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# Gauging The Green:

Exploring the Perspectives, Practises and Potential for  
Environmental Stewardship in Saskatoon's Tourism Industry

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## Executive Summary

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With more than 924 million travelers exploring the planet each year, it is vital to manage the impact of that activity, ensuring that these destinations and the environment as a whole are not only preserved, but ideally enhanced as a result. The goal is environmental sustainability and for the Canadian tourism industry, this presents an important opportunity to differentiate themselves from other international destinations by demonstrating environmental leadership. Every participant in the industry has a role to play, from the visitor to the tour operator, from government to the tourism agencies. It is the intent of this initiative to discover the most effective methods by which Tourism Saskatoon can do their part; to increase awareness of environmental issues and to promote environmentally sustainable business practises by their members.

Using a series of qualitative interviews, personal phone calls and a web-based literature review, the thoughts and opinions of members were gathered and a list of best practises of was generated. This report and the subsequent recommendations reflect those realities within the context – both global and local – in which the tourism industry operates today.

A number of critical insights rolled out of the interviews that shed a bright light on the attitudes, beliefs and opinions of the membership. In general terms, the membership understands that recycling, reducing and reusing are beneficial to the environment and many have incorporated some of those behaviours into their regular routine. However, current member activity represents only a portion of the possible actions that could be taken to preserve and protect the environment. Many activities *not* practised today cost little and are relatively easy to incorporate, but have not been adopted because they simply aren't 'on the radar'.

Members are motivated to implement environmentally sustainable activities because, in their words, it is the 'right thing to do' and because it results in cost savings. The idea of preserving or, at the very least, minimizing one's impact on the environment aligns closely with many of the personal and company values held by this membership. And the financial benefits just make good business sense.

But for others, the drawbacks outweigh the benefits. Some members believe that being green costs money, and for those members - particularly the smaller, independent businesses "trying to make ends meet" – if an activity doesn't contribute to the bottom line, it isn't a priority. For some, the challenge of bringing about long-term, behavioural change, of both staff and consumers, requires more time and energy than is possible to commit. A host of other factors including a lack of time, insufficient human resources and inadequate support, or outright opposition, from head office also impede progress on the environmental front.

But this is not to suggest that there is a lack of environmental leadership within the membership. There are, in fact, a number of champions who have armed themselves with the knowledge, tools and resources to affect meaningful change. Sharing and celebrating the achievements of these members will excite and spur the rest of the membership towards a set of common goals.

Having gained an understanding of the opportunities and obstacles that affect this membership, it is clear that Tourism Saskatoon has a role to play in growing awareness and encouraging environmentally sustainable business practises. The first step is to develop a common understanding of the meaning of that term. Often used interchangeably with the terms 'green', 'eco-friendly', or 'environmentally responsible' this collection of phrases is universally applied to those actions that minimize or reduce one's (individual or commercial) impact

on the environment. It should be made clear that the environment is one component of sustainability, which in the broadest context means activity or development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This report focuses specifically on the environment, not in isolation, but as one of three critical elements in the sustainability equation. The other two, which will not be explored in this report, are society and the economy.

The second priority is to educate the members on the many merits of environmentally sustainable practise. Well thought-out environmental initiatives contribute to the long term health and stability of our most precious natural resource – the Earth – which in turn, supports a vibrant tourism industry. But these actions present a compelling business case as well. There is much evidence to prove that an environmental action plan can yield significant long-term cost savings and at the same time, minimize a number of risks including legal, financial and environmental business risks. And as society increasingly challenges business to demonstrate environmental leadership, differentiation opportunities emerge with the potential to capture new market share and attract quality employees. Effectively communicating these efforts can also translate into improved brand equity.

Thirdly, it is important that Tourism Saskatoon provide specific, actionable tactics for becoming environmentally sustainable. As noted above, the activities currently practised by members demonstrates their intentions to be green, however, there is a wide range of behaviours and habits not being employed simply because they haven't been considered. A comprehensive member communications strategy that includes traditional print media as well as a variety of digital media, will be the key to ensuring that these messages are received and digested by the entire membership. Networking events offer another way to introduce members to new strategies and best practises. A key part of Tourism Saskatoon's strategy should be to facilitate this kind of information exchange in both physical and virtual spaces. Through blogs, e-bulletin boards, networking lunches and workshops, members will be inspired by their peers' successes and will learn from their challenges.

Over time, the idea of environmental sustainability will transition from intimidating to palatable, at which point members will be ready to explore certification as the next step in building an environmentally sustainable Saskatoon. Quickly gaining momentum in international tourism circles, certification is a tool used to set a minimum standard for tourism operators. The recent development of global sustainable tourism criteria is expected to legitimize the efforts of tourism operators and organizations worldwide and to secure the confidence of travelers by proving that the tourism industry is diligently working to preserve and protect this planet. When the time is right, Tourism Saskatoon should be prepared to promote and guide its members through this process.

And lastly, once there is a compelling story to be told, Tourism Saskatoon must be the one to communicate that message to the market, promoting the region as a sustainable destination.

## Purpose

Clearly articulated as one of four strategic priorities in their *2010-14 Strategic Plan*, “developing and expanding environmental stewardship by industry” was a commitment recently made by Tourism Saskatoon (TS) and its Board of Directors. In May 2011, TS put that pledge into action by launching a three-phase initiative which includes assessment and planning, implementation, and evaluation and impact assessment. This report is the key deliverable resulting from the research and planning conducted in the first phase, during which three fundamental activities were undertaken:

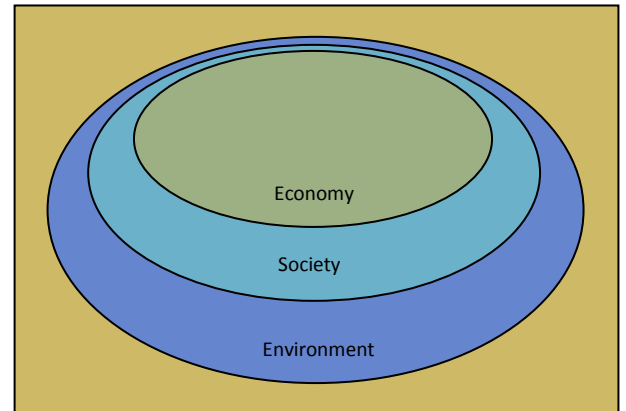
1. Qualitative interviews were conducted with the membership to determine the degree to which they are currently aware of and acting with consideration for the environment. In addition, these conversations explored member intentions in regards to implementing environmentally sustainable business practises in the future;
2. A web-based literature review provided insight into the global context for environmental sustainability and telephone conversations explored the best practises of other destination marketing organizations (DMOs); and
3. A series of recommendations were developed to assist TS in achieving the above mentioned strategic priority.

## Putting It Into Context

### What is Environmental Sustainability?

Sustainability, in the most basic sense, is the ability to endure<sup>1</sup> but over the past 25 years that term has been commonly used in the context of human sustainability and the collective impact of civilization on this planet. Because this movement is still relatively new, there continues to be much confusion around the exact meaning of the term; however, the definition presented at the United Nations' Brundtland Commission in 1987 seems to be the most widely accepted around the globe:

*“sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*



From that definition, both theorists and practitioners have concluded that sustainable development, regardless of location, culture or industry, hinges on the interrelationship of the environment, society and the economy. This belief can be graphically represented in a number of ways, one of which is seen above where three concentric circles highlight the environment's limitations on both society and the economy.<sup>2</sup>

Of those three elements, the environment has arguably received the most attention in the sustainability dialogue and as such, will be the focus of this initiative. Individuals, organizations and corporate entities are all being subjected to a higher degree of scrutiny as society continues to explore and debate acceptable environmental practise. And while the debate continues on, the generally accepted principle is that all parties should endeavour to minimize their impact, or footprint, on the environment. This can be achieved by reducing resource consumption, reusing products and materials, recycling that which is possible and lastly, offsetting the balance. (Appendix A further explores the concept of offsetting.)

