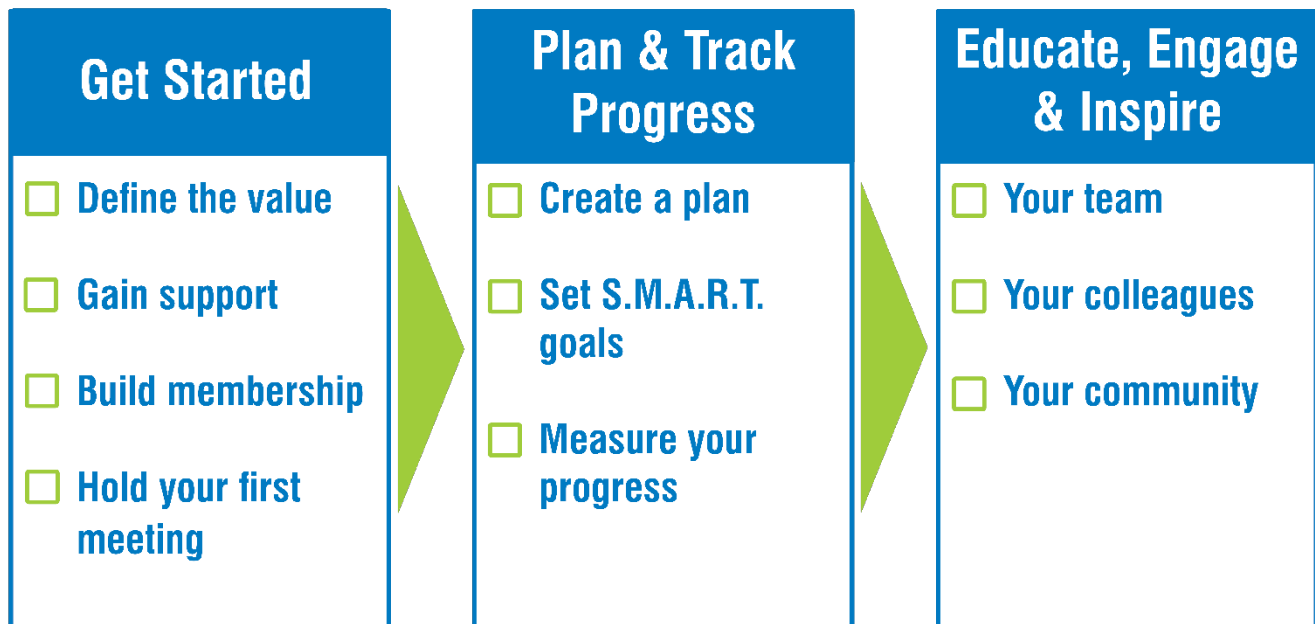




GREEN BUSINESS LEADERS

Green Team Guide

Green teams are instrumental in creating change within an organization. This guide contains the tips you need to set up and implement a successful green team at your workplace.



Get started

Define the value of the green team

Prepare a values statement to explain how and why a green team will benefit the organization and employees. Include examples such as:

- Cost savings associated with waste, energy, transportation and water.
- Attracting and retaining talent and increasing employee morale and satisfaction.
- Meeting or exceeding client or customer expectations for environmental stewardship.
- Meeting or exceeding regulatory compliance standards.
- Aligning practices with organization's values.

Gain support

Be clear about how much time is needed, whether the time will be voluntary or paid, and identify areas where management can support. Even if members volunteer, a team can accomplish no-cost, easy actions like setting up basic recycling and educating coworkers about behaviors that save energy or resources.

Build green team membership

Recruit team members from all levels and departments of your organization: operations, procurement, management, and office administrators. Look for team members who:

- Can regularly attend meetings.
- Will take on project work responsibilities.
- Can serve as an informational resource for others in the organization.
- Are enthusiastic about the team's mission.

Hold your first meeting

Writing a mission statement is a great first project for new green team members. In addition to crafting the statement, at the first meeting you might discuss:

- The team's purpose, allowing each member to explain why they joined the team, what they bring to the team, and what they hope the team will accomplish.
- How the team will make decisions together and if roles will be defined.
- Potential projects and priorities.

