

Introduction

Sustainability can be a confounding topic and not everyone has the passion to wade into all the literature to learn about it. Yet virtually everyone is willing to take steps towards sustainability if someone would just explain, in clear and understandable language, what can be done. The explosive growth in the US green building industry, for example, was fuelled largely by the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) system of checklists that made it easy for architects, developers and facilities managers to make more sustainable choices. This book does for every organization what LEED did for the building industry: it translates the abstract concepts of sustainability into tangible actions.

This book explains what organizations (businesses, governmental agencies and non-profit organizations) can do to move towards sustainability. It can be used by people new to sustainability to learn about the field. It can also be helpful for those who have been pursuing sustainability for some time but who have reached a plateau, wondering what else they can do.

This book is different from the many other excellent sustainability books that have been written, for the following reasons:

- First, we don't just talk about the problems; we give tangible examples of what organizations can do and have done.
- Second, we don't advocate any one framework; instead we help you determine which frameworks might be most useful to you and list resources so that you can learn more.
- Third, we embed self-assessments in each chapter so that you can track your progress.
- Last, and perhaps most important, we have organized the book in the way organizations are structured; this allows each reader to focus on the content that will be most relevant and provides a way of assigning organizational accountability to elements of sustainability.

Our emphasis throughout is to make sustainability understandable to the layperson. For the sustainability movement to continue, we can't rely on the 'early adopters' and the zealous minority; we must find a way to make sustainable practices easy for everyone to do. Fortunately, once people understand sustainability, they are often surprised to find how many untapped sustainable practices make good bottom-line business sense now. If all

organizations take a small first step forward, we can make a huge difference. And once people begin down the path of sustainability, they usually keep going. The health of our economy, our communities and our environment all hinge on our ability to make sustainable practices mainstream. This book can help make that happen.

We offer SCORE as a stand-alone service where we provide a detailed report, benchmarking your performance against others who have taken the assessment. We have been contacted by different clients, trade associations and others to create additional sector-specific assessments. Currently we are in discussion with or developing these for such industries as construction, eco-tourism, waste management and spas.

If you would like to conduct SCORE in your organization, please see our website for licensed SCORE assessors in your area (www.axisperformance.com). While any organization can use the paper-and-pencil version of the assessment in this book for self-improvement, only licensed assessors have the training and the rights to conduct SCORE as a service.

HOW THIS BOOK IS STRUCTURED

Following an overview chapter on sustainability, Chapters 2 to 12 are organized by major sectors (services, manufacturing and government) and common organizational functions or departments (top management, human resources, purchasing, etc.). Each of these chapters contains three sections:

- 1 What you should know about sustainability – This section explains, from the point of view of the sector or function, why sustainability is important and how it affects you. You'll understand how sustainability relates to your role in the organization.
- 2 Strategies you can use – As with any new field, terms, frameworks and buzzwords are proliferating. Here you are provided with a honed list of ones that will be most useful to you. Think of this section as a customized encyclopaedia of methods and tools used by people pursuing sustainability, complete with case examples. We also give relevant resources, listed roughly in order of usefulness, to help you learn more. This section will help you identify concrete actions you can take.
- 3 Self-assessment – Each chapter ends with a SCORE (Sustainability Competency & Opportunity Rating & Evaluation) self-assessment that can help you identify your strengths and areas for improvement. These self-assessments were developed in collaboration with the International Sustainable Development Foundation and the Zero Waste Alliance. They can be combined to provide you with an overall picture of your organization's sustainability performance. Each practice listed in the assessment benchmarks three levels of performance so that you can identify the low-hanging fruit

to do early but also see what will be necessary in the long term to become fully sustainable. Instructions on how to use the assessments and how to interpret your score are given with the first SCORE assessment (pages 33–36).

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

Certainly, this book can be read cover to cover to get an overview of the issues and strategies associated with sustainability, but for some that might feel like a drink from a fire hose. People new to sustainability might find it most useful to read the ‘What you should know about sustainability’ sections, then pick one issue and explore the handful of tools we provide in the ‘Strategies you can use’ section. People well versed in sustainability may want to go directly to the SCORE self-assessments to identify areas for improvement and then seek out the appropriate strategies.

Based on your current understanding of sustainability, the position you hold and the sector in which you work, certain chapters will be more relevant than others. Chapter 1, on sustainability as a strategic issue, will be helpful for anyone not already familiar with sustainability concepts. Since every organization has a service and office component, we recommend that all readers, regardless of their industrial sector, read Chapter 3 (on services). People in government or manufacturing will also want to read their respective sector chapters. Then read the chapter or chapters related to functions you perform. Obviously there are many more position titles than the ones represented in this book, so choose chapters most relevant to the work you do. For example, an office manager may maintain the office, purchase supplies and manage the safety programme.

Table I.1 represents our advice for what to read. A ● indicates the primary chapter related to the position. A ○ indicates other chapters that would be helpful.

Think of this as a sustainability idea book. Read a chapter, find something worth pursuing, implement that idea, and then return to the book to uncover another opportunity.

