

WORKSHEET

Create a company sustainability strategy

1. Create a Brand Narrative

Start with the Big Questions

Whether you're just starting out or far along on your fashion journey, take a step back to think about your brand. For example: Who are we? Why do we create? What does sustainability mean to our company? This may seem superfluous, but it is vital to creating a relevant sustainability strategy. It is essential to know, on a fundamental level, why you're doing what you're doing, and what your unique positive impact will be. Sustainability is not one-size-fits all, there are myriad routes one could take and they all have value. Take your time on Step 1.

Create Your Brand Narrative

- What is the purpose of your brand?
- (Re)Create your mission statement
How can you include sustainability moving forward?
- Be sure your brand story and history are updated and shareable.
- Make a vision statement that clarifies your long-term vision and goals of the company.
- Make a list of core values and principles.
- What is your value proposition (the value you promise to deliver to the consumer)?
- Who is impacted by you what you do?
Your people, also called stakeholders, include employees, suppliers, customers, and everyone who touches your brand.
Make a list of your stakeholders.
- What does your current governance and operations structure look like?
- What does your current revenue model look like?

2. Assess Where You Are Now & Where You Want to Go

Where are you now?

- What has your Sustainability journey been to date?
- What does Sustainability mean for your brand?
 - What benefit does the pivot for sustainability bring to your company?
 - What is the business case for a shift towards sustainability?
 - What are the risks of not pursuing sustainability?

Trends in Fashion + Sustainability

- What are some macro trends that are shifting the supply and demand curve of your product?
- What do you see from your customers, suppliers, and competition?
- Look to outside sources for research and factual data to back up your claims.
- How are your ideas in sustainability addressing these shifts in the market?

Conduct a self-assessment. There are some wonderful tools you can use to measure where you stand:

- B Corp Impact Assessment
- Natural Step (ABCD) Method
- Higg Brand & Retail Module (Higg BRM)
- C2C Certified™ Self Check

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Create a company sustainability strategy cont'd

Where do you want to go?

- What is your long-term sustainability goal?
 - Begin with your final vision (not only for your company, but for the whole world) and work back to how you will get there by setting checkpoints for yourself. This process is called Backcasting (Natural Step's ABCD Process).
- What are first steps you can take to begin working towards your goal?
 - Write down a basic strategy for the business areas you want to transform (design, manufacturing, etc.)
- Highlight key innovation and impact areas that are easiest for your company

3. Create and implement a sustainability strategy

Creating your company's brand narrative and conducting a self-assessment are a great start. As you move forward, here are some of the basic steps and tools for creating and implementing a sustainability strategy for your company:

1. Commit to improving environmental and social performance
2. Form a sustainability team
 - To begin, this just needs to be a couple motivated/dedicated employees. In order to succeed, they will need explicit support from, and direct access to, top management. This team will also require access to all relevant information.
3. Define what sustainability means for your company
 - Develop a common language and understanding. (You can use information gathered in Steps 1 and 2. There are also some great worksheets and exercises in the CFDA Sustainable Strategies Toolkit.)
 - How will decision-making and evaluation of design and business impacts be approached?
 - What tools or framework methods will be used?
4. Identify short- and long-term goals
 - Based on learnings from your self-assessment, identify goals for 1, 3, and 5 years - and beyond!
 - Brainstorm opportunities for action.
 - Prioritize and simplify.
5. Assess your needs to meet those goals
 - This includes things like tangible resources,
 - tools, equipment, staffing, stakeholder relationships, R+D, etc.
 - How will those needs be met?
6. Identify metrics for assessment
 - How will environmental, social, and financial impacts be measured/considered?
 - Create an action implementation table and timeline.

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Create a company sustainability strategy cont'd

7. Share and communicate your strategy with your entire team, your suppliers, the public, and all extended stakeholders

- Create and share a written company policy.
- Have written supplier guidelines (like an RSL list, code of conduct, etc.) to share with your team, your suppliers, and the public.
- Design a conscious brand strategy. This is a vision-based plan articulating the story of your brand and its journey to sustainability. For example, how does your company use design and the products it creates to empower, educate, inform, and catalyze meaningful change?
- Be transparent and publicly report your progress and challenges.

8. Regularly review your strategy and integrate new and improved concepts of sustainability

9. Engage and collaborate

- Engage and collaborate with consumers, civic, social, community, education, eco/social awareness raising, philanthropic, design leadership, activism, brand partnerships, etc.

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Sustainable design strategies

Numerous design strategies exist that can lead to more sustainable business practices and products, which then also lead to greater profitability. Here is a brief overview of ideas to keep in mind.

