data*

- 1- Determine your business activities that produce carbon emissions. These fall into two groups:
  - a. Direct emissions: burning fuel to heat or cool buildings, generate electricity, run your business vehicles.
  - b. Indirect emissions: purchasing electricity, heat and steam, and travelling or commuting in vehicles that are not owned by your business such as airplanes, trains, buses and employees' cars. This also includes carbon emissions associated with the production and manufacturing of materials you use in your business, such as paper and equipment.
- 2- Consult utility statements and fuel records to determine how much energy you use in each activity. Finding data for indirect emissions—such as the amount of electricity used when you lease space, or carbon released in the production of raw materials—is more complicated since records are not often easily available.
- 3- Establish the emissions factor that you will use. For example, to calculate the carbon emissions from transportation, you need to know how many kilograms of carbon dioxide are produced per litre of fuel for air, train, bus or private vehicle kilometres travelled. Check out Environment Canada for [emission factors](#) for [greenhouse gas sources](#).

#### *Second Step: Calculate Carbon Emissions*

Once you have gathered enough information, plug it into the following simple formula:

Or use one of the many online calculators—there are different calculators for different activities, such as commuting, air travel, heating and so on. Check out various calculators at:

Environment Canada

[Tree Canada](#)

[The Greenhouse Gas Protocol Initiative](#).

If your business is large or complex, you may need to hire a consultant to help you calculate your greenhouse-gas emissions.

- ◆ **Set Your Goal.** Now that you have figured out your carbon footprint, you can decide whether you want to become fully carbon neutral, or whether you want to simply reduce the size of your footprint. You might want to identify a certain year by which you will achieve carbon neutrality, or set annual reduction targets.
- ◆ **Reduce Your Footprint.** Once you have a good picture of your emission sources and the scale of your carbon footprint, you'll easily recognize hot spots and reduction opportunities. Typically, you'll find low-hanging fruit in energy consumption, transportation and purchasing.
- ◆ **Offset a Portion of Your Footprint.** Once you have reduced your emissions as much as possible, you can compensate for the remainder either by purchasing carbon offsets or undertaking other activities that will capture carbon.

## Purchasing Carbon Offsets

A "carbon credit" represents an offset in greenhouse-gas emissions created by another organization or business that reduces or absorbs an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide.

Carbon is typically measured in metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). They are bought and sold through various international brokers, online providers and trading platforms.

### *Carbon Offset Projects*

There are many different types of carbon-offset projects that providers invest in:

- ◆ **Renewable energy:** Displacing fossil fuels with wind, solar, geothermal, small hydro and biomass energy can offset future carbon emissions.
- ◆ **Energy efficiency:** Working on optimizing energy use through high-efficiency lighting, retrofits, green buildings, heating and cooling systems, efficient engines, etc.
- ◆ **Sequestration:** Increasing carbon sequestration in plants through reforestation and protecting and increasing a forest's capacity, or in soil through zero-tillage farming.
- ◆ **Methane capture:** Capturing methane from a landfill, coal mine or agricultural field.

## Top Five Tips for Purchasing Carbon Offsets

The global carbon-offsets market-though well developed-remains largely unregulated; questions of transparency and accountability dog the sector. Though third-party certification schemes are emerging, such as [The Gold Standard](#), oversight remains the market's biggest challenge. When choosing among the slew of businesses and non-profit organizations that sell carbon offsets, look for the following:

1. Details on the types of projects and their success in offsetting carbon emissions, backed up with a monitoring and verification process.
2. Emphasis on offset quality.
3. Registration process to verify that the same offset has not been sold multiple times.
4. Investments in public awareness and education campaigns.
5. Benefits that go beyond the reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions, such as energy conservation, biodiversity protection, plus local economic and social development.

### Try This!

Check out [A Consumer's Guide to Retail Carbon Offsets Providers](#), published by Clean Air Cool Planet for more information about choosing a provider.

# Appendix A

## Canada's Code of Ethics & Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism

### *The Canadian Tourism Industry Vision*

Canada will be the premier four-season destination to connect with nature and to experience diverse cultures and communities.

### *The Canadian Tourism Industry Mission*

Canada's tourism industry will deliver world-class cultural and leisure experiences year round, while preserving and sharing Canada's clean, safe and natural environments. The industry will be guided by the values of respect, integrity and empathy.