It is worth noting that the language used to describe environmentally sustainable behaviour is constantly changing and with each new iteration comes a subtle shift in connotation. What began as *environmentally-friendly* has morphed into *green*, *eco-conscious*, *socially responsible*, and most recently, *sustainable*. While the general public may view this as simply a collection of synonyms, certain phrases have different meanings and, according to a recent North American study, some have come to provoke more or less positive associations than others<sup>3</sup>. The term 'green' for example - perhaps because of its vagueness - has been used by businesses to exaggerate their environmental sensitivity. As society exposes these mistruths, the term, and in fact the movement, is tainted by suspicion. Specific and quantifiable messaging is the key to removing that doubt and restoring society's confidence.

Despite the potentially negative associations, the terms 'green' - because it is one of the most common terms - and 'environmentally sustainable' will be used interchangeably throughout this report and will refer to a pattern or collection of behaviours aimed at minimizing one's impact on the environment.

<sup>1</sup> "Sustainability." *Wikipedia*, Visited June 22, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Scott Cato, M. *Green Economics*. Earthscan. 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Roth, Thomas. *CMI Green Traveler Study 2009*. San Francisco: CMI Green Community Marketing. 2009.

## How Does It Affect the Bottom Line?

Many believe that engaging in environmentally-sustainable practise is the *right* thing to do. But much evidence exists to prove that incorporating the environment into one's operational, marketing, product development and human resource planning is also the *profitable* thing to do. In addition to reducing a number of administrative and operating costs, environmental initiatives can attract the attention of new customers, increasing revenues at the same time.

### *Reduces Operating Costs*

One of the most immediate benefits realized by businesses that consider their environmental impact is reduced operating costs. Simple, immediate actions such as reducing the use of everyday office materials like paper and toner will result in lower administrative expenditures. Reducing waste, by reusing or recycling, can cut back on monthly waste management fees, replacement and maintenance costs. For businesses prepared to invest in capital improvements – particularly those that help manage resource consumption - the long term savings can be substantial. According to SaskPower, compact fluorescent light bulbs, which are available for almost every size and style of fixture, use 66% less power and lasts eight times longer, resulting in less waste going to the landfill.<sup>4</sup> And federal government research indicates that energy retrofits in existing buildings can save 20% in energy costs.<sup>5</sup>

### *Captures and Maintains Market Share*

While studies report conflicting statistics, one trend is undeniable: consumers are increasingly conscious of the environment and would like their suppliers and service providers to be as well. It is important to note that these green consumers are not equally well-informed or discerning and the profile of one sub-sector can be significantly different than that of another. But regardless of where they fall on the green spectrum, the emergence of this unique and active market presents an opportunity for businesses to differentiate themselves from the competition and capture new market share.

It is not just the consumer market that actively chooses to support sustainable business; large organizations also want to green their supply chains. For instance, global giant Wal-Mart is putting pressure on many of its suppliers to green their operations, focusing on reducing packaging waste and reducing carbon emissions at the production level.<sup>6</sup> Hotels across North America are also being forced to demonstrate environmental leadership as their corporate clientele are making booking decisions, for both rooms and conference facilities, based on concrete and quantifiable initiatives.

### *Attracts Quality Employees and Boosts Productivity*

The majority of employees in both Canada and the United States, 71% and 75% respectively, consider social responsibility and environmental commitment when selecting employers.<sup>7</sup> Considering the human resource challenges that today's tourism industry must contend with, it is in a company's best interest to be seen as a preferred employer and having an environmental plan in place helps. The presence of a plan enables employers to openly discuss environmental issues and strategies with prospective employees during the recruitment and interview processes. Upon joining the organization, employees can then be invited to join

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<sup>4</sup> SaskPower. "Lighting: Save Power." [www.saskpower.com](http://www.saskpower.com), Visited July 29, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Natural Resources Canada. "Commercial and Institutional Organizations – Energy Efficiency in Existing Buildings." [www.oeo.nrcan.gc.ca/commercial/existing.cfm?text=N&printview=N](http://www.oeo.nrcan.gc.ca/commercial/existing.cfm?text=N&printview=N), Visited July 19, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Industry Canada. "Corporate Social Responsibility: Business Case." <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/rs00176.html>, Visited June 14, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Strandberg Consulting. *The Business Case for Sustainability*. (Pg 5) December 2009.



management in the implementation of that plan which helps solidify a strong bond between the employer/manager and the employee.

### **Strengthens Brand**

Brand is an intangible yet invaluable corporate asset that represents a company's worth or reputation in the marketplace. That worth is largely founded on quality, trust, and credibility. Environmental initiatives can protect and enhance a brand, but corporate claims about environmental practices must be accurate and substantiated or the credibility of that company could be permanently jeopardized. For example, when Ford used Kermit the Frog to sing 'It's Not Easy Being Green' it did little to convince consumers that their SUV's, typically high volume gas consumers, are truly the best environmental alternative. In fact, some speculate that it generated distaste for the company for attempting to distract from the facts of the matter.

On the contrary, communicating a quantifiable and verifiable commitment to the environment can help engender trust and loyalty with customers, employees and community. The most reliable and trusted sources of this information are those that money can't buy. Consumer reports indicate that purchasing decisions are mainly influenced by a product/company's reputation (21%), word of mouth (19%) and brand loyalty (15%); dollars spent on green advertising impacts their decisions only 9%.<sup>8</sup>

### **Minimizes Risk**

Companies that undergo a rigorous assessment of their environmental impact are better equipped to understand and manage risk, and are likely to be better managed companies overall. Legal, financial, and environmental risks pertaining to regulatory requirements, industry standards and NGO demands are often addressed through the environmental planning process.<sup>9</sup> Reducing consumption of natural resources, such as water, energy, wood and minerals allows one to reduce risk associated with volatile commodity and energy prices. By eliminating hazardous materials, you can reduce the risk and costs associated with spills and injuries.<sup>10</sup>

## **Exploring the Local Perspective**

Given the list of potential benefits that result from environmentally sustainable decision making, one would think that business owners would immediately jump on board. But this way of thinking is still new to many and with the speed and volume of information exchange today, it can be a bit overwhelming. In Saskatoon, there are several champions leading the way towards environmental sustainability and there are others who have only begun exploring what that means and how it affects them.

The following paragraphs summarize the responses shared in the interview process and highlight the key themes that emerged.

### **Methodology**

Approximately 15% of Tourism Saskatoon's (TS) membership was interviewed as part of this initiative. These interviews provided insight into current practices, motivations and intentions in regards to their environmentally sustainable business activity. The sectors represented by this sample group are accommodation, attractions, event, food and beverage, retail, travel trade, and professional/business service; associations were not contacted.

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<sup>8</sup> Industry Canada. "Corporate Social Responsibility: Business Case." URL noted above.

<sup>9</sup> Strandberg Consulting. *The Business Case for Sustainability*. (Pg 5) December 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Industry Canada. "Corporate Social Responsibility: Business Case." URL noted above.

To populate the sample group, the membership was first broken down by sector; each sector group was then alphabetized by the contact's first name. The greater of ten or ten percent of those names listed were marked for an interview, starting at the top of each list and working down. Telephone interviews were conducted between May 3 and June 29, 2011. In the case where one of the originally selected sample group members was unavailable or could not be reached, a member of a comparable business type was substituted, as per the consultant's discretion. Appendix B provides a guideline of the questions that were asked and Appendix C identifies the members that were contacted.