HOW TO USE THE SELF-ASSESSMENTS

The SCORE (Sustainability Competency & Opportunity Rating & Evaluation) self-assessments at the end of the chapters can be used in a variety of ways. If you are a lone voice for sustainability in your organization, the assessment related to your function and sector should give you actions you can take within your existing span of control. If your organization is already well versed in sustainability and has been actively working towards it, these assessments can help you identify missing elements in your sustainability strategy. For people new to sustainability, these assessments can help clarify what sustainability means in their context.

Table I.1 Which chapters should you read?

Position	CHAPTER												
	1	2	3-5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
	Sustainability as Strategic Issue	Change Agent	Chapters by sector	Senior Management	Facilities	Human Resources	Purchasing	Information Technology	Environmental Affairs	Marketing/PR	Finance/Accounting		
Executive/Board member	●	○	● Services (and other sector if appropriate)	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Office manager	○		● Services		○ If you own your building, can influence lease, or are remodelling		○						
Plant manager	○		● Manufacturing		○		○		○				
Product/industrial designer, engineer	○		● Manufacturing		○		○		○				
Facilities manager, architect, developer	○		● Appropriate sector		●		○		○				
Human resources manager	●	○	● Services (and other sector if appropriate)	○		●	○					○	

Purchasing manager or people responsible for purchasing supplies	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Appropriate sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Environmental, health/safety, or pollution prevention professionals	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Appropriate sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing, sales or public relations	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Appropriate sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finance/stockholder relations/accountants	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> Appropriate sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Sustainability coordinator	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Services (and other sector if appropriate)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business school student	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Services (and other sector if appropriate)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Economist	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> All sectors, esp. government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizational or sustainability consultant	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Appropriate sector(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Of primary importance to position Useful but not essential to position

- Service organizations (for example, banks, restaurants, hotels, architects and most non-profits) will want to take the service sector assessment and then all the relevant functional ones (senior management, human resources, etc.).
- Manufacturing businesses will want to take both service and manufacturing sector assessments as well as all the functional ones.
- Governmental organizations (meaning policy-setting and enforcing agencies or departments at all levels of government, as opposed to public services such as utilities or public transport authorities) will want to take the service and government sector assessments and then all relevant functional ones.

Note that we now have more detailed sector assessments for some industries which do not fit logically into the structure of this book.

You can compile the results from all the paper-and-pencil assessments in the book to get a large-scale view of how far you have come and how much further you need to go.

While anyone may take this paper-and-pencil version of SCORE in the book, SCORE is also a stand-alone service. More sophisticated analyses are available, including the ability to benchmark your organization against others who have taken SCORE. AXIS Performance Advisors has licensed people to administer SCORE as a sustainability assessment and periodically offer training to help internal practitioners and external consultants get the most out of the assessment. These individuals will have access to more sector-specific assessments as they are developed. Please go to www.axisperformance.com to find people who are trained and licensed to use this assessment.

We ask any external consultants who want to use SCORE in their practice to please become licensed; they'll learn the subtleties of the tool, get listed as a certified SCORE assessor, get all the needed support files, have access to the benchmarking database, and get access to sector assessments that aren't in this book. They will also be able to participate in improving SCORE and receive updates as the tool evolves. Contact us to be added to a notification list for upcoming training (darcy@axisperformance.com).

These assessments are not intended to replace various scoring systems that are being developed around the world to evaluate organizational sustainability performance (for example, the Global Reporting Initiative, British Standard 8900, S-BAR, and AccountAbility 1000). Nor do they collectively define ultimate sustainability, as that is a global phenomenon, not one that can be achieved by any single organization. We prefer not to use this tool to compare organizations; rather, they are intended as an internal improvement tool to help organizations make decisions and move towards sustainability.

To keep our assessments simple and short, they often focus on process (have you done an energy audit in the last five years?) more than results (how much energy you saved). The scoring is tied to the degree to which you have institutionalized practices internally but also the degree to which you are influencing others. We want to thank the smart people at the

International Sustainable Development Foundation, the Zero Waste Alliance and our licensed SCORE assessors for their invaluable input into the design of this tool.

Extend the value of the book

Some people read this book to discover what sustainability involves, others use it to get ideas for projects they could undertake, but a third type of reader wants to take this even further. For example, Sustainable Dallas formed a Book Study Group and went through it chapter by chapter. You can pull people from your own organization together or from different organizations. You could organize a lunch speakers series around the chapter titles. Sustainable North Carolina and Sustainable Florida have adopted SCORE as their assessment method to help businesses all over the state. Please feel free to invite us to be part of your process if we can add value. We've done briefings on SCORE via webinar and offer licensing training via distance learning. Let us know how we can help you get the most out of our knowledge and connections.

DISCLAIMER TO OTHER SUSTAINABILITY EXPERTS

The field of sustainability is exploding and exciting practices are bubbling up all over the world. It was not possible to include every example, every country, every framework or every method. We've tried instead to choose examples that illustrate our points and give preference to ones that could easily be researched further (ie those that have been described in print or have web resources). So we apologize in advance to all the sustainability experts who may read this book and find their pet projects omitted. We welcome your feedback and suggestions in case we print an updated edition. And we thank you all for your commitment, creativity and willingness to collaborate. Together we are crafting a better future for us all.