Design to Have Positive Impact

- How is your design making the world better or solving a problem?

Design for Circularity

- One current goal for sustainability in fashion is the creation of a circular product cycle and economy. Circularity, also known as the Cradle to Cradle approach, is the idea that products not only cause no harm, but actually benefit people and the environment along the entire product's lifecycle. Cradle to Cradle proposes a future "where design is a positive, regenerative force, producing effects that we want to expand rather than shrink." In addition to having positive impact, products create no waste - all materials are either infinitely recyclable or biodegradable.

Reduce Materials & Waste

- Use less.
- Move towards zero waste at all stages, like creating zero waste patterns.
- Consider a reduction in material weight and size, especially with packaging components.

Substitute for Better, More Energy Efficient Materials

- Utilize less toxic, more sustainable materials. (See our the [Materials](#) section

of this guide for more information.)

- Consider repurposing materials/ deadstock. Ex: Eileen Fisher Remade
- Use renewable energy sources where available.

Use Fewer Materials

- Once fibers are blended, or different materials are mixed together, they become very difficult to recycle. Create products with one material that can be more easily placed in a closed loop recycling system.
- Design for Disassembly. If a product is designed using different materials, allow for each element of a product to be separated and recycled differently.

Design for Customization and Multi-Use

- Create opportunities for the wearer to add personal elements or customize a product.
- Create designs that can be adjusted by the wearer to have different fits and/or serve multiple functions. For example, a jacket with layers that can be added or removed depending on the weather. If one garment serves multiple needs, people don't need as much stuff.

Design for Durability & Longevity

- Create high quality products with resources to extend product life through repair + mending services.

Efficiency for Best Environmental Impact

- Leverage technological and process innovations to design in solutions with greater efficiency and less impact.

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Sustainable design strategies cont'd

Keep Things Local

- Reduce transportation and energy emissions by working with local suppliers and vendors.
- Working local also makes it easier to understand your social and environmental impact because you can observe it in your local community.

Consider Using Digital Resources

- Transform physical objects into digital or virtual information. For example, use digital 3D visualization technology that minimizes the need to produce samples.

Give Your Customers Instructions

- Label customer care and end-of-life instructions.
- Design things to be washed and dried less frequently with less impact, and make care instructions very clear to consumers.

Design Closed-Loop Systems

- Consider implementing take-back programs to take responsibility for the reuse and recycling of products you create.

Generate Financial Value

- Produce products that become more valuable with time instead of less.

Create Social & Cultural Value

- Desirability & meaning – how will you create a strong emotional bond between wearer and product?
- Design products that are needed & useful.
- Design products with cultural vitality.

Plan Ahead

- Rushing things can hurt people and the environment at all stages. For example, shipping by sea has less environmental impact than shipping by air, but it takes longer so you have to plan ahead. Doing things last minute/rush orders make factory work flow more volatile, often extra workers are brought in only as contractors and workers are forced to go into overtime. Planning in advance allows for more stable and healthy working conditions, in factories as well as your own design room.

Develop Long-Term Personal Relationships with Your Suppliers

- This is better for your suppliers, who have more stable work. It also gives you better insight into your social and environmental impact and the ability to work with your suppliers toward improvements.

Use Nature as an Inspiration & Guide

- This concept is also referred to as Biomimicry. Not only can this help you innovate smart or beautiful design ideas, but it also keeps you from forgetting about your connection to nature more generally. If you're inspired by nature it's harder to hurt nature.

Be Authentic

- Be original! You can be inspired by other artists and cultures, but be respectful too.

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How to source ethically

From [Labour Behind the Label](#): The problems in the garment industry are endemic, the solutions more complex than finding 'good' or 'bad' suppliers.

Sourcing ethically is not easy. It means you have to *work with suppliers* in order to improve conditions within the workplaces they use or own. There are certain things you can do and questions you can ask to improve working conditions. Below are some guidelines on these.

1. The relationship you have with any supplier you choose is key:

- Establishing long term and stable relationships means you are in a better position to work with suppliers to make improvements to working conditions.
- Work with your supplier to resolve issues that do come up rather than simply pulling your business and moving on.
- Remember your purchasing decisions can impact on working conditions. If you demand a low price, one of the repercussions could be that workers are paid a low wage. If you place your orders too close to the shipping date or demand late changes to design this might mean workers have to put in excessive overtime to ensure the order is met.
- When you are planning orders, consult your supplier. Find out how long they need to fulfil an order, when their peak times are, what price you need to pay to ensure workers can be paid a living wage. You should also check your supplier has the capacity to meet your order.