Plan to track progress

Create a plan

A clear, simple plan is a roadmap for your green team. Include a method to collect baseline information and track your progress on things like energy and water use, transportation modes and garbage generation.

Set S.M.A.R.T. goals

Goals must be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime bound.

- **Define your focus areas.** Options include waste prevention, recycling, composting, water, energy, community engagement, transportation and purchasing.
- **Develop a list of goals and desired outcomes.** Combine similar or overlapping goals.
- Ask each member to **vote for their top choices.**
- **Prioritize goals** with the most votes and save others for the next round of goal setting.

**Example goal:
Update all track
and spot lighting to
LEDs in the next
two years.**

Measure your progress

Measuring the success of your goals is important. Track your progress regularly and collect data to share with management, educate and engage employees, and evaluate what is and is not working.

Engage, educate and inspire

Your team

You likely have some great ideas for engaging your team, but here are a few to get you started:

- **Rotate leadership.** Invite every member to lead the team, a meeting or a project.
- **Form sub-committees.** These could be organized by areas of improvement such as energy, waste, paper use, water use, stormwater management and hazardous waste.
- **Meet regularly.** Determine an appropriate frequency and be consistent.

- **Appreciation.** Recognize members for their work or ask management how to recognize the team or an individual's accomplishments.
- **Paid time.** If possible, the green team's activities should be done on paid work time and during the workday. Communicate the cost savings, marketing benefits and other assets of your team's effort.
- **Peer-to-peer networking.** Meet with other organizations' green teams to brainstorm and problem-solve.
- **Keep learning.** Share relevant webinars, podcasts, articles, or other sustainability events to learn about current news and trends. Take time to learn about sustainable justice and environmental justice, including the systemic inequalities that harm historically excluded communities.
- **Prioritize self-care and rest.** Working on sustainability initiatives can be draining due to slow progress, lack of resources or other common green team challenges.
- **Get outside.** Spending time outdoors on team building activities or scheduling meetings at outdoor venues can help your team reset, recharge and get a break from screen time.
- **Reprioritize as needed.** When internal or external events impact your workplace's day-to-day operations, take time to assess your current green team initiatives and plans. Be okay with taking a step back before moving forward.
- **Use multiple communication channels.** Consider using Teams or Slack channels, company intranet, social media groups or email to communicate when the topic doesn't require a virtual or in-person meeting.

Your coworkers

Engaging and energizing staff around green team initiatives is critical to your team's success. Here are some ideas to engage your coworkers:

- Give short updates **at staff meetings** to discuss latest projects, goals, and accomplishments.
- Post updates, reports, resources and helpful tips on an **employee website, blog or staff bulletin board.**
- Add a regular section for green team updates to your **employee newsletter.**
- Create a space for **employee feedback;** they will have good ideas too.
- Organize an informal **social event** like a virtual happy hour or game night to have fun and get to know your team members.
- **Volunteer** at a community event or with a local non-profit. Outdoor volunteer activities can offer the combined benefits of supporting your community and

team building, while also providing space for employees to safely distance as needed.

- **Step up your virtual presentations and events.** Screen time can be draining and incorporating activities like [external polls](#), [word cloud builders](#) and [collaborative whiteboards](#) to virtual meetings can offer engagement opportunities for staff without using their cameras or microphones.
- **Recognize burnout** and encourage staff to prioritize their mental health and wellness, even if that means stepping away from green team efforts to focus on their well-being.

Your community

Telling your customers about your sustainable practices can set you apart from the crowd. There are many ways to share your commitment to sustainability:

- Add a Sustainability or Green Practices section to your **company website** to share your commitment to sustainability with your customers.
- **Sustainability reports** that range from informal quarterly achievements to more formal annual reports.
- Highlight your sustainability efforts on your **social media channels**.
- **Green awards and certifications** awarded by a third-party entity are a great way to demonstrate your achievements to customers and industry peers.

Questions? Connect with us and get started today!