## Uncertainty Around the Definition of Environmental Sustainability

For most members of Tourism Saskatoon, the term 'environmental sustainability' prompts an immediate association with "recycling". Whether it be paper, tin, glass, cardboard, or plastic, it appears that the majority of members are not only aware of their recycling options, but have, to some degree, incorporated the habit into their daily routine. That term, with no other context offered, also revealed strong associations (second and third most common responses) with "reduce" and "reuse", indicating that The Three R's have permeated everyday thinking when it comes to environmental stewardship. There was no reference to offsetting, which is the practise of purchasing carbon credits to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Typically this means making a financial contribution to a project or cause that directly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

The next (fourth) most common response was "nothing" or "I don't know". Several respondents could not name any specific concepts, phrases or ideas that related to environmental sustainability. Later in the conversation, when prompted to consider sustainability in the context of specific business functions such as administration or operations, members could list examples of green activity, even if the motivation to do these things was something other than 'to be green'. Bensimon Byrne's *Consumerology Report* revealed a similar finding with their focus group; Canadians place a higher level of importance on, and relate better to, specific issues like keeping fresh water clean, reducing excess waste, and reducing air pollution than they do on the environment.

The remaining responses illustrated both positive and negative associations with the term 'environmental sustainability'. While highly diverse, responses aligned loosely with one of five themes: cost savings, socially responsible behaviour, authentic and quantifiable action, trendiness and "taking care of the planet".

### **Key Insights**

- *Almost all members associate at least one element of Three R behaviour (reduce, reuse, recycle) with environmental sustainability; offsetting is not something they are familiar with.*
- *Members relate better to specific issues than the ambiguous notion of 'the environment.'*
- *While the majority of members feel a positive affinity towards the environment and sustainable activities, there are some negative perceptions, resulting from a lack of accurate information, towards the concept which could impede buy-in of future initiatives.*

## Perceived Awareness Does Not Fit Actual Activity

When asked to rate their personal awareness of environmental issues on a scale of one to five, the vast majority of members gave themselves a four or a five indicating that they felt very well informed on the topic. Using the same scale, they rated the actual activities of their business slightly lower, but still indicated a higher than an average score. These findings are comparable to those from a larger study conducted by the marketing agency,

Y partnership, that found 85% of respondents (a group of 4000 adults from the general public) considered themselves 'environmentally conscious'.

It quickly became apparent that despite feeling informed about the issues, the typical member engages in relatively few green activities. This is not because the environment is not recognized as a priority; 50% of those interviewed indicated that they will or would like to increase their green practises and another 12% said that they would continue doing what they are currently doing. The discrepancy appears to result from members having only a superficial understanding of what environmental sustainability means and what specific actions can be taken to achieve that end.

### **Key Insights**

- *Members feel, perhaps due to the increasing amount of attention given to environmental issues, very informed on the subject, but it appears that their awareness is concentrated on two or three key topics.*
- *Members are genuinely willing to adopt and implement sustainable practises in their workplace.*
- *Most members believe that they are doing "all they can" - given financial restraints - to be green; it does not appear however, that this is entirely the case.*
- *The distinct gap between perceived awareness and actual practise of environmentally sustainable behaviour suggests that there is an incomplete understanding of environmental sustainability as a business model.*

## **Current Environmental Practises Cover Broad Spectrum**

When asked to identify specific examples of environmentally sustainable practise in their workplace, members were quick to share the list of concrete steps that they were taking. Approximately half of the members remained focused on recycling (paper, tin, glass, plastic) and reducing natural resource consumption. The remaining 50% generated a lengthy list of additional practises that they had introduced.

TIAC's *Green Your Business: Toolkit for Tourism Operators* suggests that business owners consider their environmental impact in terms of eight core business functions: product development, marketing, human resource training and education, administration, purchasing, operations, technology and planning. Using this framework to sort and analyze the group response, activities were identified in each of the eight categories, with the majority of the initiatives falling in the administrative or operational categories. Below is a summary of the most common and the most unique practises demonstrated by members; for a complete list of responses refer to Appendix D.

### **Operations**

From an operations perspective, recycling was often the first and certainly the most frequently cited example of how members are being green; more than 90% of members are taking advantage of the recycling programs and services available in their areas. Other common activities include:

- reducing consumption of energy, power and water; in most cases, that means turning off lights and electronic devices after hours or when not in use, fixing leaky faucets, installing programmable thermostats, and
- some capital-intensive measures; replacing old water heaters, furnaces, washers and dryers with high efficiency models; installing low-flow taps and showerheads and/or dual flush toilets; lighting

*Two-thirds of all waste comes from commercial and industrial sources.*

- David Suzuki At Work Toolkit

improvements such as switching to CFL bulbs, installing motion sensors or timers; replacing windows, improving ducting and insulation, and installing weather stripping.

### *Administration*

From the smallest independent business to the largest corporate entity, nearly every member identified activities in the administrative domain that yield positive environmental results; examples include:

- cutting back on printing; printing only when necessary,
- increasing email correspondence,
- encouraging staff to print on both sides of the paper, and
- subscribing to e-magazines or e-bills.

### *Purchasing*

A small percentage of the membership is consciously and deliberately purchasing 'green', 'local' or 'reusable' products, such as:

- biodegradable and non-chemical based cleaners; that could mean bathroom or window cleaners or an entirely new spectrum of weed control or grounds maintenance products,
- glass or plastic reusable bowls, plates and glasses for staff and customer use,
- pitchers of tap/filtered water for clients and staff instead of water bottles, and
- bulk items - pens, toilet paper, straws or sugar - rather than in individually wrapped packages.

When talking about food procurement, some food service members try to support the local farmers' market when possible, but this practise is the exception rather than the rule. Organic or naturally-grown ingredients may find their way onto the menu, but again this is not normally the case.

One member indicated that they seek out second-hand or gently-used items, such as office furniture, as a cost cutting measure rather than to reduce waste.

### *Product Offerings or Product Development*

Some business types have more flexibility than others when it comes to adapting or changing their product development activities. While retailers generally aren't able to alter individual products, they can choose which products to carry. For example, one member deliberately stocks a product line with a solar charger, rather than one that requires a plug-in to recharge.

When the product is a program or an experience, a vendor has other options. One member, a radio station, capitalizes on opportunities to feature environmentally-focused content or to sponsor, in the form of air time, initiatives and events that are environmentally-sensitive. Saskatoon's local festivals and events incorporate a wide variety of sustainable activities into their product mix:

- the Saskatchewan Jazz Festival offers a bike valet to encourage cycling to performances,
- both FolkFest and Sundog Craft Fair offer discounted public transit to visitors, and
- Ness Creek Music Festival hosts an Eco Village which showcases more than 20 local environmental organizations or businesses and offers hands-on activities such as solar powered cookie bake stations.

### *Human Resource Training and Education*

Human resource training and education can be delivered formally, through structured employee workshops, online training modules or textbooks, or informally via internal emails, handouts, or speaker sessions.

Currently, formal sustainability training is not being offered by respondents however, some circulate internal communications with the intention of engaging employees in green practises. For example:

- one member issues a company-wide ‘green challenge of the month’ for all staff; not only does this fun initiative serve to inform and engage, but it prompts behavioural change that is intended to extend beyond the workplace, and
- several others have introduced “Lights Out” campaigns email or promoted it with small signs above the switches.

### *Marketing*

A small, but active group (5% of respondents) deliberately communicates their environmental initiatives in their marketing materials:

- The Delta Bessborough, for example, proudly showcases its environmental program , Delta Green, on signage in the lobby,
- Saskatoon Fastprint includes the Forest Stewardship Council logo on all of its print jobs to indicate their membership in that international certification program,
- WestWorld Tours website promotes the environmental advantages of group travel on their motor coaches,
- Saskatoon Farmer’s Market actively promotes the fact that they source only locally grown foods, and
- CanoeSki Discovery Company has prepared an ‘eco-quiz’ that challenges guests to consider best practises while experiencing the wilderness in northern Saskatchewan; this particular activity does not directly promote the environmental actions of the business, but rather serves as an educational tool to round out the awareness levels of the public.

