

A STUDY ON GREEN PRACTICES IN BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

Green practice is a term which pertains to activities that help in reduction of damage caused to the environment we live in. This topic is clearly self explanatory but still it has to be explained to the people, to the society and to the companies all around the world. Green practice refers to nothing but taking an effort to improve the condition of the air we breathe, the environment we mobilize in and the eco-system in which animals, plants and humans co -exist in. Any company which indulges in sustainable and eco friendly ways of functioning and operating their business can be called as Green Company. Green practices in companies can be anything which will help to reduce pollution, global warming, harm to trees and other living organisms. Use of sustainable energy, planting of trees, reduction of plastic, disposal of wastage in the most effective manner assuring no harm to water bodies or air due to smoke etc. These are the few common and simplest green practices undertaken by few companies. We need every company to be like these few companies.

KEYWORDS: *Green Practice, Green Company, Sustainable Energy, Water Bodies, Eco-System.*

Introduction

The Need for Green Practices in Business

We all are well aware about the reasons why businesses need to start and maintain green practice of functioning in their everyday operation. The most obvious reasons being:

- **Air Emissions:** The releasing of hazardous gases like Sulphur Dioxide and Nitrous Oxide which lead to greenhouse effect, climate changes, direct harm to living organism.
- **Wastewater:** The sources of effluent treated and untreated water are many and huge variety. A lot of damage is faced by the roads, transportation canals and sewage systems. Heavy metals and salts in such water leakages cause high damage and also ruin agricultural development.
- **Marine Pollution:** There are many companies and industries that are close to the aquatic biosphere in coastal cities. The chemicals leaked out as waste, the materials and garbage dumped out in those water bodies directly hit the marine life. It ruins the shore and public sighting spots too. It becomes tough for any living being to stay in such surroundings.
- **Noise:** The sound levels that are produced from manufacturing companies and industries damage a normal human ear and can seriously lead to deafening of workers and people around them.
- **Radiations:** Caused due to high usage of electronic devices, these radiations affect the brain cells of humans. They have the potential of increasing the risks that cause brain tumors and other tumors in the head and neck area.

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Benefits of Environmentally Friendly Business

- **Business Point of View**

There are a lot of benefits for businesses pursuing green practice method of functioning. Some of the general ones are:

- Increasing goodwill
- Satisfying the people and society
- Accomplishing social responsibility
- Saving up expenses by reusing, recycling and reducing
- Better environment for workers and people around the company's workplace or factory

Now let's take a look into the business benefits in detail:

- **Satisfying the Consumer's Tastes and Expectations**

Many people center their lifestyle around sustainability these days. Shoppers want to do their part for the environment by exchanging their money with businesses that they trust will make a difference. Most prominently, this expectation comes from millennial, who basically are eco – conscious customers. This group has been reported as very willing to pay more for brands that they believe in, such as health / wellness, sustainability, organics, eco-friendliness and other social values.

- **Customer Loyalty**

Going green not only makes a company different from others but also gains a customer's loyalty. Whether you appeal to those who are conscious about the benefits of going green, or inspire and educate those less involved, including this to your business's mission are a great way to develop ties. Eco-conscious shoppers show amazing brand loyalty when they know they aren't just getting good quality products, but also their commitment to environmental safety makes them drive into other green companies if their choice of brand isn't available.

- **Positive Impact on the Name of the Company**

Not even 50% of the companies are green yet. So those who are right now know what it takes to help the eco system and also build a great reputation for them in this process. Going green also benefits the American economy as a whole and supports a national cause to become an energy – independent country in more ways than one. One of the biggest benefits of going green is that it improves your image in the eyes of your spectators as caring and awareness.

- **Healthy Workplace**

Employee morale is one of the biggest concerns in business. Whether it happens to be just you or an amazing, hardworking group of individuals, the people are the most important aspects of every business. Improving the quality of life at work with green technology, paperless processes and paychecks, recycled paper options, green cleaning materials and green energy will in due course improve your entire business. Show that you care not only for the well being of your customers and yourself but also that of your employees and the community as a whole.

- **Reduction in Expenditure**

Going green saves you money. Long – lasting, efficient light bulbs like CFLs and LEDS are decreasing the amount of electricity businesses use, lowering their utility bills. Energy saving appliances and technology will keep your business running on an energy lean diet.

