

# THE GREEN BUSINESS

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## Letter

THE HANDS-ON JOURNAL FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY  
CONSCIOUS COMPANIES

## GREEN CUISINE

### *Company Restaurants' Growing Appetites for Sustainable Foods*

Company cafeterias and restaurants have not, to date, been a hotbed of environmental activity. Most companies, it seems, still struggle with the basics: reducing or eliminating disposable serviceware, recycling bottles and cans, perhaps managing a little food-scrap composting. A few companies have made admirable strides in waste reduction, energy and water conservation, and other efficiency measures.

But what about the food? It represents, arguably, cafeterias' and restaurants' biggest environmental footprint, when you consider the petrochemical, water, and energy inputs of conventional agriculture; the groundwater contamination and worker health and safety impacts of most modern farming; the energy used for

food processing; and the vast distances food typically travels to reach its ultimate consumer — variously quoted at between 1,300 and 2,000 miles from farm to fork.

Reducing that impact isn't easy, though a small but growing number of companies and foodservice vendors are figuring out how.

The greening of foodservice has been in process for some time in colleges and universities, where young, idealistic consumers have demanded foods that align with their environmental, political, and social interests. At Colorado College's campus cafeteria, for example, 80% of the food served is made with 100% certified organic ingredients and is free of additives, antibiotics, hormones, and preservatives.

Similar stories are coming from corporate campuses, too, including those of Addidas, Amgen, Cisco, Google, Intel, Nike, and Nordstrom. Many of these are clustered in California and the Pacific Northwest, where groups like the Food Alliance have been working actively with foodservice vendors like Aramark, Bon Appetit, Guckenheimer, and Sodexo to help them manage the change.

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**Pitching In** United Technologies Corp. has established a new employee volunteer effort called "Team Green" **to support environmental programs locally and regionally** and to complement its Sustainable Cities initiative. Team Green will hold activities throughout the year in various locations to benefit nonprofit organizations.

The first Team Green project took place earlier this month at a Habitat for Humanity site in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. More than 20 employees from UTC's corporate headquarters and divisions performed various interior construction jobs for the project.

In October, UTC launched its Sustainable Cities initiative supporting the development and use of green-building practices in urban areas and creating new education programs. UTC awarded \$350,000 in grants last year to national and Connecticut programs, and plans to increase that to \$500,000 this year.

### Beyond Recycled Paper

With the launch of its 2005 "Green Book" catalog, Office Depot is banking that its business customers will be **placing many more orders for environmentally preferable products** in the new year.

Sent to nearly 40,000 organizations, the Green Book contains roughly 2,500 environmentally preferable products — an 84% increase over last year's catalog — including paper, pens, energy-efficient computer displays, printers and light bulbs, toner cartridges, biodegradable packing materials and cleaning supplies. These products are billed as equal in

performance to standard items, but save raw materials, conserve energy, or reduce or prevent the emissions of toxic chemicals.

The Green Book provides detailed information on the environmental benefits of products, offers Top-10 Tips for greening the work environment, and cross references these tips to specific case studies, products, and short articles throughout the catalog. The company hopes these extra features will provide customers with tangible examples, identifying products that are likely to generate the greatest environmental benefits for the buyer.

During the first few months of 2004, Office Depot says it was able to help its customers transition nearly \$1 million of their office supply spending to more environmentally preferable products.

To obtain a copy, go to [www.community.officedepot.com/gb.asp](http://www.community.officedepot.com/gb.asp).

**Pedal Pushers** In a nation with more bicycles than people, two Dutch entrepreneurs **are selling the concept of a company bike**, as an alternative to the much more expensive company car that clogs up roads and cities, report Reuters.

Although most Dutch citizens own a bike, very few in the big cities have ever ridden one that is comfortable, safe, and never gets a puncture, the duo reckoned.

Some 80,000 bicycles are stolen every year in the capital Amsterdam alone, according to the national Cycling Union, which explains why most people rarely fork out more than 50 euros on a rusty third-hand bike with no lights and a creaking chain.