2. Do your homework:

- Recognise that your supplier may just be telling you what they think you want to hear. Taking what your supplier says at face value means you may not be getting a full picture of what is really happening in the factory.
- Ensure that you know what legal standards apply within the country and what international labour standards exist and whether these are being met by your supplier. This is important to ensure at least basic working rights are being respected.
- Contact local organisations such as trade unions and NGOs dealing with workers' rights issues. This is a good way of gauging what issues workers in that region or in your supplier factory are facing and for example what workers need to earn to provide for themselves and their families.
- If possible, visit the factory, both by appointment and unannounced. Ask about health and safety, wages, overtime and the presence of a trade union. Emphasize that an active trade union would be an advantage when you choose a supplier. If you want more advice on this, Labour Behind the Label can help.
- Again, don't just assume your supplier is being completely transparent. If there is a union then try to speak with its representative outside of the factory and independently of the owner. If there is no independent union, see if a local organisation can talk to some of the workers and report back to you (they may charge a fee for this).

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How to source ethically cont'd

3. Work with others:

- Find out if your supplier has any kind of certification, like SA8000. This is no guarantee of decent conditions, but shows at least that your supplier is aware that social concerns may be an issue for their buyers.
- Find out who the other buyers are at the factory and contact them to see if you can work together to improve working conditions.
- Contact other companies or designers who are also trying to source ethically.
- You could join a multi-stakeholder initiative such as the Ethical Trading Initiative or FairWear Foundation to share learning between companies taking action to improve conditions.

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Questions to ask for all materials

These questions can be used when considering any material. In addition to fashion materials, this includes packaging, disposable cutlery, paper and any materials you might use in your business.

Raw Materials

- What raw materials go into making a material or product?
- Where do they come from?
- What impact does the cultivation/ extraction of that raw material have on 1) the environment, 2) wildlife, and 3) the communities where it comes from?
- What processes does a raw material go through before it becomes useful to you? What gets added or taken away (and from where does that stuff come and to where does it go)?
- Be thoughtful about the intended use of your product. Are you using the material the best suited for your product over its entire lifecycle - production, use, and end-of-life?

Water

- How much water is used in the cultivation/ extraction and processing of the material?
- Where does the water come from?
- Do you have a way to measure quantity and quality of water coming in and going out?
- How much water is wasted? Can it be recycled?
- Is your wastewater clean?
- Is the process happening near any water sources (groundwater, lakes, etc.)? Is your process affecting that water in any way?
- If your raw material involves animals, is

their waste contaminating water sources?

- Will the material require large amounts of water in terms of consumer care?

Energy

- Where does your energy come from?
- Is it renewable?
- How much energy does it take to create a material? Can this be reduced?
- How much energy will that material require when the product is 1) in use and 2) disposed of/recycled?

Air

- What is the carbon footprint of a material? Are you measuring this?
- Are any other parts of the process sending pollution into the air?
- Is air safe for workers to breath in the fields/mines/factories/mills/refineries/etc. where your material is produced?
- How much travel is required between all the different phases of production? Can you reduce this?

Chemicals

- What chemicals go into the making of a material? (Don't forget, these aren't just synthetic, nature produces some harmful chemicals too!)
- Are these chemicals harmful to the environment or people along any part of a product's lifecycle?
- Where does the chemical come from? How is it made? Who makes it? Chemicals are made out of raw materials, so don't forget to ask all the raw materials questions for those too.
- Do you use a Restricted Substances List? (If not, you should consider creating and using one.)

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Questions to ask for all materials cont'd

Waste

- What raw materials go into making a material or product?
- What are the bi-products of producing that material?
- Where does that waste material go? Can it be used for something else? If not, how is it disposed of?
- What kind of packaging is being used and discarded?

Biodiversity

- Does the cultivation/extraction and processing help to maintain biodiversity and preserve the many different species of plants and animals? (For example, the use of GMO crops hinders biodiversity).
- How does the material impact natural habitats along all stages of its lifecycle: cultivation/extraction, processing, use, disposal, and everything in between?

People

- Think about all the people that play a part in that material's lifecycle, including your employees, your local community, every worker along your entire product supply chain (raw material, fiber processing, dye, manufacturing, shipping, retail, etc.), all the different communities those people are a part of, customers/consumers.
- Do you really know who all of them are?
- Do workers in your supply chain have good, stable income (a true living wage, not just the national minimum wage)?
- Are workers empowered? Do they have a voice in the workplace, the right to organize, and equal opportunity?

