

# CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

## A Note From Dave

Because we serve both executive and recruiting communities, we are often a conduit for information between the two. Our survey work, research and daily contact with our members enables us to provide market intelligence that helps leaders on both sides do their jobs better.



We also attend a lot of senior executive conferences, forums, meetings and seminars that bring added perspective and you will often see us mention specific events in our newsletters. For example, just this year we were on-site at events conducted by Kennedy Information, ERE, the MRI Network, Argyle's CEO Leadership Forum, [Onrec.com](http://Onrec.com), the Association of Executive Search Consultants, the International Association for Corporate & Professional Recruitment, and the prestigious HSM World Innovation Forum and Global Business Forum.

ExecuNet staffers are now invited to participate in so many key thought-leader events we thought it was time to dedicate regular space in *CareerSmart Advisor* to convey the key learnings to you. We've added "Leadership Briefing," where we will share the top takeaways from these events, and in this issue you'll read what global financial leaders discussed at HSM's World Finance and Economy Summit on October 16. ExecuNet executive editor and vice president Lauryn Franzoni and our president and chief economist Mark Anderson were invited by HSM to attend this forum that included Alan Greenspan, Martin Feldstein, Barton Biggs and Jeremy Siegel to gather critical insight on the current market conditions. On page 8, Lauryn provides a report prepared exclusively for our members including comments made in private interviews she conducted on your behalf.

Sincerely,



Dave Opton  
ExecuNet Founder & CEO  
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## Being Green: Helping the Environment, Your Company and Your Career

By Marji McClure

**P**ut simply, the two main goals of every executive are to make money and save money. As a result, executives continually seek to develop and implement initiatives that can accomplish both. In recent years and months, green initiatives are emerging as the types of programs organizations need to meet their financial goals. However, they're also emerging as much more — programs that can sustain businesses and enhance careers in ways that reach beyond the bottom line.

"We feel that we are at the early stages of the environmental movement. While it has certainly been around in various forms for many years, it is just now getting the global support and exposure it should," says Hilary Kusel, executive director of Florida-based **Green Business Alliance**. "That being said, 'Going Green' is here to stay. This is not a fad. Making changes at home and in the office to lead a more sustainable life is at the heart of this movement. It is important for an executive to become a green initiative champion, not only for his/her career, but also for the organization and the world in which we live. It is a way in which an executive can demonstrate through actions that he/she has the ability to affect leading-edge change for a most critical cause."

### Sustainability Creates New Buzz

Oftentimes, organizations need the promise of financial gain before committing to any new initiative. However, these green initiatives are different because, while financial results are important, they're truly not the only aspect driving the attention in this area.

"Right now, there are high cost savings in energy and waste. If you substituted the word 'efficient' for 'green,' you would find the same benefits," says Kevin Wilhelm, CEO of Seattle-based Sustainable Business Consulting. "Additionally, consumers and stakeholders (financial institutions, insurance companies, suppliers and vendors) are all demanding action and sustainability policies." So there is certainly plenty of external pressure, in addition to internal motivation, for

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organizations to respond. “You have to start looking at everything you’re doing as a company and how it affects other systems,” Paul Linzmeyer, general partner of Wisconsin-based ISO Inc., which helps companies get their green initiatives on track.

According to a recent survey conducted by public relations/investor relations firm Makovsky + Company, 80 percent of the senior executive respondents said they were personally concerned about the threat of climate change for future generations. That fact didn’t surprise Robbin Goodman, executive VP and partner at Makovsky. “Rather it was the gap between their concerns and the actions of their companies that was surprising, and particularly because so many (73 percent) believe that corporate action can help make businesses more competitive as well as effect change on the environment,” she says.

### What You Can Do: Beyond the Lights

When executives think about green initiatives, they typically think about some of the smaller steps they can take, such as those connected to their buildings — energy-efficient lighting and heating/cooling systems and the presence of recycling bins throughout the offices.

“A carbon footprint is a great first place to start,” says Wilhelm. “Before you jump down a list of initiatives, it’s important to first measure where all your impacts are and then understand which actions will have the most benefit environmentally, socially, and of course, financially.”