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**Joel Makower, Editor**

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## Survey Takes the Temperature of CSR, Finds Warming Trend

**A** new survey by Business for Social Responsibility, in conjunction with the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, finds that executives rate more highly their organization's competitive advantage as a result of implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, including higher levels of confidence in CSR implementation, than do CSR managers and staff.

Two-thirds of executives agree or strongly agree (compared to 46% CSR managers and 48% of CSR staff) that CSR adds to their organizations' competitiveness contributions. Moreover, executives view CSR as well-integrated into their organization at more than double the rate of managers (50% vs. 24%), likely suggesting some critical "disconnects" around the perception and realities of CSR integration overall.

"These findings," says BSR, "raise questions about the nature and clarity of internal communication around CSR issues between those individuals confronting these issues 'on the ground' and those at the top."

Other findings:

- Contributions made by governments to the promotion of CSR are not seen as especially important by executives and managers; both groups show little interest in greater guidance from government.
- When it comes to seeking greater guidance from government on CSR

STATEMENT	EXECS	MGRS	STAFF
"My organization has achieved competitive advantages from its implementation of CSR."	67%	46%	48%
"My organization has done a good job of integrating CSR throughout all of its operations."	50	23	38
"Five years from now, CSR will be an even more important part of business than it is today."	95	82	93
"On its current path, CSR will make the crucial contributions necessary for the betterment of people and the environment."	67	68	74
	MNC	NGO	SME
"Most businesses have done a good job of integrating CSR into their core functions and activities."	15	5	10
"Markets provide clear incentives for companies to embrace CSR."	53	44	48

Source: Business for Social Responsibility, 2005. Percentages reflect numbers of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. MNC = multinational corporation; NGO = nongovernmental organization; SME = small/medium enterprise.

issues, nonprofits, and small-company respondents have similar desires to see a stronger role for public policy. Still, both groups, as well as large companies, are split in this sentiment, representing continued ambivalence to government intervention in this arena.

- All groups agree that CSR is not seen as especially transparent by stakeholders. Similarly, and at high levels, confidence is shared by all groups that they will see more requirements in support of greater accountability measures in the form of law.

Among the encouraging results, says BSR, is that optimism for the future role of CSR runs high. The data suggest the

"idea" that "CSR is an important part of business" is passing or has already passed the tipping point. Five years from now, all respondents say that CSR will be an even more important part of business practice than it is today. However, embedding CSR deeper into business behavior and practice is what is required.

Says BSR: "There is a long way to go before more people can confidently assert that the trajectory of CSR will indeed serve people, planet, and business in the ways that each requires and deserves."

For a summary of the results, go to [www.bsr.org](http://www.bsr.org).

In the flat country with over 16 million inhabitants where one bicycle is stolen every minute, Pegasus charges firms 349 euros (\$467.20) a year per employee for hassle-free cycling.

Just like a company car,

customers start off with a new bicycle and receive regular service. When the bike breaks down, Pegasus repairs it on the spot or delivers a replacement.

The Dutch government offers tax benefits to citizens who

use a bicycle to travel to work, and the nation clocks up 13 billion cycling km (8.13 billion miles) every year.

**Taking the Plunge** Recognizing that hot-water washing

represents a significant part of its detergents' environmental footprint, and its customers costs, Procter & Gamble has **specifically formulated a laundry detergent for cleaning in cold water.**

The company identified high energy costs as a major concern for consumers. The company says that for a family that washes seven loads a week in warm water, switching to cold water can save up to \$63 a year.

As part of a PR blitz, P&G is working with the Alliance to Save Energy to issue a "Cold-Water Challenge," urging consumers to wash their laundry in cold water to save money and energy. The challenge "dares" consumers to test for themselves how they can achieve deep cleaning in all their laundry loads using cool temperatures. P&G also is donating \$100,000 to the National Fuel Funds Network, which assists state and local groups helping low-income families pay their energy bills.

More information: [www.TideColdwater.com](http://www.TideColdwater.com).

**Good Sports** The Third Global Forum for Sports and Environment, or G-ForSE, organized by UNEP and the Global Sports Alliance, whose members produce 60% of the soccer balls used around the world, unanimously endorsed a declaration **calling for environmental concerns to be fully taken into account** in their industry.