- Are working conditions safe?
- Are your customers safe?
- Do workers have the resources they need for them and their families to live healthy lives?
- Is there gender equality and empowerment for women?
- We have a tendency to think of just the people with whom we work directly, but we need to think of entire communities, which are often effected by environmental pollution, cycles of poverty inflicted by poor labor practices, and more.
- Does your supply chain have a negative impact on human health? (For example, if your dye process is polluting ground water and rivers you are hurting the health of entire communities, not to mention entire ecosystems).
- How does your supply chain impact urban migration? (Which can also mean the destruction of smaller communities, rural life and artisanship, or the creation of vast urban slums that encourage dangerous living situations).

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Implementing sustainability at production facilities

1. Get to know your suppliers!

Most importantly, get to know your suppliers! This includes farms, slaughterhouses, mills, dye houses, tanneries, chemical suppliers, mines, etc. Every place touched by your product. Visit the facilities, see the process in person, and establish a personal relationship.

2. Create a code of conduct & RSL to share with suppliers

Develop environmental and social guidelines to share with suppliers and stakeholders. This should include:

Create a Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is a document outlining your company's position on labor and environmental values and policies you hope to be implemented in all facilities you work with. This document can be shared with your suppliers, partners, and all stakeholders (including on your website).

There are many templates and examples of Codes of Conduct that exist. Two great examples include the [LVMH Supplier Code of Conduct](#) and [Kering Sustainability Principles](#).

Create a Restricted Substances List (RSL)

An RSL is a list of harmful or illegal chemical substances often found in the apparel supply chain that are either prohibited or limited.

There are multiple tools and existing RSLs that can help you to develop your own and enforce it, including those from [ZDHC](#), [GOTS](#), and [bluesign®](#).

3. Assess your suppliers

Has Your Supplier Already Completed an Assessment?

First, you should ask the facility if they have already done environmental or social assessments. If they are already measuring and providing information to other companies, perhaps there is no need to ask them to do it again.

Choose the Best Approach

There are multiple ways to assess a supplier:

- You can start with something as simple as a basic, one-page questionnaire. Even just a few answers can give you great insight into a facility's values and practices.
- The supplier can use a self-assessment tool. The [Higg tools](#) are a great place to start measuring sustainability performance. (Apparel, footwear, and home textiles manufacturers have the unique option of using the Higg Index without joining the Sustainable Apparel Coalition. For a fee of \$85 per year, any manufacturing facility can access and use the Higg Index Facilities environmental and social modules online.)
- You can pay a third party to do an official assessment.

*Please note that in order to measure environmental impact, the right equipment is needed. This includes meters and tools to track water, steam, and electricity consumption at the process and equipment level. If the facility doesn't have these, work with your suppliers to install them.

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Implementing sustainability at production facilities cont'd

If You Can Ask Nothing Else of a Manufacturer, Ask These Questions:

According to the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, these are the critical questions to determine if your manufacturer does basic sustainability management (beyond artisan production).

Has your facility been in compliance with all legal requirements/permits within the last 12 months?

- Behind this Q: Whether or not the manufacturer has a formal process for complying with local and national environmental laws
- How to use this info: If the facility isn't complying with local laws it is unlikely to be a solid sustainability actor

Does this site track and measure, at least annually, energy use from all sources, including energy used on-site (direct) and purchased energy (indirect)? Do you set and review at least annually improvement targets for reducing energy use (including fuel use for on-site transportation if applicable)?

- Behind this Q: While energy isn't the greatest area of risk, managing it well will yield financial returns for the manufacturer. Sophisticated and well managed facilities manage their energy well and this is a good indicator of overall sustainability performance.
- How to use this info: If you are looking to see whether or not your manufacturer is sophisticated about sustainability, energy management indicates they are moving in the right direction but shouldn't be used on its own.

For Wet Processes: Is all wastewater that is produced at your site being treated with primary and secondary treatment? Do you monitor the quantity and quality of wastewater produced at your site?

- Behind this Q: If the facility has wet processes and isn't managing and monitoring its wastewater it's not a responsible actor. Also it can be an indication of sound chemical management
- How to use this info: You can't make sustainable products if your wet processes aren't treating their wastewater. Period.

4. Help Your Suppliers Create a Sustainability Roadmap, and Work With Them Over Time

Provide Your Supplier With Support

Based on the results of the assessment, look at areas where improvement can be made. Support the facility to create a Sustainability Strategy with specific timeline and measurable goals.

Good Work Should be Rewarded

The best way to reward suppliers is with increased business and long-term commitments. If possible, provide other incentives (financial or community benefits).

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Ethical Metalsmiths'

Questions to learn more about your supplier.

