

Green Teams: Best Practices



A 'Green Team' is a group of employees that form to pioneer improvements to an organization's environmental practices.

Forward: Thank you for being interested enough in preserving our environment to read a document about 'best green team practices'. Now that the pleasantries are over let's get moving because the ecological damage occurring every day (and night) is unwinding the very fabric of life on Earth - & you need to do your part to change your organization for the better.

First things first: Get buy in from the highest person in your organization that you think will say 'yes' to allowing you to form a 'Green Team'. Do this by highlighting that you have done some early research and found that a number of companies, government agencies, & non-profits are going green and are realizing significant benefits by doing so. For news worthy examples please visit <http://www.corporatekindness.org/PressCenter.html>

BEWARE *** Forming a green team during office hours without management 'buy in' is a proven way to short circuit your good intentions.

Post an initial meeting notice & give people time to respond: Let people know that with "name your manager that gave the OK here" support that your organization will be forming a green team and that you are planning the 'Kickoff' meeting for 'X' Date (usually 2 weeks from the date of notice posting) at 'Y' Time – leave the meeting location as 'To Be Determined'. It is a good idea to request in your posting that interested parties RSVP relative to attendance. This will allow you to build a contact list of attendees and will give you a sense of the size of room that you will need to host the meeting.

Don't forget to secure availability of the meeting space 3-5 days before the meeting.

Send a follow up message before the meeting: For professionalism's sake, please send a message 2-3 days before the scheduled Kickoff meeting time to confirm the attendee list, restate the Date & Time, and update the group as to the meeting location. In your message you may

also wish to include a brief ‘to bring list’ that attendees should have such as a pen, note paper, & most importantly their ‘good intentions’.

Prepare the space: Think ahead. Arrive early. This meeting is your baby but you want it to become ‘everyone in the room’s baby’. Make sure there are enough seats and table space. If you can, provide some refreshments. Make sure the group is comfortable – people make better decisions when they are comfortable.

Have a brief meeting intro prepared: Thank everyone for coming to the meeting & for caring about the organization enough to help a green team initiative get started. Thank the manager that gave the OK even if they are not present in the room.

Build group consensus around the following:

- How often should the group meet (bi-weekly or monthly is usually best)
- When should they meet (day, time, location)
- **Who will make up the ‘recruitment committee? The best green teams are made up of many different players from different levels and departments. You’ll almost certainly want a recruitment committee working diligently to bring others onto the team.**

Announce a logo vote for the next meeting: You’re building a team here. Good teams market themselves well. Your Green Team Logo will be used in all internal & external communications including emails. Ask the team members to submit a logo to you before the next meeting and print out each logo (try to make them the same size) for the next meeting to allow team members to vote on the Team’s logo. Good designs are widely available within Microsoft Word’s Clipart and at <http://images.google.com> All logos should be on a white background. Here are some examples from Microsoft Clipart:



Announce a priorities vote to be held exactly halfway to the next meeting date: Ask people to do some thinking about prioritizing the following – *Green Office Supplies, *Energy Efficiency & Green Energy, *Reduce + Re-Use + Recycle, *Green Infrastructure & Construction, *Green Vendors & Business Partners, & *any other category the team agrees on. Exactly half way to the

next meeting date, ask folks to prioritize the items by numbering them 1-last number and then tally the results. Once the results are known, send them to the other team members and notify the team's 'recruitment committee' to redouble their efforts to attract people with power or influence over the top 2 priorities. Hopefully the new recruits will be available to join the second meeting. Ask team members to think about the top 2 priorities and bring at least 1 actionable suggestion about each with them to the second meeting.

At the second meeting:

- Make sure you have the same sized print outs of the different logos that people submitted. Conduct an anonymous first round vote. Take the top 2 choices and hold a show of hands vote between them. *Suggestion: Offer to buy all those that voted for the runner up logo a consolation coffee for the 3rd meeting.*
- Have folks go around the room and give voice to their ideas for green initiatives under the top 2 priorities and write them on a whiteboard or chalkboard while they are being stated. – *write small because there should be several of these ideas out there.*
- Build consensus around which ideas make the most sense for the team to pursue in both the next 30 & 90 days.
- As a group, determine how each priority project is going to be accomplished in a Systematic, Measureable, Actionable, Realistic, & Time-bound way (SMART). This tool while not exactly made for the task... may help:
<http://student.aahanet.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?site=student&webcode=itsmartgoals>

Things for the group to keep in mind:

- A group is better off without persistently negative team members. Those folks that are always saying 'this can't be done' or 'this shouldn't be done' are very detrimental to the Team's cohesiveness.
- Always live up to your commitments to the Team.
- Always show up for 'practices' (inter-meeting votes and emails etc...) & you need to be there for the 'games' (regular meetings)
- Never be afraid to show your Team colors – always include the Green Team Logo in all emails. *Suggestion: Team T-Shirts printed with the Company Name & Team Logo on organic fibers are fantastic to wear on dress down days and they raise awareness.*
- A.B.R.A. Every Team member needs to understand the importance of the magic word 'ABRA'. It's **Always Be Recruiting...Always**. New blood, fresh talent, old members that were good but drifted away – bring them all into the Team. There is never going to be enough support for Team. Fill the roster. Fill the stadium. Fill the bleachers.
- Never get discouraged. All teams lose – the best ones make the adjustments and keep coming back to the field.