Running a more environmentally friendly office promises tangible business benefits for all law firms, large or small, national, regional or international. Some of the main benefits include:

* reduced costs;
* a healthier, more efficient office environment;
* better staff recruitment and retention; and
* building relationships with clients and suppliers.

Few firms will achieve these goals without first engaging their employees in the issue of environmental sustainability and then providing the tools to help them achieve your goals. Employees are the engine room of ideas, the source of innovation and the energy that helps to drive change and get things done.

Law firms that really want to make a difference should draw on the enthusiasm of their people and use their influence to promote positive environmental behaviour both at work and at home. In return the firm will be viewed as progressive employers, not only engaged with one of the key issues of the day, but also actively supporting their people as they make positive environmental changes both at home and in the workplace.

Also remember, your firm is probably already doing things that promote efficiency. Don’t start from scratch but build-on, refresh and refocus existing initiatives.

This document provides you with a 6 step guide to help your firm engage employees in the environmental sustainability process. Throughout the toolkit we include Resources and Tools to assist you in managing this process, which we will continue to update.

If you require further support or information, please contact

### Identify Why

* Identify the benefits
* Help staff see the need to change
* Secure support from senior management
* Make it relevant

Although one person with passion can change the world, change is easier and more rapid when you can convince others to help. To gain support from colleagues, particularly management, you must be able to communicate ‘why’. For different people, there can be a different ‘why’; for example business case reasons or just wanting to do the right thing.

**Identify the benefits / Secure support**

* Write a business case for sustainability
  + AusLSA: Intro to Corporate Sustainability (training course [***is there a link to booking the course you can add here?****]*)
  + Report *Sustainability Pays: Studies That Prove the Business Case for Sustainability*.*pdf* (<http://www.natcapsolutions.org/businesscasereports.pdf>)
  + EcoSteps - <http://www.ecosteps.com.au/content.asp?id=61>
  + Sustainability Business Case Reports: <http://www.natcapsolutions.org/businesscasereports.pdf>

**Help staff see the need for change**

* Screen documentaries or videos
* Host a high profile speaker
* Measure, calculate and communicate the environmental impacts of office items or processes

**Resources & Tools**

* [www.green.tv](http://www.green.tv)
* [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)
* [Www.Youtube.com](http://Www.Youtube.com)
  + Search for “environmental impacts X”
    - Disposable cups - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OulbSeM9GI>
    - Water impacts of making disposable cups <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDTmjR_GG1w>
  + Browse through an environmental organisation’s channel
* Documentary screenings
  + [*An Inconvenient Truth*](http://www.documentarytube.com/an-inconvenient-truth) **(2006)**
  + [*The End of the Line*](http://endoftheline.com/film) **(2009)**
  + [*The Age of Stupid*](http://www.ovguide.com/the-age-of-stupid-9202a8c04000641f80000000092710eb) **(2009)**
  + [*The Vanishing of the Bees*](http://www.vanishingbees.com/) **(2009)**
  + Take3 campaign - <http://timsilverwood.com/the-take-3-documentary/>
* Interactive displays
  + Bureau of Meteorology - <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/change/>
  + CSIRO - <http://www.csiro.au/>
  + [NASA Climate Change website](http://climate.nasa.gov/)
  + [Catlin Arctic Survey](http://www.catlinarcticsurvey.com/)
* Environmental Speakers
  + [Australian Speakers Bureau](http://www.australianspeaker.com/page.php?id=608&speaker_page=1)
  + Platinum – [Speakers](http://www.platinumspeakers.com.au/page.php?id=492&speaker_topic=23)
  + [Successful Speakers](http://www.successfulspeakers.com.au/view_speakers_by_topic.php?range=&topic_id=89)
  + [Saxton](http://www.saxton.com.au/speakers/environment-and-climate-change-speakers/)

### Develop Ideas

* Survey staff / consult stakeholders
* Identify champions, establish a ‘green committee’
* Develop a strategy, objectives and goals

**Survey Staff / Consult stakeholders**

Asking for broader suggestions and opinions raises awareness, engages staff and generates more ideas. It is also a great way to gauge interest and appetite; to identify the greatest environmental impacts at your firm.