### *The Tourism Industry Association of Canada and Parks Canada Definition of Sustainable Tourism*

Sustainable tourism actively fosters appreciation and stewardship of the natural, cultural and historic resources and special places by local residents, the tourism industry, governments and visitors. It is tourism which is viable over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place.

### *Ethics*

The Canadian tourism industry is guided by the values of respect, integrity and empathy in designing, delivering and marketing sustainable tourism products, facilities and services.

### *Ends*

A sustainable tourism industry that:

- ◆ Promotes sensitive appreciation and enjoyment of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, contemporary landscapes, cultures and communities.
- ◆ Balances economic objectives with safeguarding and enhancing the ecological, cultural and social integrity of Canada's heritage.
- ◆ Shares responsibility by being a full participant and contributor to the economic, environmental and cultural sustainability of the destinations and assets it utilizes.

### *Benefits*

The tourism industry recognizes that fostering sustainable tourism practices addresses its triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social performance.

Travellers benefit from:

- ◆ Access to high-quality products and services that support positive experiences and respect socio-cultural and environmental sustainability;

- ◆ Access to opportunities that support a variety of service interests, recreational interests, skill sets and income levels; and
- ◆ Opportunities, now and in the future, to experience natural, cultural and social environments that have retained their integrity.

Tourism providers benefit from:

- ◆ Lower costs through more efficient use of resources and the reduction of waste;
- ◆ Sound planning and management of new and existing tourism opportunities, which leads to increased business certainty over the long term; and
- ◆ Canada's improved global competitive position through heightened recognition as a world leader in the implementation of sustainable tourism practices.

Host communities benefit from:

- ◆ Positive contributions to their natural, social and cultural environments and economic well-being;
- ◆ Respect for their rights and values; and
- ◆ Full participation in the decisions which affect the development of their community as a tourism destination.

## Guidelines

*We regard Sustainable Tourism as a guiding concept for the sound management of Canada's tourism experiences. We will honour the following guidelines in balancing economic objectives with respect for the natural, cultural and social environments in which we work.*

*To this end, we will:*

### 1. Protect Natural and Cultural Heritage Resources

Support and contribute to the protection, enhancement and restoration of the integrity of natural and cultural heritage resources and places; encourage the establishment of parks, sites and reserves; support legislation to ensure protection of historic places and resources; condemn wilful destruction of heritage resources; and work to enhance public awareness and involvement in the protection of heritage.

### 2. Promote Appreciation and Enjoyment

Enrich travel experiences, understanding and enjoyment by providing accurate information, engaging presentations and opportunities to connect with Canada's natural and cultural heritage; and foster support for the protection and sensitive use of heritage resources and places.

### 3. Respect and Involve Host Communities

Respect the rights and values of host and local communities, property owners and Aboriginal peoples; educate communities about the importance of tourism and provide them with a meaningful role in planning and decision-making for the design, development and delivery of tourism programs and services; and optimize the long-term economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to the community.

### 4. Influence Expectations and Use

Influence traveller expectations through marketing, trip-planning materials and tourism activities which foster responsible use and enjoyment of our nature, culture and communities; and support leading-edge services and facilities that respect heritage resources and places while achieving economic goals.

## **5. Minimize Impacts**

Limit the negative impacts of tourism on the natural and cultural environment through the responsible use of resources, effective waste management and minimizing of pollution; limit activities, services and facilities to levels that do not threaten the integrity of heritage resources or systems while continuing to support economic goals and traveller access; and seek innovative solutions to mitigate or avoid undesirable environmental, social and cultural impacts.

## **6. Raise Awareness**

Conduct research to expand the knowledge base upon which sound sustainable tourism decisions depend; share the knowledge through education programs, staff training and scholarships; and recognize excellence and best practices through awards and accreditation programs.

## **7. Work Together**

Advance sustainable tourism by working with governments, communities, stakeholders, travellers and other industries to agree upon common goals, contribute to co-ordinated and co-operative actions, exchange information, technologies and solutions, and develop shared plans.

## **8. Contribute Globally**

Show leadership in sustainable tourism by honouring international commitments; participate in international policy development and initiatives; contribute to the building of capability on a world scale; and share best practices and technologies with other countries.