1. Who is the right person to talk to? What is their name, and contact information? Record the date and time of your call.
2. Can they verify that 100 percent of the silver, or gold you are buying is from recycled sources?
3. If not, what portion can they guarantee and where does the rest come from?
4. Do they know about the copper that they alloy with to make sterling, where does it come from?
5. What about other alloys?
6. Can they ensure that none of their metal - recycled or new - has come from known conflict zones (like Democratic Republic of the Congo)?
7. Can they ensure that the scrap, old jewelry, etc. that they buy is not part of a money laundering scheme? In other words do they screen the people they buy from?
8. What products are made with materials refined in house? (Ex. sheet, wire, bezel, findings, chain, ear wires) - often a refiner will make sheet and wire, but not the findings, those they are buying from somewhere else and re-selling.
9. What kind of system do they have in place to keep refining toxics out of the environment? (ex. scrubbers to clean the air, water purification and re-use systems for solid waste)
10. Do they monitor and aim to reduce energy and water use over time?
11. What can they tell you about the treatment of their own employees? Fair living wages, rights, and safety?
12. Would they consider communicating answers to these questions on their website, in other words, make their process more transparent to jewelers?

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“Golden Rules”: Gold & Precious Metals Sourcing Policy

The Golden Rules are a set of criteria for more responsible mining developed by the [No Dirty Gold \(NDG\)](#) campaign based on broadly accepted international human rights laws and basic principles of sustainable development.

The Golden Rules hold that mining companies and operations must:

1. Respect **basic human rights** outlined in international conventions and law
2. Obtain the **free, prior, and informed consent** of affected communities.
3. Respect **workers’ rights and labor standards**, including safe working conditions
4. Ensure that operations are not located in areas of armed or militarized **conflict**
5. Ensure that projects **do not force** communities off their lands
6. Ensure that projects are not located in protected areas, **fragile ecosystems**, or other areas of high conservation or ecological value
7. Refrain from **dumping mine wastes** into the ocean, rivers, lakes, or streams
8. Ensure that projects **do not contaminate water, soil, or air** with sulfuric acid drainage or other toxic chemicals
9. Cover all costs of **closing down** and cleaning up mine sites
10. Fully **disclose information** about social and environmental effects of projects
11. Allow **independent verification** of the above

Publicly sign and endorse “The Golden Rules:” Gold and Precious Metals Sourcing Policy.

NDG asks jewelers and jewelry retailers to pledge to source only from mines who meet the criteria listed on the page before this. By signing the pledge, you show your customers your commitment to ethical mining and corporate social responsibility. If you are a retailer and would like to endorse the Golden Rules, please share a signed and dated copy of [this document](#), printed on your letterhead and email it to: retailers@nodirtygold.org.

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Sustainable buildings & offices

1. Use less water

Use Low-Water Appliances

- This includes things like low flow toilets, washing machines, dishwashers, faucets, and any other water-using appliance. (The ENERGY STAR® seal means you're buying an appliance that uses 10-50% less energy and water. Check out the [Energy Star website](#) to see what gets the seal of approval.)

Make Sure Plants and Gardens are Low-Water

Make Sure the Water Leaving Your Facility is Clean

- Make sure whatever water leaves your facility is not harmful to people or the environment, and does not put undue stress on stormwater and drainage infrastructure.

Can You Filter and Recycle Your Own Water?

- This is most relevant to factories and wet-processing facilities that tend to use large volumes of water.

2. Use less energy

Turn off the Lights and Use Natural Light

- You'll save money on energy and maybe even feel better – exposure to natural light at work has been linked to better sleep, more physical activity and even a better mood.

Turn Everything Off When You're Not Using It

- Shut down computers and turn off all lights, printers, copiers, electric heaters, ac, and any other office electronics.

- Using smart power strips can stop the drain and save you money. Power strips also make it easy because you could shut everything off with one switch.

Make Sure You're Using Low-Energy Use Electronics

- Switch to LED light bulbs. In addition to reducing your monthly electric bill by up to 75%, they last 25 times as long as traditional incandescent bulbs and don't contain any potentially harmful toxins like mercury, according to GreenNYC.
- The ENERGY STAR® seal means you're buying an appliance that uses 10-50% less energy and water. Check out the [Energy Star website](#) to see what gets the seal of approval.

3. Use better energy

Use Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy

- Install solar energy.
- Talk to your utility company. Many offer businesses the option to use more renewable energy out of the mix of energy that they purchase.

Measure Your Carbon Footprint!