* Suggestion box – electronic or old-school
* AusLSA Staff Engagement survey questions

**Identify champions, establish a ‘green committee’**

* Break out box –

**Develop a strategy, objectives and goals**

***Establish an employee environmental network***

*A green champions group or network enables interested and motivated individuals to become involved in the firm’s environmental objectives. Rather than driving change from the top of the firm, this allows a wider range of people to be involved in generating environmental ideas and solutions.*

*Volunteering to be a green champion should be a personal choice and the best way to get started is to advertise for interested individuals in firm-wide newsletters, emails and posters. The first meeting should determine the terms of reference for the group, establish its purpose and what members would prefer it to be called.*

*The first meeting should also establish the number of times per year the groups wishes to meet and also how much involvement they would like in between meetings.*

*At subsequent meetings, updates on what the firm is doing to reduce its environmental impact need to be provided, along with updates from champions on what initiatives they have commenced in their work areas and how they have helped to increase awareness of the firm’s environmental objectives and targets.*

*Ideas from the champions group should be recorded and progress should be plotted. This information will prove vital at a later date to review how much the firm has achieved and help you to celebrate success.*

*Important things to remember when establishing your network:*

* ***Inclusive and representative:*** *Ensure there is an even mix of champions; a cross-section from all levels within the firm, fee earners and non-fee earners, is essential.*
* ***Empowered to perform:*** *Operational staff must support the green champions as well as use them as a link to the rest of the firm. It is important to ensure that the green champions ‘own’ the projects, ideas and initiatives*

An ad-hoc approach is often how a law firm’s sustainability initiatives begin. Like any project, a more strategic approach that identifies objectives and measures progress promotes success.

Breaking down environmental sustainability into smaller topics, focussing on particular issues can also be a useful approach. AusLSA has developed a themed approach that you are encouraged to adopt.

* Draft an Environmental Policy for your firm - <http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/government/ems/publications/pubs/a-environmental-policy.doc>
* AusLSA EMS will assist you develop an Environmental Management Plan for your firm - <http://www.legalsectoralliance.com.au/aems.html>
* Adopt and use the AusLSA Sustainability themes and focus on a particular issue every quarter.

**Resources & Tools**

* Surveys – [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
* Legal Sector Alliance - could we link to the UK LSA?
* Eco-Buy - <http://www.ecobuy.org.au/>
* Sustainability Victoria - <http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_businesses.html>
* Yammer - https://www.yammer.com/

### Build Enthusiasm

* Develop a communications platform
* Get staff involved
* Coordinate with existing committees and departments
* Keep messages simple

**Develop a communications platform**

* Develop a web page on your firm’s intranet site to communicate your plans and successes
* Start a Facebook or Yammer site for your activities
* Ask to include a regular green column, tips and tricks or a sustainability update in your firms internal newsletter, managing partner’s update or equivalent
* Negotiate to have a regular spot at staff meetings
* Populate your communications with:
  + Policies and procedures
  + Objectives & targets
  + Fact and tip sheets
  + Articles/updates

**Get staff involved**

* Generate and retain staff interest by regular updates on upcoming campaigns, strategies and achievements
* Employee induction and performance reviews– include info on sustainability in your HR programs. See the AusLSA HR checklist for ideas on how [**insert hyperlink**].
* Consider some of the ideas and resources in the AusLSA Sustainability Action Plan [**hyperlink?]**
  + Waste awareness
  + Sustainable food and wine evening
  + Energy reduction events
  + Paper reduction campaign
  + Cycling promotion campaign
  + Energy awareness promotion
  + Pedometer challenge
  + Prompting ethical consumption

**Resources & Tools**

* External speaker (refer to above)
* Tour of local nature reserves/site special scientific interest
* Find a community project (this is the WA local government website, I’m sure there are other states which have the same: <http://walga.asn.au/AboutWALGA.aspx>)
* Generic environment email address for feedback and suggestions
* Yammer / Facebook site
* Weblogs & wikis
* ABC green at work - <http://www.abc.net.au/greenatwork>
* Meatless Monday campaign - <http://meatlessmondays-australia.com/>
* Earth Hour - <http://www.wwf.org.au/earthhour>
* World Environment Day - http://www.fta.org.au/