- **Availing tax Benefits:** Investing in renewable energy and green technology could qualify your business for tax related benefits, in the form of credits or deductions. Going green helps the planet and your business. It can help with differentiating you from the competition, attracting customers who care about the climate and in saving money. Start taking steps to go green and see the positive impact you can make.
- **First Mover Advantage:** In the green market, the advantage lies with the first to offer a green product or service. Consumers with green interest will gravitate towards the products or services that meet their interest. By being the first to introduce the green option, you are likely to capture the attention of those consumers and create long term consumers. For example, Toyota introduced the Prius, the first mainstream hybrid car and enjoyed success with the model, as well as being the most recognizable hybrid model. Although there are new entrants to the hybrid environment, the Prius remains the most recognizable and has established a base of loyal consumers.

- **Investor Attractiveness:** As seen by previous discussion regarding green market growth, the demand for such products and services is growing. Investors have noticed and are ready to invest in the next wave of big business. Entering into the green market is attractive as it shows a respect for the environment and community the business lies within. Additionally, many green practices lowers costs and improve efficiency while also reducing the risk of new regulations – such as emissions regulations – adversely affecting your business. As such, green companies and markets are attractive to investors on a variety of levels.

Environmental Point of View

After looking at the benefits businesses get, Let's have a look at the benefits received by the environment due to green practices.

- **Benefits to the Environment**

Green practices lead to reduction of waste released, reduction of pollution towards water bodies, soil or land, cutting the amount of smoke released in air and also controlled sound levels at low frequencies. This leads in restoring a balance in eco system due to reduction in levels of pollution. Be it air, water or noise pollution.

It's a social responsibility of every business to not only go green but to help in producing a green environment too. Planting trees is an important social activity which must be mandatory for every business. This increases greenery and makes our environment a better place to live in.

It's funny that we think of our homes and not of the several birds and animals whose homes lie in the woods shadowed over by green leaves. Trees are home to uncountable species of birds, reptiles and insects.

Green practice helps to reduce the death rate of aquatic organisms. How? By not letting any waste into water bodies.

Lesser the release of toxic gases, cleaner the air to live in. This leads in prevention of health problems amongst the workers and the people in the surroundings.

Fresh air to breathe in is a healthy and lively environment to live in.

There will be significant in the pollution levels. The greenhouse effect will subside if going green becomes an applied function in every person's everyday life.

The environment will be able to sustain resources like coal, phosphorous, natural gas etc and grow sustainably.

Companies that follow Green Methods

- **LUSH Cosmetics**

Lush Cosmetics is a company engaging in retailing of cosmetics. Founded 23 years ago in Dorset, United Kingdom, this company highly believes and encourages green methods of business. This cosmetics company is not only bringing green to your morning routine with it's all natural products, it's reinvented the status quo for the (excessive) way beauty products are packaged. This was the business that introduced packaging free cosmetics like solid shampoo, massage bars and bath "bombs," which they visually capitalize on their stores with colourful product displays free from excessive boxes or wrapping. For it's products that do need packaging, LUSH is committed to using recyclable and biodegradable materials and all of it's products contain ingredients that have minimal impact on the environment.

- **BLISSMO**

Founded in 2010, Blissmo is an online company that helps users to access organic, non toxic and eco friendly products. Green cleaning products and all – natural foods are great, but there're not always easy to find – nor cheap. But by providing excellent deals on eco – friendly products, Blissmo leaves it's subscribers with no excuse not go for the green option. The company acts as a "Green Groupon", offering daily discounts on businesses and services helping sustainable companies reach new audiences and consumers change their consumption habits. And the Blissmo Boxes arm of the company takes the guesswork out of buying green in a whole new way, finding the best eco and organic goods on the market and delivering them straight to your door.

- **The Home Depot**

Green Business practices come in many different forms, but this retailer seems to have them all covered with its EcoOptions initiative. From changing the energy usage behaviours in every store to investing in more environmentally friendly lumber selection (the company's Council program only buys wood from trees that are ensured to be replanted) to enabling shoppers to easily recycle CFL bulbs, batteries, cell phones and in many stores, plastic, paper and aluminium, the Home Depot walks the walk when it comes to being a "green" giant.

- **Nike**

Yes, the famous sports company follows green methods in their business too. It is one of the top climate – friendly companies because of its numerous initiatives, including programs, materials used to make new shoes and shoe reuse programs. Here are just a few of the examples of what Nike is doing in terms of environmental sustainability initiatives.