Participants agreed to:

- raise the importance of sustainable development and the environment in our work principles;
- include the environment as

a key factor in our non-financial reporting;

- reduce and improve the use of water and energy during the production of sporting goods;
- introduce cleaner technology, reduce the amount of toxic and chemical waste produced and other pollutants in our production facilities;
- raise environmental awareness and action among company workers;
- promote and sponsor children and youth activities linking good health, sport and environment; and
- participate in and support initiatives that seek to promote the linkages between sport and the environment including with athletes."

**Information Overload** British investors are confused by the **proliferation of products that measure the environmental impact of business** and lack confidence in the sector, according to a report by the U.K.'s Environment Agency. It said greater transparency and more quantitative research methods were needed to improve the assessment of the environmental performance of companies.

The report analyzed how companies performed across a range of ratings and found little comparability between the different products.

The range of organizations providing information includes ratings agencies, investment funds and indices such as FTSE4Good and the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. While some, such as Trucost, measure actual environmental performance, others such as rating agency SERM, are concerned with issues that create

financial and reputational risks.

Some groups include environmental factors in their analysis but may be more concerned with corporate governance or social issues. There is also a wide difference in the depth of coverage, with Eiris, the Ethical Investment Research Service, covering 2,700 companies and Business in the Environment covering only 176.

### The Cutting Edge Sun

**Microsystems?** SolarPC ([www.solarpc.com](http://www.solarpc.com)), which offers a line of small, quiet, aluminum-cased notebook computers operating non solar power, claims that if its computers were the standard in the U.S., we would annually save more than 138 million barrels of imported oil, 25 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, and more than 100 tons of waste. . . . **Breakfast of Eco-Champions:** A start-up nonprofit, Organic Athlete ([www.organicathlete.org](http://www.organicathlete.org)), aims to "Become a leader in promoting healthful, plant-based, and ecologically responsible lifestyles." . . . **Unreal Estate:** Texas billionaire Ed Bass, who owns Biosphere 2, has put the glass terrarium up for sale. The closed, 57-hectare ecological site north of Tucson, Ariz., contained miniatures of Earth's rainforest, ocean, desert, and other environmental features. Oxygen and other life-support systems are not included. . . . **Landfills 'o Fun!** In a new board game, "Industrial Waste" ([http://gamefest.com/product\\_info.php/products\\_id/386](http://gamefest.com/product_info.php/products_id/386)), players aged 12 to adult must compete "in a world where profit, innovation, and environment must be balanced to be considered successful." ❖

# FOODSERVICE

(Continued from page 1)

This is no small opportunity. According to SPINS, a consultant to the natural products industry, “business and industry” represents nearly a fourth of the \$100 billion annual noncommercial foodservice market (which includes schools, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, and the military, but not traditional fast-food or sit-down restaurants). And the organic portion of this market

is projected to grow rapidly, says SPINS, from about \$300 million today to just under \$2 billion by 2007. That doesn’t include several other types of foods that fall within the sustainable food-service menu (see box, below).

So, corporate cafeterias, dining rooms, conference facilities, and catering services represent a huge growth potential for moving to more sustainable food practices. And increasingly, the major food suppliers to the business sector are recognizing this opportunity.

Consider, for example, Bon

Appetit Management Co. ([www.bamco.com](http://www.bamco.com)), which has emerged as one of the leading food-service firms to embrace the sustainability ethic. The company has made sustainable food-service part of its operations, sometimes even when clients don’t necessarily specify it.

At the San Jose corporate headquarters of Cisco Systems, the Internet networking giant, Bon Appetit operates seven cafes, an executive briefing center, two conference centers, and assorted other catering operations — all told, providing some

## *Sustainable Foodservice, from Soup to Nuts*

There’s no standard definition of what makes foodservice “sustainable” or “green” — or any other term, for that matter. Here are some key components:

**1. Locally sourced foods.** A large number of foods are grown within 200 miles of most cities, many of which are suitable and appropriate for institutional foodservice use. At certain times of year, these foods can be delivered cheaper or fresher than their conventional counterparts. Other foods are *produced* locally, such as baked goods. Using such vendors can be tricky: not all can deliver with the reliability or in the forms required by a large foodservice operation. But some of the problems aren’t the farmers: foodservice firms need to be open and flexible about working with locals.