### *Technology*

Making use of email, electronic faxes, online money transfers and other technology-supported correspondence is quickly becoming *the way* of doing business today. Developing a website that effectively promotes the business and also allows for consumers to purchase products and services through e-commerce reduces paper usage both in terms of marketing materials and receipts. While the majority of members have a website for promotional purposes, sites that facilitate e-commerce are not yet the norm for TS members.

Technology is also being used to monitor and measure one’s environmental impact. Two members reported using industry-specific software that helps to calculate the environmental and financial implications of their green practises. In one case, not only are they comparing current performance to original baseline measures, but they can also compare their operation to others in the same company.

### *Planning*

Nearly 10% of those interviewed have addressed sustainability at the policy or strategic planning level. From professional service providers and convention centres to hotels and independent resorts, these members clearly understand the value of integrating environmental sustainability into every function of the business.

Four designated ‘Green Teams’ were noted, each of which included staff from various levels of the business as well as senior management. These committees were largely in place to discuss current environmental issues that could affect the business and to brainstorm innovative solutions to these challenges.

Two other members indicated that management had been discussing environmental issues and that policy was likely to be introduced within the next year.



## *Social Considerations*

While not specifically included in the scope of this work, it is worth noting that a small percentage of the members have recognized that sustainability, in the broadest context, does extend beyond environmental consciousness. Fifteen percent of those interviewed have taken steps to fulfill social responsibilities by supporting local community groups or partnering with youth or charity organizations.

### ***Key Insights***

- *Members are relatively familiar with sustainable practises as they pertain to the operational, administrative and technology functions, and are relatively unaware of best practises as they relate to planning, HR training, and marketing; the membership would benefit from a best practises 'to do' list.*
- *There is a wide variety of quantifiable and effective practises currently implemented by members that, if shared, would inspire and motivate others.*

## **Motivations Are Two-Fold: Values and Money**

Two key factors drive the implementation of environmentally sustainable activities: the desire to help the environment and the potential cost savings. Through discussion, it was made clear that value statements about the need to take care of the planet reflected both personal beliefs and corporate philosophies. The former seems to be the more powerful of the two motivators, but it was evident that an engaging corporate environmental plan helps move business groups to action. As for financial considerations, while more than a third believe that environmentally sustainable behaviour results in cost savings, several respondents contradicted that by saying that it actually costs money (to recycle) but they do it because it is the 'right thing to do.'

A significant number of respondents also made reference to the market as a motivator, although it is commonly believed that today's green travel market is a small, but growing, segment. One member that caters primarily to local or regional markets will periodically receive notes or comments about their green activities, but says interest in environmental initiatives is usually sporadic and fleeting. However, those sectors that cater to national and international markets, such as hotels and convention centres, find themselves subject to a more frequent and involved degree of inspection. Corporate customers in particular challenge venues or hotels to deliver on a series of environmentally-responsible initiatives in order to secure large scale events or contracts. In these industries, managers and executives are taking steps to ensure that they are ahead of the pack in terms of their sustainable initiatives and are prepared to answer questions in a professional and timely manner.

### ***Key Insights***

- *Any efforts to engage members in environmentally sustainable behaviour must clearly make the connection between specific actions and cost savings.*
- *Messaging should also address the tangible benefit to the environment.*
- *Market research indicating the habits and tendencies of green travellers would help members to make informed marketing decisions.*

## Money is the Primary Obstacle

Despite an apparent willingness to implement new environmental initiatives, members identified a lengthy list of obstacles that prevent them from doing so; the most common was money. The typically held belief is that in order to make *significant* change, one must make a *significant* capital investment. They named water heaters, furnaces, window upgrades, and ducting improvements as examples of those things that they would like to do, but that are simply not in the budget.

Members also struggle with bad habits. The habits in question - of both staff and customers - are those highly consumptive tendencies such as leaving lights and electronics on when not in use, throwing recyclables in the garbage, or driving to work rather than cycling or car pooling. It was suggested that while management can request or recommend that someone “recycles their bottles” or “thinks twice before printing” these requests are difficult to enforce.

The third most common response was that there are ‘no barriers’ preventing businesses from acting responsibly.

Typically, those who felt this was the case fell into one of two categories: those large, corporate entities that have sufficient capital or human resources to research and develop environmental strategies or those that have a limited understanding of the broad context and best practises.

Other challenges include lack of information, lack of available programs, uneducated customers and insufficient time. Unsupportive leadership - from head office or a Board of Directors - and uncooperative landlords were also presented as challenges.

*Changing one habit – like how one gets to work - would have a serious impact on the environment: 20% of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions come from transporting people, including daily commuting and business travel.*

- David Suzuki At Work Toolkit

### **Key Insights**

- *Members are not fully aware of range of activities that can be undertaken for little or no cost.*
- *Most members have not calculated the potential long-term savings that could result from capital improvements.*
- *Members would benefit from increased awareness of the funding programs that support environmental initiatives.*
- *Housing a collection of resources, links and support materials in one central location would enable members, as well as their Boards and head office managers, to make better informed business decisions.*
- *Managers and business owners would also benefit from change management training.*

## Members Want More Information

Despite the fact that a ‘lack of information’ was not one of the top three barriers to progress, ‘access to information’ was the most common solution to implementation challenges. Suggestions on how that information could best be shared varied from passive methods to more involved activities. A dedicated webpage on Tourism Saskatoon’s website and monthly emails or e-newsletters were suggested as quick and easy ways to get information to the membership. These resources should be easy to access and readily available when the owner, manager or staff person had time. The content should include quick ‘how-to’ tips and

engaging articles on the rationale, benefits and opportunities of environmental sustainability. Contact information and links to other businesses or agencies in the environmental sector would also be appreciated.

Although a smaller percentage of the membership indicated that they would participate, speaker events, workshops, and webinars were also suggested. In attending these activities, members want an opportunity not only to learn from experts, but to share and listen to the best practises of their peers.

Members feel they are lacking adequate information about government incentive programs. They would like more information - or a centralized location from which to gather information - on rebates, grants and promotions. Programs such as SaskEnergy's Commercial HVAC Program or SaskPower's Commercial Lighting Program are not particularly well recognized by members, but those who have taken the time to research their options, indicated that the information was well presented and accessible.

### **Key Insights**

- *In order to meet the needs of the membership, TS will have to gather, sort and synthesize information on a wide variety of sub-topics. A comprehensive list of suggested content is provided in Recommendation #2.*
- *Several different media and forums will need to be employed in order to reach and engage the entire membership.*

## **How Tourism Saskatoon Can Help**

Members felt strongly that Tourism Saskatoon should focus on three core activities:

1. to educate and inform,
2. to promote, and
3. to (attempt to) influence other decision makers to think green.

Providing access to relevant information and creating forums for information exchange is the first step in boosting the members' collective understanding of environmental sustainability. The membership indicated that, while it was important to do so, there simply wasn't enough time in the day to adequately gather and sort through the mountain of information that pertains to greening one's business. There is a willingness to learn, but uncertainty about what to do, where to turn and how to find the most relevant information.

Members also agree that TS should be promoting the region as green in an attempt to capture the attention of the green travel market. Showcasing the efforts of both individual members as well as the region as a whole in its external marketing campaigns was suggested on multiple occasions.

And thirdly, encouraging other agencies to embrace environmentally sustainable processes was seen as an important in solidifying Saskatoon's reputation as a green destination. By promoting those events that demonstrate genuine environmental-sensitivity and disassociating with those that operate without regard for the well-being of the planet, it was suggested that TS would be seen as truly 'walking the talk'. Lobbying civic and/or provincial governments to implement policy and fund programs was another priority.

It should be noted that a small faction of the membership does not believe that TS has a role to play in expanding environmental stewardship. It is important that all efforts to do so are accompanied by a contextual introduction that clearly explains the relationship between a thriving tourism industry and a healthy environment.



