Session 6F

The Sum is Greater than Its Parts: Successful Partnership Models
Transforming SMEs through Sustainability Circles

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Presentation Outline

- Overview
- Design Challenge
- Sustainability Circle Program
- Results
The Need: Small Business Represents

- 1/2 of non-farm economy in the United States
- Over 95% of US organizations
- Employs more than 50% of the work force

But . . .

- Underserved/low participation in sustainability
The Design Challenge

• Requirements
  – Embedded sustainability, not bolt on
  – Comprehensive program
  – Sustained engagement
  – Scalable

• Constraints
  – Time
  – Capital $$
The Design Solution: Sustainability Circles

• Peer learning circle of 8 organizations – 2 representatives each, to share experiences, ideas, support, community

• 6 months – 1 full day/month + 1 day between

“Sustainability boot camp”

Join a Sustainability Circle Today
Sustainability Circle Design

- Outcomes
- Content
- Social networks
- Support & Resources
  - Social
  - Technical
  - Financial
Planned Outcomes
“Begin with the ending in mind”

- Develop a Sustainability Action Plan
- Launch an internal 'Green Team'
- Complete an initial project
- Establish a strong business case for sustainability
- Build in metrics for measurement of success
- Achieve 100% return on investment, 1st year + continuous
- Form a valuable peer support network - sharing of knowledge, experiences, resources, & new collaborations
- See business through a ‘new lens’
How Sustainability creates business value

1. Risk
   - Mitigating risk

2. Efficiency
   - Reducing energy, waste, materials

3. Product
   - Differentiating products

4. Market
   - Entering new markets

5. Brand
   - Protecting & enhancing brand

6. Business Context
   - Influencing industry standards

Social Networks

- Peer learning Circle
- National network of domain experts
- Local network of contractors
Support and Resources

Support
• 2 Professional Coaches
• Technical & admin support
• Referrals
• Loan packages

Resources
• Portfolio Manager
• Wiki website
• Curated knowledge
  – Selected books & references
  – Selected websites
  – Tools & checklists
• Exercises
• Case studies
An Integrated Social Design Approach

- Knowledge
- Local action network
- Resources
- Circle website
- National network of experts
- Peer learning & support
- Coaching
- Applications
Results: Example 1
Sustainability Action Plan
Mi Rancho
Sustainability Action Plan
Results

Actions

- Reduce materials
- Reduce waste
- Improve lighting

Outcomes, 1st year

- $90,000
- $50,000
- $35,000
Results: Additional Examples

- Manufacturer – Social Service Agency launched new business, $20K
- Bank reinvented business model
- Mechanical services company achieved 10x investment on building improvements
- Lighting contractor began new venture
- Nursery launched new product line, engaged industry association
Questions and Discussion

Thank you!