**2. Hormone- or antibiotic-free.** This applies to poultry, livestock, and dairy products. Most claims in this area are specific to synthetic hormones and to “subtherapeutic” antibiotics — that is, those used preventively, as opposed to cure a specific illness.

**3. Seasonal and sustainably harvested foods.** Reducing or eliminating the purchase of fresh produce from

around the world simply to have year-round availability is another worthy goal. Produce purchased locally will, by definition, be seasonal. This can be problematic, since customers may come to expect year-round availability of some foods. Also in this category are sustainably harvested fish — those that come from fisheries not being threatened with depletion from overfishing. Several lists of “good” fish exist, including a popular one from the Monterey Bay (Calif.) Aquarium’s “Seafood Watch” program ([www.mbayaq.org/cf/seafoodwatch.asp](http://www.mbayaq.org/cf/seafoodwatch.asp)), which produces pocket cards and other educational materials about which fish to eat, and which to avoid.

**4. Organic and other certification.** A number of helpful food-related standards exist. In the U.S. “organic” is now governed by federal law, but there are other useful certification labels (such as fair trade and shade-grown coffee), as well as certification organizations, such as the Food Alliance, which certifies farms on both environmental and social conditions. Several foodservice operators, mostly in the Pacific Northwest, use the Alliance’s standards to govern their own purchases.

**5. Reduced or zero-waste practices.** There are a myriad things foodservice

operations can do, including reducing or eliminating disposable serviceware. (One company does this by placing it far from the reusable serviceware, making it slightly inconvenient to access.) Recycling of boxes, bottles, cans, and containers, and donating or composting unused or waste food (as appropriate) are essential waste-reduction practices. Some firms donate unneeded kitchen equipment, dishes, pots and pans, and utensils to local shelters, soup kitchens, and the like.

**6. Energy- and water-efficiency practices.** As with most businesses, the opportunities are ripe, from energy- and water-efficient appliances to energy-efficient lighting to cleaning filters and coils to ensure that appliances work as efficiently as possible.

**7. Education.** Successful foodservice educate customers about what they are doing and why. Signage, table tents, menu notes, newsletters, and e-mail can be potent tools for helping customers understand the rationale behind changes being made in the name of sustainability. One firm offers a monthly “Lunch with the Chef,” where diners can talk directly with dining staff about sustainability and other issues. ♦

## FOODSERVICE

(Continued from page 5)

32,000 meals a week, according to Bridgeen Keys, a Bon Appetit district manager who oversees the Cisco operation.

At Cisco, the poultry is antibiotic- and hormone-free, the fish is sustainably harvested, and much of the produce is local. “We work with a company called American Fresh, a consortium of local farmers,” explains Keys. “They tell us on a weekly basis what they have, what’s fresh. We place our orders and they bring it to us. Often, in the height of the growing season, we can get a lot of things cheaper from them than from the big commercial suppliers.”

In the Cisco kitchens, recycling bins sit near the food-prep

areas, so cooks can toss empty bottles and cans directly into the trash. At many kitchens that recycle, everything goes into one trash bin, and recyclables are later picked out and sorted.

“It’s not rocket science, but it takes a commitment to doing it,” says Keys.

Sustainability can create limits, which can be problematic for some customers. Example: Bon Appetit hews to the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s “Seafood Watch” program, which warns against eating species harvested from sources that are overfished or are farmed in environmentally undesirable ways.

One red-listed item is farm-raised salmon, a staple in many restaurants. “Raising salmon in net pens releases fish waste into the water and can spread disease and parasites to wild salmon,”

says the aquarium’s Web site.

The alternative is “wild-caught” salmon, which isn’t always as plentiful as the farm-raised variety. “We offer wild salmon when we can get it,” says Keys. “And a lot of customers expect to see salmon 52 weeks a year. We explain it and a lot of people understand. But not everyone.”