For instance, Berkeley, Calif.-based SightSpeed has a web-based video chat service that helps employees cut down on travel. CEO Peter Csathy and Eric Quanstrom, SightSpeed’s VP of marketing, work from their home offices in the San Diego area (hundreds of miles from company headquarters) and 25 percent of the company’s employees work remotely. Some use the technology to work from home a few days a week.

Annie Howell is SVP, communications and public affairs at Planet Green, Discovery Communications’ global cross-platform initiative and channel that is

### Green Success Stories — Green Benefits to the Bottom Line

- Global cleaning products company maximized natural lighting, installed occupancy sensors and enabled employees to control heating and cooling at their work stations. The ROI: Saved nearly \$100,000 a year.
- Fortune 500 global technology company gave employees the option to telecommute from home. The ROI: Saved \$67.8 million in real estate costs in just one year; reduced 29,000 tons of CO2 emissions; and increased worker productivity by 34 percent.
- Healthcare company recycled more than 6,000 tons of paper, plastic, glass and aluminum waste. The ROI: Saved more than \$300,000 in disposal costs and diverted more than 18,000 cubic yards from landfills.

*Source: Sustainable Business Consulting*

focused entirely on being green. She notes that Discovery supports the green initiative throughout its offices, with water-efficient plumbing, bamboo flooring and a newly opened all-green daycare center as just a few examples. “It’s incredibly important that companies are not hypocritical,” Howell says. “It’s hard to advocate a brand if you don’t believe it yourself.”

### Leading the Cause

Like most company-wide initiatives, green programs need strong senior management support; they need a C-level executive to believe in their viability and lead the cause. Samantha Taylor, founder of Reputation Dynamics, says that the “executive needs to be the ‘champion’ within the organization and make it a top-line priority for the CEO agenda. He/she needs to align with core departments who can establish and implement an effective green initiative program (such as technology, HR, marketing and operations). The executive needs to present and illustrate the need for greening — bring the outside realities into the business and show how it starts there.”

“Executives would do best to start by

benchmarking companies that they see as leaders in this area — there’s no need to re-invent the wheel — and leverage the great work that has already been done,” says John Mooney, VP, global finance for Haworth Inc., a Michigan-based designer and manufacturer of office furniture and organic workspaces. Mooney leads the company’s global sustainability team. “By benchmarking and then modifying elements to the areas an organization feels is most important to them, the efforts can be aligned around achieving these objectives more effectively,” adds Mooney.

When the plan is in place, the next step is to receive buy-in from members of the team (from senior-level managers to direct reports).

### Workplace Benefits Beyond the Environment

Green initiatives can help companies protect the environment and provide a boost to bottom lines; such programs also help organizations solve other familiar workplace issues, such as employee recruitment and retention.

International design firm SSOE Inc. has had more success finding highly

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### Expert Resources:

- Peter Csathy, SightSpeed ([SightSpeed.com](http://SightSpeed.com))
- Robbin Goodman, Makovsky + Company ([Makovsky.com](http://Makovsky.com))
- Annie Howell, Discovery Communications ([Discovery.com](http://Discovery.com))
- Hilary Kusel, Green Business Alliance ([GreenBusinessAlliance.com](http://GreenBusinessAlliance.com))
- Paul Linzmeyer, ISO Inc. ([ISO2050.com](http://ISO2050.com))
- Catherine Malicki, SSOE Inc. ([SSOE.com](http://SSOE.com))
- John Mooney, Haworth Inc. ([Haworth.com](http://Haworth.com))
- Ahmed Rahim, Numi Organic Tea ([NumiTea.com](http://NumiTea.com))
- Samantha Taylor, Reputation Dynamics ([Reputation-Dynamics.com](http://Reputation-Dynamics.com))
- Kevin Wilhelm, Sustainable Business Consulting ([SustainableBizConsulting.com](http://SustainableBizConsulting.com))
- Tim Wright, Wright Results Inc. ([WrightResults.com](http://WrightResults.com))

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talented architects and engineers to hire because of the company's green initiatives. "Being a part of the 'sustainable movement' has helped us attract new employees, hiring nearly 250 in the previous 12 months," says Catherine Malicki, VP, director of marketing. "More importantly, it has also helped us have a 95 percent retention rate."