### Provide support

* Empower action
* Remove barriers
* Be realistic

Consider if there are any barriers to staff taking action and getting more involved, such as time, resources or a lack of understanding about purpose or expectations. Take time to review your communication of benefits to secure resourcing from management and engagement with other staff

**Empower Action / Remove Barriers**

* Write a business case for sustainability
  + AusLSA: Intro to Corporate Sustainability (training course)
  + Report Sustainability Pays: Studies That Prove the Business Case for Sustainability.pdf (<http://www.natcapsolutions.org/businesscasereports.pdf>)
  + EcoSteps - <http://www.ecosteps.com.au/content.asp?id=61>
  + Sustainability Business Case Reports: <http://www.natcapsolutions.org/businesscasereports.pdf>

**Resources & Tools**

* Environmental corporate volunteer programs -  <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/volunteers/>  (includes Conservation Volunteers, Landcare volunteering and Coastcare volunteering)

### Celebrate success

* Generate and celebrate short-term wins
* Communicate progress
* Reward those who made success possible

**Generate and celebrate short-term wins**

As part of your sustainability plan, build in some initiatives that have an immediate impact or cause a rapid change:

* Certified FairTrade workplace – switch to Fairtrade coffee, tea and hot choc and seek certification (http://www.fta.org.au/)
* Change all printers to default duplex
* Provide jugs/house bottled water instead of pre-packaged
* Provide KeepCups to staff
* LSA(UK) Quick wins - http://www.legalsectoralliance.com/getinvolved/quickwins

**Communicate Progress**

Small improvements can inspire people to consider just how much more can be achieved. Make sure you let people know of the small wins as well as progress towards the larger objectives. Think of novel ways of communicating achievements: the number of trees saved, cars off the road, etc...

* Use a PC in a central location for featuring interactive material
* Cascade emails
* Develop a ‘Green Your Team’ pack which includes their terms of reference, action and ideas matrix, their successes, reminder emails they send out to their groups and any internal audit checklists they complete

**Reward those who made success possible**

* Interview individuals for a story
* Organise recognition at team meetings
* Research the wider market
* Carry out a survey
* Join your pro bono and/community activities
* Prizes
* Enter an award
* Recognise an individual

**Resources & Tools**

* [**The ALB Australasian Law Awards might include a Corporate Citizen award or a CSR award, but I will need to double check**].
* Law Society awards
* UN Awards
* Banksia awards for environmental excellence in Australia include a couple of business categories.  <http://www.banksiafdn.com/>

### Reinforce the message

* Anchor new approaches in the firm's culture
* Integrate principles into existing processes
* Use wins and information from your campaigns in the firms ongoing sustainability plan

You’ve picked the low hanging fruit. You’ve secured a group of fully engaged green champions to help you drive forward your message. Your managing partner is pleased that you’ve also managed to secure some cost savings. And your fellow employees no longer hate you for taking their desk side bins away.

Reasons to be cheerful, yes, but this is no time to rest on your laurels.

You need to pull together all of that good work – the cost savings, feedback from employees, visuals of events in action, unexpected outcomes – and use it to inform the strategy for your ongoing sustainability plan.

Everything you have learned during your communications campaign and related events will help you to focus on those areas where future efficiencies can be gained.

**Anchor new approaches in the firm’s culture / Integrate principles into existing processes**

* Monitor campaign success (by survey or some quantitative mechanism) report back to staff
* Align with broader / national campaigns
* Connect your environment campaign with your pro bono and community activities.
* Refresh campaigns and posters periodically
* Find out how what other firms and businesses are doing

**Resources & Tools**

* AusLSA Sustainability Action Plan
* AusLSA Sustainability HR checklist
* Sustainable Living Festival (Melbourne) - <http://festival.slf.org.au/>
* Sustainable Living Foundation - http://www.slf.org.au/
* Ride2Work Day - <http://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/general/ride2work/93176/>