### SPAGHETTI SAUCE BLUES

In some cases, bigger firms are partnering with smaller ones to offer sustainability services. That’s the case with Sodexo, which began its life as a spinoff of the Marriott hospitality giant. Sodexo has partnered with Wild Sage Foods, Inc. ([www.wildsagefood.com](http://www.wildsagefood.com)), based in Mill Valley, Calif., to offer “clean cuisine,” in the words of Wild Sage CEO Lauren Bell. Sodexo licenses Wild Sage’s “Herb ‘n Farm” brand at the aforementioned Colorado College dining facility, where the alternative foodservice offering was launched two years ago this month. Wild Sage provides training, design, marketing, procurement, and other services.

Bell’s experience shows some of the complexities of shifting to sustainable cooking at the institutional scale. Take spaghetti, for example. Conventional foodservice operations order large, 102-ounce cans of spaghetti sauce — pretty much heat and serve. For the organic kitchen, there’s no equivalent product: organic tomato sauce isn’t available in institutional-sized cans. “That means making things from scratch — and using a lot of cans,” says Bell. Another challenge is getting small, local vendors to go through Sodexo’s complex vendor-approval system, which can take months.

### LOW-HANGING FRUIT (AND VEGGIES)

Making the switch to more sustainable foodservice doesn’t

### Select Foodservice Resources

#### A Practical Guide to Understanding Organic

[www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/toolbox\\_gen.cfm?LinkAdvID=8474](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/toolbox_gen.cfm?LinkAdvID=8474)

#### Better Restaurant and Cafe Guide

[www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/tools\\_third.cfm?linkadvid=24529](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/tools_third.cfm?linkadvid=24529)

#### Chefs Collaborative

[www.greenbiz.com/reference/organizations\\_record.cfm?linkadvid=3377](http://www.greenbiz.com/reference/organizations_record.cfm?linkadvid=3377)

#### Choose Green Report: Rigid Quick Serve Food Packaging

[www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/toolbox\\_gen.cfm?LinkAdvID](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/toolbox_gen.cfm?LinkAdvID)

#### Don’t Throw That Food Away: Strategies for Record-Setting Waste Reduction

[www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports\\_third.cfm?linkadvid=4347](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports_third.cfm?linkadvid=4347)

#### Food Alliance

[www.greenbiz.com/reference/organizations\\_record.cfm?linkadvid=60866](http://www.greenbiz.com/reference/organizations_record.cfm?linkadvid=60866)

#### Food Production and Environmental Stewardship: Examples of How Food Companies Work with Growers

[www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports\\_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=3353](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=3353)

#### Green Food Claims: An International Survey

[www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports\\_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=53708](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=53708)

#### Green Plan for the Food Service Industry

[www.greenbiz.com/reference/webguide\\_record.cfm?linkadvid=31831](http://www.greenbiz.com/reference/webguide_record.cfm?linkadvid=31831)

#### Green Restaurant Association

[www.greenbiz.com/reference/organizations\\_record.cfm?linkadvid=3378](http://www.greenbiz.com/reference/organizations_record.cfm?linkadvid=3378)

## How Sustainable Food Systems Shrink Our Ecological Footprint

According to *Redefining Progress*, our global food system, with its resource-intensive production and distribution, “is using almost half the planet’s ecological capacity and is slowly degrading our natural resource base.” Sustainable food systems offer viable opportunities to shrink humanity’s food footprint to a size the Earth can support, says the group.

The following is adapted from RP’s “Agricultural Footprint Brief” titled “Eating Up the Earth.” Download at [www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports\\_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=60895](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/reports_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=60895).

There is nothing inevitable about unsustainable food systems. They are the product of past choices, social forces, and special interests. Alternatives abound for every dimension of the current food system. Making them a reality depends on overcoming special interests, providing recognition and financial support, and restructuring the current incentive system that subsidizes and encourages

unsustainable behavior.