Many companies discover such initiatives really do help improve retention in a way that no other initiative can. Mooney says that one team began an "e-commitment contest" in which employees received points for efforts such as carpooling, and winners would receive small prizes. "But it was the genesis of the effort that was notable — the self-directed activities — that clearly evidenced the boost in morale, and that ultimately fosters longer-term loyalty around a company," adds Mooney. "If the employees feel tightly connected to the aspirations of the company, then you truly have created a powerful force, both for the company and the individual."

Success happens when such programs become part of the company culture. "At SightSpeed, thinking and acting green permeate the company," says Csathy. "It's so deeply ingrained, we don't even think about it."

Taylor suggests making green initiatives a part of employee training and development. "It is important for an organization to ask employees what they care about and would like the company to advocate for them on their behalf," says Taylor. "Otherwise the company is missing out on an opportunity. A happy employee leads to a healthy employee and that leads to a company having the reputation as a great place to work."

Many career coaches advise executives, especially those in transition, to find what they love to do — and do it. For many, working for a "green" company can truly be the answer. It was for Howell, who has worked for Discovery for almost 10 years. She says that her interest in green causes began with the birth of her first child 15 years ago. Working at Discovery has been a rewarding career move. "You tell people where you work

### Can You Be a Green Champion?

While many executive-level positions require specific qualifications and skill sets, leadership positions for green initiatives don't yet demand particular industry or job function experience.

Hilary Kusel, executive director of the [Green Business Alliance](#), notes that green champions don't need to have specific skills, or even possess an environmental background. "The important role of the green champion is to be outspoken with employees as to the benefits that can be realized by making some changes," she says. Executives who take ownership of creating such initiatives must truly believe in what they are about to do. They can't expect others to share that enthusiasm if they don't exude it themselves.

"They just need to be passionate about this. It isn't rocket science," says Kevin Wilhelm, CEO of Sustainable Business Consulting. "The facilities and marketing people understand this; the finance people will want to keep tabs on the numbers. But for the most part, the green champion just needs to be a leader, someone who can pull together the right people to tackle all the various issues and then be able to communicate it both to the executives and front-line employees."

If you have the motivation, desire and ability to motivate others, now could be the time to consider a transition in this area. "Right now, companies are looking for people with these skills and there is a shortage of people who really understand this work. If someone can get into it in the next year or two, they'll have an advantage," says Wilhelm. "If they wait four to five years, the market will be flooded with these types of people, and they will actually stand out as not having this experience."

Being able to show strong examples of how you have championed successful green initiatives will be a strong asset, especially as such programs gain favor in organizations in a variety of industry sectors. "Assuming future opportunities (and hiring boards) value environmental commitment, successfully championing an initiative (and generating substantial documentation) can have definite impact," says Tim Wright, a Texas-based career coach and president of Wright Results Inc.

and you're proud to say it," says Howell.

Keep in mind that your green efforts also go beyond your company. Your customers, vendors and other constituents are also affected. Ahmed Rahim, CEO and co-founder of Numi Organic Tea, notes how being "green" truly drives all aspects of his business. "It is about a lifestyle and choice to make a difference in how and what we do in the business community, especially as it relates to the products and materials purchased to produce the thousands of products sold every year," says Rahim. "It is a chain affect that touches everyone who comes into contact with this product."

### Providing Some Career Stability

For executives who are looking for a growth area, one in which jobs have the potential to be plentiful in years to come, the green arena may be exactly what they are looking for. "This [concept] is the new cutting edge and every company I've worked with is looking for people internally who 'get' this and understand it," says Wilhelm. "Granted, it will likely add

tasks in the short term, but becoming someone who's working on this is a great way to position yourself for advancement and insulate yourself from potential downsizing with all the market volatility that currently exists."

If you can gain expertise in this area when working in one industry, those skills will most likely be transferable to any other industry in which you transition in the future. "This is a huge growth sector across the board," says Howell.

Perhaps the most positive thing to remember is that while green initiatives could translate into a long-lasting and successful career for you, they can also help ensure an equally productive and healthy environment that will remain stable and sustained for many years. Leading green programs could be among the most important and rewarding tasks executives accomplish. "We're getting ourselves out of this doomsday scenario," says Linzmeyer. "American business has a lot of great leaders. We need to get back this can-do spirit. We can make these changes. It's in our own best interest." ■