## Best Practises: What Are Other Destinations and DMOs Doing?

It is clear that Tourism Saskatoon has a role to play in helping members to fully understand environmental sustainability and realize their environmental goals. To determine the best strategies for doing so, several Canadian destination marketing organizations (DMOs) as well as tourism agencies in other jurisdictions, were contacted. Discussions around their successes, and failures, were integral in shaping the recommendations that follow.

Of the ten Canadian DMO's contacted, several have begun conversations around the environment and sustainability at the executive and/or Board level. However, only three of those - Edmonton Tourism, Tourism Calgary, and Tourism Vancouver - were able to articulate clear and definitive action that has been taken to date.

Edmonton Tourism has developed a program called *FRESH Edmonton* which is intended to showcase that city as an environmentally-conscious destination in which to host an event, meeting or conference. The *FRESH* initiative includes a *Green Meetings Guide* and an *Eco-Report Card* designed for conference planners and a *FRESH Magazine* to promote the region. While they are still working out the details, the plan is to promote those businesses that have incorporated 'fresh' ideas - which loosely translates to 'green' ideas - in the *FRESH* marketing campaign. Businesses are encouraged to self-report those initiatives that they feel are environmentally-sustainable; this process is not verified by a third party.



Tourism Calgary's Board of Directors has approved an internal sustainability policy that focuses primarily on reducing consumption within the administrative and operations functions. They are also involved in an initiative called *Meet Green*, that measures and facilitates the 'greening' of destinations and promotes them amongst meeting and convention planners throughout North America.

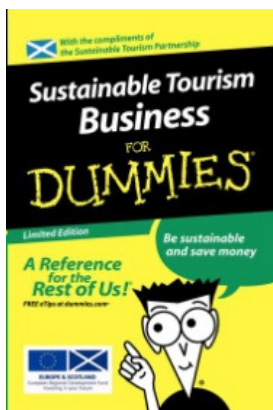
Tourism Vancouver is largely recognized by its Canadian counterparts as being a national leader in environmental initiatives. Their activities are both internally and externally-focused and widely communicated to all stakeholders. A Green Team routinely assesses the organization's activities and creates strategies to reduce their environmental impact. They have also initiated several strategic partnerships with local businesses to develop programs for their members. To date, they have successfully built a Conservation Library which was created in partnership with BC Hydro, they manage the *Tourism Ambassadors for Conservation Program*, and are active participants and promoters of Uniglobe's *Green Flight Program*, which allows businesses to purchase carbon offset credits to mitigate the effects of international travel. In addition, various workshops and speaker events invite members to learn about the issues and explore possible solutions.

But their efforts extend well beyond the city limits. Tourism Vancouver was also a key driver in the creation of ETHOS (Engaging Tourism and Hospitality Operators in Sustainability), a network of industry, association and government agencies that came together to advance British Columbia's environmental agenda. The core mandate of this body, which was chaired by Tourism Vancouver's Executive Vice President, Paul Vallee, was to develop and promote a sustainable tourism certification process. (Certification is a process whereby businesses undergo a rigorous level of testing to ensure that all aspects of the business are conducted in a sustainable manner; see page 16 for more information.) Both provincial and federal governments were involved as the plan was to eventually roll out a program for tourism operators throughout Canada. ETHOS aligned themselves with an international certification provider, Green Tourism UK, and together they launched a pilot project with 24 businesses. The pilot was a success, garnering high praise from those businesses, large and small, that participated.

Within months of wrapping up the project, funding for ETHOS ran out and the organization dissolved in early 2011. Those who completed the pilot had the option of maintaining certification through Green Tourism UK, but all efforts to build a national program were indefinitely put on hold. Despite this untimely setback, Vallee is hopeful that their work ignited a movement because, in his opinion, certification is the most important mechanism industry has for ensuring widespread, legitimate change.

Tracy Breher, the Program Director of Quality Assurance at Tourism Saskatchewan, discussed their newly launched quality assurance program which was designed to develop and support high quality, authentic tourism destinations and experiences throughout the province. Several committees have been established, each one representing a specific sub-sector, and tasked with developing a process that is relevant and acceptable to them. Committee members are not compelled to consider environmental issues, but the relationship between quality and environmental sustainability is widely accepted and the subject has been brought up on more than one occasion. The committees also seem to agree that some form of accreditation, with a third party audit, is necessary to maintain the integrity of the program. How this will be achieved has yet to be decided, but all decisions will be debated and approved by members, empowering them to take ownership of the final decision. So while TS and Tourism Saskatchewan have two separate initiatives underway, it seems likely that the two groups of stakeholders will deliberate similar content and processes and likely encounter similar challenges. Maintaining open lines of communication with this group could prove beneficial for both parties.

At the national level, Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and Parks Canada have authored a joint statement of principles that communicates their commitment to development that "balances economic objectives with safeguarding and enhancing the ecological, cultural and social integrity of Canada's heritage."<sup>11</sup> As a means of assisting tourism operators to adopt these principles and integrate sustainable practises in their workplace, these three partners produced a valuable resource entitled "*Green Your Business: A Toolkit for Tourism Operators*". This guidebook provides a brief look at the business case behind going green as well as offering a list of what they call 'low hanging fruit'; those action items that can be implemented quickly and with relatively little, or no, cost.



Expanding the best practises search beyond Canadian borders yielded a number of other excellent examples of tourism agencies that have effectively addressed the issue of environmental sustainability. Scotland's national tourism organization has dedicated an entire section of their corporate website to their *Sustainable Tourism Resource Centre* which offers business owners theoretical, statistical and practical information on how and why they should consider incorporating sustainability into their workplace. Their *Sustainable Tourism Business for Dummies* guide provides a collection of 'how to' tips and presents the concept of certification, which is heavily endorsed in that country. On their tourist-oriented site, visitors can search for green accommodations and a *Responsible Visitor Guide* offers suggestions on how and where to experience a number of sustainable destinations.

Elsewhere in the UK, Failte Ireland is currently developing a series of environmental best practise guidelines for each of the prominent sectors in their tourism industry. The first three documents are now available on their website. Their *Tourism Business Guidelines*, which was originally developed for event planners but is relevant for all tourism businesses, provides sample environmental policies, an environmental action plan template and a checklist for an overall environmental management system. This suite of tools is professionally designed, well-organized and tailored to meet the needs of their



<sup>11</sup> Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Canadian Tourism Commission and Parks Canada. "Green Your Business: Toolkit for Tourism Operators"; 2008.

membership.

And in the land down under, the Australian tourism industry has enthusiastically embraced a national eco-certification process run by the non-profit, Eco Tourism Australia. With over 430 certified members listed in their *Green Travel Guide*, this organization represents a critical mass of operators that collectively validate claims that Australia is, in fact, a green destination. Eco Tourism Australia's logo, or that of its certification program, can be found on a number of international eco or green travel sites indicating membership or affiliation, which helps to boost awareness and confidence in this body.

## **What Other Resources or Support Systems Exist?**

While TS is travelling into relatively uncharted territory for a DMO, there are many non-tourism agencies and organizations that could offer support or serve as a potential partner for them. The federal government, through Environment Canada, has dedicated considerable effort to the development of resource libraries that focus on environmental issues, programs, incentives and rebates. As well, Industry Canada has thoroughly explored corporate social responsibility (CRS) as a business model and on its site presents the business case for 'going green' as well as a lengthy list of suggestions of how businesses might accomplish those goals.

Through its *Go Green* Program, the Province of Saskatchewan demonstrates its commitment to providing environmental solutions. They have introduced a variety of incentive programs targeted at business owners as well as setting aside monies in the *Go Green Fund* to be invested in special projects aimed at reducing waste, avoiding greenhouse gas emissions, conserving water or restoring water quality. That said, there appears to be no specific provincial initiative that recognizes or supports the connection between tourism and environmental sustainability. The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport conducted a province-wide review of the tourism system in 2009, but has yet to publish a final report. While this study was not focused on the environment or sustainability, there is an opportunity to bring this matter to the attention of policy makers. The summary report does indicate a need for a provincial tourism strategy which could be a key mechanism for addressing sustainability.

The Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council (SWRC) and the Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) are two other organizations – both Saskatoon-based, non-profits - that have relevant programs and resources. The SWRC website offers an extensive list of the recycling depots and programs available in Saskatchewan as well as posting a variety of informative facts about the three R's. SWRC also hosts the *Waste Minimization Awards* each year, celebrating the achievements of both individuals and businesses. The SES, in addition to educating the public about the issues, offers two specific fee-for-service training programs which can be tailored to suit the needs of a particular business or sector: Building Operator Training and Energy Awareness Training.

These four local/Canadian agencies have much to offer in terms of content and process that could be used to inform and guide TS's next steps. Developing strategic partnerships with these bodies would maximize synergies, reduce duplication of efforts and ensure that best practises were being shared and expanded for the benefit of all.

Appendix E provides links to all of the agencies and tourism bodies mentioned in the above sections.

## **The Certification Debate**

Earlier in this report, certification was presented as an example of best practise, but when assessing the merits of this systematic assessment process it is important to also acknowledge its limitations. Today, awareness of certification and awards programs is low and poor recognition of accreditation and associated labelling

indicates that tourists are not greatly influenced by them<sup>12</sup>. According to the CMI 2009 Green Traveler Study, there are over 350 green travel and hospitality certifications worldwide and only 3% of respondents could name one. When asked if they were aware of or involved with any, TS members had a similar response; only those in the accommodation industry said yes, referring to their participation in the Green Key program.

On the other hand, there is significant momentum pushing certification to the forefront of tourism dialogue and there is reason to believe that it will emerge as an industry standard. Over the past decade, several hundred independent certifying bodies have cropped up, each one claiming to improve the environmental practises of the commercial sector. But without an internationally accepted standard by which the certifiers were expected to operate, consumers were left unsure of what types of activities these certifications actually endorsed.

Recognizing the need for a set of global criteria, a group of influential stakeholders including United Nations agencies, country tourism boards, leading travel companies and tourism operators came together in 2009 to form the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). Their first task was to develop the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, a set of internationally-accepted minimum requirements by which a tourism business should aspire to reach in the conservation and preservation of the planet. With that mission complete in 2010, they launched an accreditation program in July 2011 that assesses individual certification programs to ensure that their criteria include, at a minimum, the GSTC criteria. So in effect, they will certify the certifiers, in the hope of creating a legitimate, transparent and trusted accreditation system worldwide.

Anticipating this turn of events, many of the successful certification programs were already adhering to the GSTC standard. Unfortunately, a lack of public awareness of both the GSTC as an entity and their criteria meant that this affiliation carried little weight with travelers. Moving forward, it is expected that as the GSTC and its accreditation program will become more familiar to consumers, that trust and confidence will transfer over to compliant certifying bodies and ultimately offer added value to tourism operators and businesses.

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<sup>12</sup> Bergin-Seers, Dr. Suzanne and Dr. Judith Mair. "Sustainability Practises and Awards and Accreditation Programs in the Tourism Industry." Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations take into consideration the perspectives and comments of the membership as well as the best practises and lessons learned by other tourism bodies, governments and environmental interest groups. They are segregated into three categories; those which can be implemented in the short term (6-12 months), and those that, due to more substantial investments of time, money or human resources, are more likely achievable over the medium (1-2 years) and long term (3-5 years).

### 1. Review Internal Practises and Develop Environmental Plan (short term)

To demonstrate true leadership, Tourism Saskatoon should first evaluate its own activities and develop an environmental policy, strategy and action plan.

- Develop an Environmental Policy
- Set environmental objectives and targets (to be reviewed annually)
- Create an Environmental Action Plan that will effectively and quantifiably reduce the organization's environmental impact and address any current or anticipated issues
- Establish a Green Team
- Measure and monitor key performance indicators such as energy, waste and water consumption
- Develop sustainable purchasing strategies
- Identify offsetting tactics and establish partnerships with offsetting bodies

### 2. Develop and Implement an Internal Communications Plan (short - medium term)

In response to an overwhelming request for information, Tourism Saskatoon should develop a communications plan and a comprehensive portfolio of communication tools that will inform, educate and engage its members in environmentally sustainable activities. See Appendix F for examples.

- Build a brand for this initiative
- Create and implement a communications plan that considers:
  - communications objectives
    - to generate excitement
    - to articulate the benefits
    - to keep members informed about progress
    - to introduce new initiatives or phases of an ongoing project
  - key messages and content
    - the rationale for embarking on this new initiative
    - the connection between environmental sustainability and tourism
    - the opportunities that result from 'green' business activity
    - the business case behind sustainable business practise
    - environmental market trends
    - Tourism Saskatoon's Environmental Policy and Action Plan
    - links to government incentives or rebate programs
    - links to other environmentally-oriented agencies or businesses of interest
  - the collection of tools and media that will be used
    - digital, ie: websites, email, video, e-bulletin boards, blogs
    - print, ie: newsletters, brochures
  - key audiences and audience-specific messages
    - individual sectors within the membership
    - landlords
    - Boards of Directors

### **3. Facilitate Networking (short term)**

Create forums, both virtual and physical, for members to gather, discuss issues and share best practises. This will help to generate enthusiasm and, at the same time, instill a sense of urgency as members witness their peers giving this matter their attention.

- Implement a comprehensive social media strategy to encourage peer-to-peer education and sharing of best practises (ie: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.)
- Host workshops, speaker events, or webinars where members can meet and learn from peers and experts

### **4. Encourage Certification (medium - long term)**

As members become more familiar with the concept of sustainability, they will come to more fully understand the opportunities and implications for their business. Armed with this knowledge, members will be better equipped to digest the concept of certification, which will add legitimacy and transparency to their claims.

- Develop a partnership with a certifying body (ie: Green Tourism Canada, Green Globe or Sustainable Travel International)
- Train staff on the processes involved
- Actively promote member participation in its program(s)
- Engage adjacent regional and provincial tourism agencies in a discussion around certification so that, in time, the organizations could work together to build awareness of the program on a broader scale

### **5. Celebrate Successes (medium - long term)**

Throughout the process, continue to build commitment to the cause by celebrating successes. Thank champions and recognize leaders; this will inspire others and draw attention to the cause.

- Initiate a self-nominating mechanism, such as a contest or challenge, where stories, videos, or pictures are submitted, communicating sustainable achievements
- Showcase innovative, effective or new initiatives (using the traditional and social media channels in use at that time)
- Aggressively promote and encourage nomination for Land of Living Skies Award (as part of the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards)
- Research and promote additional recognition opportunities for members

### **6. Develop and Implement a Marketing Strategy (long term)**

Once a critical mass of businesses have acquired certification or initiated effective and quantifiable change, TS can confidently promote individual members as well as the region as sustainable, appealing directly to the green travel market. While united in their commitment to supporting the environment, this market segment comes in many shades of green and the priorities and interests of one sub-segment can vary wildly from those of another. Efforts must be made to identify specific green target markets and to develop campaigns that will reach and uniquely appeal to each one.

- Develop a Sustainable Tourism page on Tourism Saskatoon's website, listing all certified businesses (see [TourismVancouver.com](http://TourismVancouver.com), [Visitscotland.com](http://Visitscotland.com), [SeeTorontoNow.com](http://SeeTorontoNow.com) for examples)
- Produce a Green Visitors' Guide that features certified members
- Attend trade shows specifically designed to promote sustainable businesses and destinations

**7. Lobby Civic and Provincial Governments to Support and Fund Environmental Initiatives (long term)**

Give voice to the concerns and issues of the membership by lobbying for more environmental incentives, and programs. Use the influence of the organization to support or pressure when appropriate, political decision makers in the development of specific policies and actionable plans.