- You can use an existing carbon calculator, or make your own! Here are a few free ones: [Carbon Fund's Business Carbon Calculator](#), [California Small Business Carbon Calculator](#). Measure your personal carbon footprint with this [WWF Calculator](#)
- DO AN ENERGY AUDIT!
 - Talk to your city to see if they'll do this for free.

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Sustainable buildings & offices cont'd

4. Don't use toxic chemicals

Use non-toxic cleaning products:

- A great resource to learn more about which products are safe and non-toxic is the Environmental Working Group (EWG).
 - For cleaning products, see their [Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#).
 - For personal care products (like hand soap), see their [Skin Deep Database](#).

5. Reduce waste

The Goal = Zero Waste!

- Ideally, whatever (minimal) waste you make would be recyclable or biodegradable.

Use Less Paper - Or Go Paperless!

- Use digital tools to share files.
- When you have to use paper, make sure to copy and print on both sides. You can also stock your office with recycled and chlorine-free paper.
- Recycle paper in recycling bins, scrap paper, shred it for packing material, or even compost it (learn more about composting to see which papers apply).

Use and Wash Real Dishes, Silverware and Water Bottles

- The environmental impact of making, re-using and washing is far less than disposable plates, utensils, water bottles, etc. Remember to only run the dishwasher when it's full and choose the air-dry setting or open the door after the final rinse.

- Encourage your employees to use reusable coffee mugs, water bottles, takeout containers, and bags in general. Perhaps you'll even provide them with these items and tell them how to use them?

Drink Tap Water

- Avoid single-use plastic bottles. Consider an office water filter.
- You can learn about the quality of your tap water [here](#).

Compost

- Some stuff shouldn't go to landfills – food scraps, napkins, grass clippings, leaves and many other items can be composted. (If all New Yorkers composted, they'd cut down on waste by 31%!)
 - Learn how to compost in [NYC](#) and [LA](#).

6. Have indoor plants

Plants Make Offices Healthier and More Enjoyable

- They can absorb indoor pollution and increasing the flow of oxygen.

7. Shop local

- Benefits including reduced environmental impact, job creation, better service, and community benefit, among other things. We've listed them in the [People](#) section.
- You can read more about it and create a Local Purchasing Policy with this [B Lab Resource Guide](#).

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Sustainable buildings & offices cont'd

8. Reduce impact from travel

Prioritize public transportation

- Take the train, bus, or subway instead of renting a car for business travel. Recommend employees do the same for their commute, in addition to carpooling and bike options.

If You Can, Choose Train or Bus over Airplane

- Air travel is a major source of human-induced climate change – traveling by train or bus produces 85% less pollution than a plane flight.

Use Technology

- Encourage your office to invest in videoconferencing and other technological solutions that can reduce employee travel.

9. Measure & Track Your Improvement

Measure, Track and Work on Improving the Above Areas

- Start with specific goals for your workplace sustainability initiatives and work to continually improve.

10. Get Your Entire Company Involved!

To achieve meaningful change, employee engagement makes a big difference so consider building a “green” team and providing training (and budget) for sustainability initiatives.

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Make packaging more sustainable

The following are steps you can take for more sustainable packaging:

Use less packaging

- Optimize packaging design: Speak with suppliers about how you can use less.
- Consider alternative types of packaging: Do you need a box? Could the garment be shipped in a pouch or bag?
- Design products to require less packaging: For example, the more compact and light-weight, the less packaging required. Design efforts here can yield huge cost savings!

Use recycled, recyclable, renewable, and biodegradable materials

- Use packing made of recycled materials
- Consider new, innovative materials: For example, look at traditional petroleum resins vs bio-based recyclable resins vs compostable resins.

Know where raw materials come from

- Understand where your packing suppliers get their materials: Refer to the [Questions to ask for all materials Worksheet](#) of this guide.
- Consider sourcing and supply chain certifications: Examples include: SFI, FSC , PEFC

Create a Packaging Restricted Substance List (PRSL)

- Create an official list of substances you do not want used in your packaging and publish it publicly.
- Work together with your suppliers to ensure no restricted substances are being used.

Use Retail-Ready Packaging

- Where appropriate, use packing from the factory that is retail-ready from early on to avoid excess packaging.

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Make your transportation & logistics more sustainable

Understand, track and measure how your goods are transported

Understand

- The first step is simply to understand how your goods are transported during every step of the supply chain, from raw material through all stages of production, distributors, retail, user, and landfill/incinerator/recycling facility.
- Things to think about include: emissions, natural resource utilization, waste and recycling, efficiency, impact on people (at all levels) in terms of health and safety

Measure

- Once you understand the big picture, start to track, measure and reduce your environmental impact. Only with good information can one make effective decisions about what to produce and how much, where to locate inventory and how best to transport it.