- **Nike Grind Program**

The Nike Grind program is the Reuse – a – Shoe program created by the company in 1993. The objective of the Nike GRIND Program is to support the elimination of waste as well as close the full loop in the product lifecycle by collecting post – consumer athletic shoes that do not contain metal, including ones that have been returned due to defects. Once the shoes are collected, the sneaker parts are then reused to create items like flooring for weight rooms and baseball fields and so on. Currently, this program is available in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Japan.

- **Environmentally Friendly Products**

The belief is in creating superior athletic performance products while lowering environmental impact. For instance, the Nike's Women's Board Shorts are made from 100 percent recycled polyester which saves three plastic bottles from going to the landfill. In another example, Nike Zoom and Flywire technology use 100 percent green rubber along the outsole to eliminate a large number of toxic compounds – the only impact will be the shoe on the court.

- **Rethinking the Nike Box**

The largest purchase Nike makes is in corrugated cardboard for shoeboxes and shipping. Hence, to reduce the waste associated with packaging, Nike has been looking for ways to modify their box. The new shoe box uses 30 percent less material than the 1995 box and is the very first 100 percent recycled content box. The boxes first showed up in stores around 8 years ago and aided in saving approximately 2,00,000 trees. This new box is not only made from recycled materials and is recyclable but it's also much stronger and lighter than the previous box.

- **The GreenXchange**

The GreenXchange was a partnership between Nike and a number of other companies, including Best Buy, Mountain Equipment Co-Op and creative commons, to aid in the acceleration and scale of sustainability – based innovation through the mutual sharing of intellectual property assets. The GreenXchange was an online marketplace where companies share their products with other companies who may or may not be in the same industry as them. This can help in reducing the total costs associated with technology transfer and increase industry convergence. Although GreenXchange is not active anymore but we still cannot overlook the efforts taken by Nike and the supportive companies.

Companies that do not follow Green Business Methods

Here's a list of few companies that do not follow green practice in their operations:

- **Peabody Energy**

Peabody Energy is a coal company. Their Environmental practices are minimal just like their current profits. They have made the headlines a number of times for their non – green practices. This has led to a considerable amount of downfall in their goodwill. However on recent basis, the 136 year old company has improvised on their shortfall in green methods and is slowly rising up.

- **ConAgra Foods**

The famous food company was charged due to violation of clean water act in 2006. The Oregon Department of Environmental quality had fined ConAgra Foods for its frozen fruit and vegetable processing plant in Hermiston. The plant violated the permit by exceeding the limit for disposal of nitrate and ended up releasing high amounts of nitrate.

These companies are just examples of big names gone small due to zero/less green practice or violation of eco - friendly acts and regulations.

Let's take a look at a Comparison between a Green Company and Non – Green Company

Basis	Green Company	Non – Green Company
Name and Reputation	A green company gets a good name for the good deeds they follow.	Termed as an unethical company.
Purpose	To maximize profits as well as serve the society	To maximize profits.
Economical	Reusable and recyclable products reduce lot if unwanted expenditure for the firm	Standard expenditure and ever rising.
Employee Morale	Employees feel satisfied working in a clean environment and using eco – friendly stationers.	High usage of plastic. Many employees have to work in areas of high levels of smoke and sound.
Futuristic	With both, good business performance and accomplishing social responsibilities, a green company has a possibility of lasting pretty long and is respected for its dos. Profits are nothing but numbers in front of conserving the environment.	The life of the business is only dependent on profits. It has no other factor apart from high sales that will support the reason for its existence.
Customer Base	Eco conscious customers who are huge in number and have brand loyalty towards green companies. Being a green company not only means to the nature but boosts sales for the business with its unique eco – friendly products.	Customers who do not really consider environment that important and choose brand over all other factors. But the business may lose them too as consumers must encourage the use of eco - friendly products.

Conclusion

It seems to be pretty clear that green practice is more important than green notes. Our planet has witnessed absurd levels of damage caused to all types of natural organisms and elements due to practices which are unfriendly to nature. Businesses have not realized how big a role they play in the protection of our environment. A rise in Green Companies will benefit the environment in all possible ways, be it pollution towards air, land, water or sound. The start of everything good starts with something good.

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