## Appendix A: Offsetting: The Fourth Step in the Waste Management Hierarchy

Offsetting is referenced, but not fully explored, in the body of this report. The following information has been added to provide clarity around the definition, context and application of offsetting. Examples of offsetting companies and initiatives are also provided.

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The phrase “reduce, reuse and recycle” has become an international mantra, reminding consumers what they can do to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, which are generally accepted to have a negative effect on the Earth’s temperature. (A Google search for “Greenhouse Gas Effect” or “global warming” will provide volumes of data on the science behind that statement.) But despite these ongoing efforts, society’s consumptive activities often result in a net negative impact on the environment. A proposed solution is to offset. One can mitigate the potential harm done to the planet by first calculating the level of emissions created, both directly and indirectly, by an activity, and then invest in another activity that deliberately reduces or reverses emissions by the same amount.

The following excerpt was taken from Wikipedia on July 18, 2011:

*A **carbon offset** is a reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide or greenhouse gases made in order to compensate for or to offset an emission made elsewhere. One carbon offset represents the reduction of one metric ton of carbon dioxide or its equivalent in other greenhouse gases.*

*There are two markets for carbon offsets. In the larger, compliance market, companies, governments, or other entities buy carbon offsets in order to comply with caps on the total amount of carbon dioxide they are allowed to emit. This market exists in order to achieve compliance with obligations of Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol, and of liable entities under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. In the much smaller, voluntary market, individuals, companies, or governments purchase carbon offsets to mitigate their own greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, electricity use, and other sources. For example, an individual might purchase carbon offsets to compensate for the greenhouse gas emissions caused by personal air travel.*

*Offsets are typically achieved through financial support of projects that reduce the emission of greenhouse gases in the short- or long-term. The most common project type is renewable energy, such as wind farms, biomass energy, or hydroelectric dams. Others include energy efficiency projects, the destruction of industrial pollutants or agricultural byproducts, destruction of landfill methane, and forestry projects. Some of the most popular carbon offset projects from a corporate perspective are energy efficiency and wind turbine projects.*

In the past 15 years, entire industries have been built around the provision, purchase and regulation of offsets. Touting a variety of carbon-management solutions, Canadian offset agencies tend to be located in either British Columbia or eastern Canada. Vancouver-based Offsetters ([www.offsetters.ca](http://www.offsetters.ca)) and Montreal-based Planet Air ([www.planetair.com](http://www.planetair.com)) are two examples of Canadian offset providers that cater to both individuals and businesses. Through those companies, one can calculate their carbon footprint and then purchase credits on either the “Gold Standard” international market or the voluntary market.

In Saskatoon, the Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA) is in the process of developing a voluntary carbon offset program which plants trees in the parkways and conservation areas of Saskatchewan. In addition to purchasing an offset, a business or individual can partner with or sponsor the program.



## Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. When you hear the words “environmentally-friendly” or “environmentally-sustainable” what does that make you think of? What concepts, ideas, buzzwords pop to mind?
2. On a scale of 1-5 (1=low, 5=high), how would you rate your personal level of awareness around environmental issues?
3. Using that same scale, how would you rate the level of environmentally sustainable activity currently being undertaken by your business?
4. Provide some examples of environmentally sustainable practises currently being used in this business?
5. Why do you believe these practises have been implemented?
6. Do you feel it is important for your business, over the next 2 years, to increase and promote greater environmentally sustainable practices?
7. What are the barriers/obstacles that stand in the way of achieving your environmental goals?
8. What would enable you to more fully integrate or adopt environmentally sustainable practises in your place of business?
9. Are you aware of and/or using any toolkits/guidelines/certification processes designed to assist organizations or businesses in incorporating environmentally sustainable practises in their workplace?
10. If Tourism Saskatoon were to try to provide support to you, how could they do that?
11. Would you like to be informed as to the findings of this report and/or receive updates as this project progresses? If yes, what is your preferred form of communication?

## Appendix C: List of Interview Participants

Company
<b>Accommodation</b>
InnChanted B&B
College Drive Visitor Lodge
Cooper's Lodge
Ninth Street Bed & Breakfast
Delta Bessborough
Sandman Hotel Saskatoon
Hilton Garden Inn
Days Inn
<b>Attractions</b>
TCU Place
Terry Fox Track
Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre
Wanuskewin Heritage Park
Elk Ridge Resort
Hunter's Fairhaven Bowl
<b>Events</b>
Ness Creek Festival
Sundog Arts & Entertainment Faire
Saskatoon Blues Festival
Saskatchewan Jazz Festival
Saskatchewan International Raceway
Saskatoon FolkFest
<b>Food and Beverage</b>
Mr. Rizos Restaurant
2nd Avenue Grill
Country Style BBQ
Haradros Food Svcs (Manos)
Pacific Gallery and Fine Art Café
The Ivy Dining & Lounge
<b>Professional Business Service</b>
Planet S Magazine
KPMG
Saskatoon Fastprint Limited
The Marketing Den
Cinepost Productions
CFCR Community Radio
Dark Horse Communications
Canadian Light Source
CNT Management Group Inc.
Rawlco Radio

Company
<b>Retail</b>
The Awl Shoppe
Mr. T's RV Rental Vacations
The Fishin' Hole
Heavenly Nights Bedroom Centre
Ten Thousand Villages
Positive Passions
Thoen's Classic Auto Rentals
Saskatoon Farmers Market Co-op
<b>Travel</b>
Saskatoon Co-op Travel
Westworld Tours
Uniglobe Carefree Travel
Thomas Cook Travel
Canoeski Discovery Company
Three Lakes Camp

## Appendix D: Interview Responses

The responses for each question are noted here, listed in order from the most to least frequent; the number of times each response was given is indicated in parenthesis.

### 1. When you hear the words “environmentally-sustainable” what does that make you think of? What concepts, ideas, buzzwords come to mind?

- Recycle (30)
- Reduce ie: water, energy or waste (10)
- Reuse (8)
- Nothing/Don't know (6)
- Helping the environment (3)
- Not negatively impacting the planet (2)
- Green (2)
- Paperless (2)
- Using non-chemical based products (2)
- Supporting local charities and/or community groups (2)
- It is directly related to cost savings (1)
- It is an ongoing process (1)
- Tree huggers (1)
- Measurable (1)
- Certification processes (1)
- Long term projects (1)
- Driving less often (1)
- Being a good custodian of the planet (1)
- In the news all the time (1)
- “Everybody knows about it, right?” (1)
- Action, not just lip service (1)
- Nuclear power (1)
- Public transit (1)
- It is important (1)
- It is popular/trendy (1)
- Carbon footprints (1)

### 2. On a scale of 1-5 (1=low, 5=high), how would you rate your personal level of awareness around environmental issues?

- 2 (2)
- 3 (9)
- 4 (8)
- 5 (10)

### 3. Using that same scale, how would you rate the level of ES activity currently being undertaken by your business?

- 2 (7)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (12)
- 5 (2)
- “Not where we should be” or “needs improvement” (4)

### 4. Provide some examples of ES practises currently being used in this business?

- Recycle ie: cardboard, cans, bottles, paper, glass, toner/ink cartridges (29)
- Reduce paper waste in the office; using both sides, discouraging unnecessary printing (16)
- Implemented lighting improvements ie: CFL bulbs, motion sensors, timers (13)
- Installed high efficiency appliances ie: furnaces, water heaters, dishwashers, washers, dryers (10)