Engage

- Share any relevant data and engage with vendors to apply best practices, reduce impact, improve utilization, and optimize routes.
- Implement an internal or “shadow” price on carbon high enough to materially affect investment decisions.

Use renewable energy and reduce your carbon footprint

Calculate your carbon footprint

- This can be initially be done using basic calculators that carbon offset companies provide . For more accurate and more complex calculations, options are listed in the tools section below.

Consider carbon offsets

- Reducing your carbon footprint should be your priority. But until you're completely neutral or actually improving air quality, consider purchasing carbon offsets. You should do due diligence to make sure your're buying from companies that are transparent (and ideally third party certified).
- Consider planting trees!

Choose the mode of transportation with the lowest impact

There are many modes of transportation to choose from, including rail, road, air, and water. Which mode is the most sustainable depends on your specific product and company, each has its advantages and disadvantages.

- Shipments by land and sea have significantly smaller carbon footprints than air shipments. Air shipments are most common in the final leg of transportation, from retail to consumer, so incentives can be provided to consumers for selecting slower shipping.
- For land transportation, trains and more efficient trucks are preferable.

WORKSHEET

Make your transportation & logistics more sustainable cont'd

Minimize transportation distance

Reduce the distance materials need to travel between production facilities, distribution centers, retail, and beyond

- Slower modes of transportation use less energy. For example, ocean transport has a much lower carbon footprint than air transport, as mentioned above. But, driving a vehicle slower than its' maximum speed also greatly reduces energy consumption.

Consolidate & increase density of shipments

- Moving the same quantity of goods in fewer trips reduces spending on fuel, vehicle maintenance, and energy.

Engage with your carriers

- Work with your transportation companies to comply with best practices, reduce impact, improve utilization, and optimize routes.
- Help educate them about basic efficiently tips such as properly inflated tires, driving during off hours when there is less traffic and idle time, combining shipments to reduce empty space in trucks and when possible, using lower emission fuels, hybrid vehicles or electric vehicles.
- Best practices show that better routing, loading, driver training and advanced tech can improve fuel efficiency by 87%, resulting in a reduction of 15,000 tons of CO2 emissions – equivalent to savings of \$11 million.

Reduce waste

Employee Transportation

This includes how your employees commute to and from work as well as business travel. Encourage public transportation, carpooling, bicycling, walking, etc. Days spent working at home reduce transportation if they are possible. If you have employees that drive, consider installing electric car chargers at your workplace.

Reduce environmental noise

Environmental noise refers to unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise emitted by means of transport, road, rail, air and sites of industrial activity.

- According to the [WHO](#), excessive noise seriously harms human health and interferes with people's daily activities. It can disturb sleep, cause cardiovascular and psychophysiological effects, reduce performance and provoke annoyance responses and changes in social behavior.

Design products and packaging with less volume and weight.

- To use less and better packaging, see [Packaging](#).
- To design more compact and lightweight products, see [Design Strategies](#).

WORKSHEET

Design for & educate your customers about sustainable use

1. Design for durability and longevity

- Create high quality products that last for years and can be repaired.
- Adopt a Quality Assurance Program to enhance durability and longevity.

2. Design for low-impact care & educate your customers about it

Design for low-impact care, which includes:

- Wash less, wash in cold water, wash only when loads are full, wash on shorter cycles, use front-loading, energy efficient machines, air dry, use non-chlorine bleach and safe laundry detergents, don't dry clean

Educate your customers about it

- Care labels are a great place to communicate instructions on how to wash, dry, mend, and further care for your product (in addition to information about materials, recyclability, and instructions for disassembly, if applicable).
- In addition to providing information with a product itself, provide resources on your website. This is a great opportunity to make creative content!

3. Educate your customers about repair

- Most people don't know how to repair damaged clothing, so you have a great opportunity to help them. This can

include written or visual guides. For specialized products or materials you might even want to provide physical repair kits.

4. Create an in-house care & repair program

- Provide services to repair and refurbish products for your customers.
- Track and measure repairs to improve product quality and longevity.

WORKSHEET

Reuse, recycling, and proper disposal

Find circular opportunities

- Try to design products and packaging that are reusable and either infinitely recyclable or compostable. No waste should be created along a product's entire lifecycle.
- Aim to design products that not only do no harm, but benefit society.
- If it is not possible to design a circular product, find other ways to support the development of a circular economy. For example, you could choose to incorporate a single circular element into your product, or you could financially support circularity innovation through investment or charitable giving.