The beauty of a sustainable food system is its ability to generate benefits in numerous areas: health, biodiversity, ecological restoration, energy savings, aesthetic values, and economic justice. None of these benefits alone may outweigh the apparent short-term gains of the current destructive system. But the sum of these benefits will make society far better off and help to avoid the trap of increasing production at the expense of people and the planet.

Shrinking our food Footprint also becomes a social feast. Support for sustainable food systems will let farmers become more than nameless raw material providers for a giant food manufacturing system. Sustainable agriculture gives a human face to food. We create relationships with the people who grow what we eat, as we work toward community food security and public education around our food supply. Other countries have started to recognize this opportunity. For

example, Germany is aiming to have at least 20% of its farms be organic by 2010. The government is allocating hundreds of millions of dollars to help farmers make the transition.

The United States is also exploring new models. For instance, “green payments” to farmers who follow sustainable practices could begin to level the playing field and lead to increased adoption of sustainable agriculture. Already, the U.S. Department of Agriculture uses incentive programs for environmental protection—and there is still vast opportunity for improvements on these schemes.

To put it simply: global sustainability depends on sustainable food systems. Our food system is one of the dominant pressures on the biosphere. It is also a testing ground for sustainable economies, offering powerful, much-needed lessons about how to operate a steady-state economy that maintains economic vitality, provides healthy and satisfying lives to people, and protects ecological assets. ❖

necessarily require waiting until your current vendor contract is up for renewal, though that’s an excellent time to bring it up, says Jennifer Hall, executive director of Chefs Collaborative, a network of more than 1,000 chefs and others who promote sustainable cuisine. But she also notes that the transition can be costly. “If you want to go organic and need the integrity of organic to be maintained, there are handling procedures,” she says. “Once an organic product touches a nonorganic product or surface, it’s been contaminated. All surfaces that you’re washing the produce on, cutting boards, have to be sanitized to a much more rigorous degree.” There’s more, says Hall. Local produce, because it’s picked ripe, may have a shorter shelf life,

requiring more frequent deliveries. However, some companies have stringent policies about the number and timing of vendor deliveries.

“The oddest things can become major barriers,” says Hall.

But there are also some simple ways to get started that don’t require an entire kitchen overhaul, such as basic kitchen recycling, purchasing antibiotic- and hormone-free poultry, and avoiding no-no seafood.

A little signage that tells the story can help gain support, though it’s important to keep it simple, avoiding long or technical explanations. “People only have a half hour. They’re not looking for a research project to choose their lunch,” says Hall.

Hall is among many that we talked to who believe that the

food-eating public is ready to embrace a changing food ethic. Another is Scott Exo.

“I think we can declare victory in the crusade to get consumers to really pay attention to the origins of food,” says Exo, executive director of the Portland-based Food Alliance, which has been seeing certification of farms meeting its standards rise by 35% to 40% annually in recent years. “They’re asking tough questions. [Mad cow] outbreak has heightened people’s awareness of food. *Fast Food Nation* has been on best-seller list for the better part of a year. Something is going on. These foodservice companies are very mindful of the fact that this trend is accelerating in the American public, and they’re responding.” ❖

## *Sustainability, v2.0*

MORE THAN A LITTLE DEBATE HAS taken place in recent months about the future of the environmental movement. It is dying, some say, from self-inflicted wounds resulting from its inability to construct a coherent and compelling public message.

"The environment," these critics point out, isn't just a bunch of "things" — old-growth trees, spotted owls, polluted rivers, denuded parks, and the like — but the interconnectedness of all things. As such, it is part of other "movements" — for racial and gender equity, for improved access to health care, for worker rights, human rights, civil rights, and more. Making those connections more clearly, the argument goes, will bring environmentalism back from the edge of death.

If that's the case, we can thank the Worldwatch Institute for taking some heroic measures.

The 2005 edition of Worldwatch's authoritative *State of the World* series ([www.worldwatch.org/pubs/sow/2005](http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/sow/2005)) focuses on the links between environmental and social ills and global security. "Poverty, disease, and environmental decline are the true axis of evil," it says. "Acts of terror and the dangerous reactions they provoke are symptomatic of underlying sources of global insecurity, including the perilous interplay among poverty, infectious disease, environmental degradation, and rising competition over oil and other resources."