- Conduct business transactions/communication electronically (6)
- Use reusable or biodegradable plates, bowls, glasses (6)
- Developed marketing materials for external promotion of green initiatives (5)
- Use biodegradable/green cleaning products and/or yard maintenance products (4)
- Upgraded windows, weather stripping, insulation, ducting (4)
- Installed water-minimizing toilets/faucets/showerheads (4)
- Support local charities or community groups (4)
- Use organic or naturally-grown ingredients in meal preparation (3)
- Have a "lights out" policy and it is promoted to staff (4)
- Created internal Green Team (4)
- Offer programming that educates the public on green issues ie: radio, newspaper programming or hands-on workshops for kids (4)
- Source food products locally and/or supporting the farmers' market (3)
- Compost (2)
- Take used food-oils to be turned into bio-fuel (2)
- Purchase products in bulk (2)
- Use software to monitor the carbon footprint of the business (2)
- Subscribe to e-bills when possible (2)
- Offer filtered water to clients rather than bottled (1)
- Collect rainwater (1)
- Reuse grey water (1)
- Consciously stock solar rechargeable products rather than those that require a plug-in (1)
- Initiate staff 'fun' challenges to kickstart behavioural change and create positive habits in the workplace ie: if you bike to work in the month of May, you will have name put in for a prize draw, or if you don't turn your monitor off in the month of June, you will be penalized \$5 and the proceeds will go to a local charity.
- Take used toner cartridges to the Food Bank which they can recycle to produce a revenue stream for them (1)
- Made a commitment at the national level to seek out 'green' buildings in which to locate new offices (1)
- Use social media to market our business (1)
- Purchase recycled goods (1)
- Re-distribute unused food products to food bank/churches/schools (1)
- Discourage <customers from> plastic bag use; offering paper bags instead (1)
- Installed environmentally-friendly flooring products (1)
- Coordinate the Eco-Village <at an event> which showcases green technologies/businesses/non-profits/interest groups (1)
- Issue an eco-quiz to customers (1)
- Maintain a fragrance free workplace (1)
- Developed partnerships with other green-focused entities/initiatives (1)

##### **5. Why do you believe these practises have been implemented?**

- To take advantage of cost savings (16)
- To help the environment (16)

- Personal commitment/philosophy (10)
- Stakeholders <customers, clients, shareholders> are conscious of green initiatives (8)
- It is the right thing to do (3)
- It is important to make do with what you have (1)
- No need to contribute to the landfill (1)
- It is easy once patterns/behaviours are changed (1)

**6. Do you feel it is important for your business, over the next 2 years, to increase and promote greater environmentally sustainable practices?**

Yes (21)

We will continue doing what we are currently doing (5)

No (3)

Not sure (1)

**7. What are the barriers/obstacles that stand in the way of moving these initiatives forward?**

- Money (12)
- Bad habits prevent permanent/positive change (6)
- There are no barriers (5)
- Insufficient time (4)
- Not a priority (4)
- Lack of information (4)
- Lack of available programs (3)
- Unsupportive leadership ie: head office, Board of Directors (3)
- Lack of technology available in the area <for solar> (2)
- Landlord makes decisions (2)
- Negative customer perceptions <that recycled or reused is a less attractive option> (2)
- Lack of penalty/ramification if you don't do it (1)
- There are no barriers preventing 'green' initiatives, help is needed to differentiate it as a green business(1)
- Uninformed customers (1)

**8. What would enable you to more fully integrate or adopt sustainable practises in your place of business?**

- Access to <better, more relevant> information (5)
- Government incentives (3)
- No help needed (2)
- Access to programs (2)
- Availability of new technology (2)
- No idea (2)
- Increasing public awareness (1)

**9. Are you aware of and/or using any toolkits/guidelines/certification processes designed to assist private business in incorporating environmentally sustainable practises in their business?**

- No (14)
- No, my staff and I conduct our own research (5)
- No, but I attend conferences to learn about best practises in my industry (4)
- Yes (3)
  - Green Key (2)
  - Fair Trade (1)
- No, I rely on passive sources (ie: the newspaper, Discovery channel, word of mouth) for information (2)

**10. If Tourism Saskatoon were to try to provide support to you, how could they do that?**

- Provide information (19)
  - It should be provided with new member 'welcome package' (1)
  - Email 'tip of the month' (1)
  - It should be free (2)
  - It should be industry specific (2)
  - It should identify specific cost savings (1)
  - It should include existing government programs (1)
- Host events/workshops where members can discuss green initiatives in their workplace (5)
- Differentiate and promote members as "green" in TS marketing materials (3)
- Launch marketing campaigns promoting the region as green, especially materials aimed at European and American markets (2)
- Nothing (2)
- It is not TS's responsibility to help its members act or think 'green'; the environment has nothing to do with tourism (2)
- Endorse only green events in Saskatoon and avoid supporting non-environmentally friendly activities ie: the rodeo, power boat races (1)
- Lobby the City of Saskatoon for better recycling programs (1)
- Have TS staff come to my workplace with a 'green' checklist (1)

**11. Would you like to be informed as to the findings of this report and/or receive updates as this project progresses? If yes, what is your preferred form of communication?**

- Yes (33)
- No (4)

## Appendix E: Websites of Organizations and Government Agencies Referenced

Edmonton Tourism's FRESH Initiative - <http://www.edmonton.com/for-business/1759.aspx>

Tourism Calgary - [www.tourismcalgary.com](http://www.tourismcalgary.com)

Meet Green - [www.meetgreen.com](http://www.meetgreen.com)

Tourism Vancouver's Sustainable Initiatives -  
<http://www.tourismvancouver.com/about-us/sustainable-tourism/tourism-vancouver-initiatives>

Visit Scotland - [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org) or [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)

Failte Ireland - [www.failteireland.ie/Business-Supports/Environmental-Guidelines](http://www.failteireland.ie/Business-Supports/Environmental-Guidelines)

EcoTourism Australia - [www.ecotourism.org.au](http://www.ecotourism.org.au)

Environment Canada - [www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en](http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en)

Industry Canada - [www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/home](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/home)

Province of Saskatchewan's Go Green Initiative - [www.environment.gov.sk.ca/gogreen](http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/gogreen)

Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council - [www.saskwastereduction.ca](http://www.saskwastereduction.ca)

Saskatchewan Environmental Society - [www.environmentalsociety.ca](http://www.environmentalsociety.ca)

Global Sustainable Tourism Council - [www.gstcouncil.org](http://www.gstcouncil.org)

## Appendix F: Sample Toolkits, Workbooks and Marketing Collateral Materials

This collection of resources illustrates the range of tools and communications products that have been developed for business owners worldwide. Not all of created specifically for the tourism industry, but because most of these tools were developed by member-based organizations, they are relevant to and may spark some ideas for Tourism Saskatoon.

Tourism Industry Association of Canada: *Green Your Business Toolkit*  
[www.tiac.travel/documents/advocacy/green\\_your\\_business\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.tiac.travel/documents/advocacy/green_your_business_toolkit.pdf)

David Suzuki Foundation: *David Suzuki At Work Toolkit*  
[www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/green-your-workplace/take-david-suzuki-to-work/](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/green-your-workplace/take-david-suzuki-to-work/)

One Planet Vision: *One Planet Action Plan Sustainability Toolkit*  
<http://www.oneplanetvision.org/organisations/one-planet-action-plans/free-toolkit/>

Canadian Chamber of Commerce: *A Guide to Climate Change For Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises*  
[http://www.pollutionprobe.org/old\\_files/publications/Energy.htm](http://www.pollutionprobe.org/old_files/publications/Energy.htm)

Visit Scotland: *Business Waste Toolkit for the Tourism Industry, Sustainable Tourism Business for Dummies Guide, Responsible Visitors Guide*  
[http://www.visitscotland.org/business\\_support/sustainable\\_tourism/downloadable\\_resources.aspx](http://www.visitscotland.org/business_support/sustainable_tourism/downloadable_resources.aspx)

Failte Ireland: *A Guide to Running Green Meetings and Events, How to Make Your Event A Green One*  
<http://www.failteireland.ie/Business-Supports/Environmental-Guidelines.aspx>

Industry Canada: *Eco-Efficiency Scorecard for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*  
[http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ee-ee.nsf/vwapj/finaltool.PDF/\\$FILE/finaltool.PDF](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ee-ee.nsf/vwapj/finaltool.PDF/$FILE/finaltool.PDF)