Label how consumers should recycle or dispose of products

The care label on your product should specify what customers should do with unwanted items. This may include donating, recycling, disassembling, throwing in the compost, or returning it to your company.

- You could make it easier for your customers by providing this information in other places as well, like at the point of purchase or on your website.

Take responsibility for your own waste

Create a Take Back Program

- Encourage your customers to bring back the products you sold them when they are no longer wanted. Some companies provide store credit, for example.
- Analyze what has been returned to measure the quality, longevity, and value of your products and improve them.
- Properly dispose of, reutilize, or recycle the products you take back.

Recycle, compost, or otherwise utilize your pre-consumer waste

- This includes things like fabric offcuts and deadstock.
- You should be working to minimize and completely eliminate pre-consumer waste.

WORKSHEET

Make your event more sustainable

Choose more sustainable vendors

- Choose vendors that have their own sustainability policy.
- Use venues and materials that already exist.
- If possible, use an existing venue that already offers the services you need, minimizing transport requirements. This could include things like catering and A/V. Choosing venues with good natural lighting and insulation can further reduce energy use.
- Most of the time, renting flatware, dishes, and glasses is more sustainable than using ones that are disposable (even recycled, recyclable, and compostable ones). There are exceptions, depending on transport

Don't pollute

- Don't use chemical or other products that could harm people, animals, or the environment.
- Work with your venue and vendors to ensure that all cleaning solutions and any other wastewater are disposed or appropriately so as to not cause damage to the local environment.
- When possible, we request that all cleaning products be environmentally friendly.
- Don't contribute to noise pollution

Use less water

- Ideally, for drinking water serve tap water in reusable cups
- Avoid bottled water. If required, choose

from brands that use minimal and more sustainable packaging and sourcing. For example, a paper carton is preferable to a plastic bottle.

- Use low water-use facilities (like kitchens and toilets) and look for solutions to reduce industrial water use even more.

Use less & cleaner energy

- Aim to reduce your footprint
- You can use a free event online carbon calculator, like those from MyClimate or Carbonfund.
- If you can't eliminate your carbon footprint, consider carbon offsets.
- Use Renewable Energy
- Monitor, measure and reduce your power consumption. This could include solar, wind, or biofuels.
- Use low-energy lighting and equipment
- Turn things off when not in use

WORKSHEET

Make your event more sustainable cont'd

Reduce or eliminate waste

- Aim for zero waste
 - This means that none of the waste generated at your event goes to landfill, but is recyclable or compostable. Given the current US recycling dilemma, check with your local recycling facility to ensure recyclables will actually be recycled. Composting is an idea option, but be sure to use due diligence in selecting a compostable product. Many compostable products are only compostable in industrial compost facilities, so you need to make sure the products will make it to one (many don't). Many compostable products are also made out of less-than-ideal materials, so you must also do due diligence to ensure the wood/paper/bioplastic is sustainably made.
- Choose electronic over paper
 - If possible, choose digital marketing, tickets, run-of-show, brochures, etc.
- Use less and non-disposable decor
 - Too often, décor used at fashion shows is simply thrown away after the event.
 - Whenever possible, use materials that already exist (either rented, or invest in materials you know you'll use repeatedly).
 - If possible, reduce décor materials (perhaps aim for a more minimal aesthetic). Otherwise, use materials that can be rented or re-used.

- If your guests don't need giveaway items, don't give them any stuff
 - Work with local suppliers to donate used materials in the community
 - Ask your venue/caterer to donate unused food items to local organizations, such as shelters

Use low-impact modes of transportation

- Take transportation into account when selecting a venue
 - Select a venue with easy access to public transportation and, if long-distance travel is required, transportation hubs.
 - If you are offering accommodation, make it within walking distance of the venue.
- Promote and/or provide low-impact modes of transportation
 - If possible, encourage biking or public transportation
 - If driving is required, offer carpooling services and utilize low-emission vehicles.
- Consider a digital event. For example, teleconferencing or live-streaming. This is certainly lower-impact than hosting a large event.
- Use low-impact transportation and shipping for the transfer of all goods related to the event
- See our [Transportation & Logistics](#) section for more detail

WORKSHEET

Make your event more sustainable cont'd

Work with local vendors

- There are many well-documented benefits to supporting local vendors. Benefits include reduced environmental impact, job creation, better service, and community benefit, among other things - we've listed them in the [People](#) section.
- You can read more about it and create a [Local Purchasing Policy with this B Lab Resource Guide](#).

Start planning your event well in advance

- Avoid last-minute event planning and execution, which often results in a much heftier social and environmental impact including long, inhumane working hours, rush air shipping, etc.