Or, as I like to put it:  
Sustainability = Security.

THAT'S A MESSAGE THAT'S GOT legs, as they say in the ad biz. To be sure, it's far from feel-good or uplifting; it definitely needs a little punching up by the Madi-

son Ave. wizards. But it's a start.

Worldwatch doesn't overtly make the sustainability-security link in its book, but it's a subtext throughout. Some examples:

- **Continued dependence on oil** fuels geopolitical rivalries, civil wars, and human rights violations. The economic security of supplier and buyer nations is compromised by severe swings in price and supply. And oil's role in climate change poses grave threats to human safety.

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*A new rallying cry  
for environmentalists:  
Sustainability = Security.*

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- **Insufficient access to water** by nearly a half-billion people worldwide is a major cause of lost rural livelihoods, compelling farmers to abandon their fields and fueling conflicts.

- **Food security** is often undermined by factors such as water availability, land distribution, poverty, and environmental degradation. Among food security threats are climate change, the loss of plant and animal diversity, the rise of foodborne illnesses, and food bioterror.

- **HIV/AIDS** infects up to 46 million people, mostly in poorer countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, the disease is devastating education, weakening militaries, and undermining political stability.

- **A "youth bulge"** in more than 100 developing countries, in which 15- to 29-year-olds account for more than 40% of all adults, is threatening to be a destabi-

lizing force if their discontent pushes them into crime or to join insurgencies or extremist groups.

And we haven't yet mentioned the impacts of climate change.

HOW DOES THE PRIVATE SECTOR fit in? Somewhat disappointingly, Worldwatch doesn't really say, except for offering a sort of corporate Hippocratic oath: First, do no harm. Recent years has seen documentation of the complicity of multinational companies in exacerbating some of these problems: human rights abuses in oil-rich countries; the importing of "blood diamonds" whose profits support terrorist organizations; the misuse of financial services for arms purchases by terrorists, and more.

But Worldwatch doesn't offer much counsel about how typical firms can leverage their considerable economic clout to address these global security threats — a gaping hole in an otherwise excellent report. Clearly, there's much more needed on this topic.

BUT FOR NOW, LET'S PAUSE AND celebrate a small step forward toward a reinvigorated environmental ethic — one that focuses not just on the birds and the trees but on the larger systemic issues: the inequalities, injustices, and inefficiencies that lead to ecosystem disruption — and the plight of the people both at home and around the world who suffer most when these systems are out of whack.

It doesn't exactly sing, message-wise, but it's a good moral foundation on which to build a global movement. The catchy slogans will come.

— Joel Makower

# THE GREEN BUSINESS Letter

THE HANDS-ON JOURNAL FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS COMPANIES

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Nearly every choice you make can affect your company's environmental performance — and, potentially, its financial performance. Today, companies of all sizes and sectors are striving to integrate environmental thinking into strategic business decisions and create more environmentally sustainable businesses — while improving their financial performance, enhancing their reputations, and achieving competitive advantage in the marketplace.

The definition of “environmental responsibility” is changing. Among leadership companies, it now includes

- having a comprehensive view of one's operations, strategies, and facilities with an eye to cutting waste and emissions . . .
- maximizing the efficiency of all assets and resources . . .
- improving the quality of products and services . . .
- creating new market opportunities; and . . .
- enhancing reputation and relationships with customers, employees, communities, regulators, and other stakeholders.

Doing all this isn't easy. It requires new kinds of business relationships, both internally and externally, and new types of communication with trading partners up and down the supply chain. It takes innovative thinking to measure and report your company's environmental progress, and new and creative, effective partnerships with trading partners, government agencies, communities, customers, and others. **It requires timely, reliable information.**

That's where THE GREEN BUSINESS LETTER fits in. Each monthly issue brings the latest tools, strategies, research, and hands-on tips to help your company make environmental responsibility a source of business value and competitive advantage. From corporate strategy to facilities management, personnel policies to product development, we help you make good, green choices — every single day.



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