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## What's the Green Idea?

How to go green and boost  
profits — at the same time.



# A Simple Plan

*Some practical advice for going green and doing it profitably.*  
BY MICHAEL LAWSHE

Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes opened its first green convenience store in 2007, which incorporates energy-efficient refrigeration, HVAC, an energy management system and LED lighting.

(Source: NACS Green Toolkit, [www.nacsonline.com/gogreen](http://www.nacsonline.com/gogreen))

Often, the green movement is its own worst enemy.

Recently, in San Francisco, I attended a green convention. As I entered, it was like going back in time. Everywhere I looked, I saw 1960s hippies in hemp clothing eating organic food and drinking herbal tea. I saw a few new technologies, which were largely hidden by well-intentioned, preachy environmentalists.

That's all fine and good, but those things don't represent my green movement — and likely not yours either. My green movement is all about new technology to save energy, reduce costs and clean up our environment, and it's not all peace and free love. My green movement is more like the Jetsons, and less like the Flintstones.

I am not opposed to saving the whales or our forests, but deep down I am a capitalist. I want to do the right thing and I want to make money, and I want my customers to make money

while doing the right thing. Going green does not have to be expensive or impractical; it can have a good return on investment. New sustainable technologies should build better buildings and operate better stores for less money. That's what's exciting about the green movement.

But often the flood of self-proclaimed green products into the marketplace dilutes my excitement and makes it hard to know which way to turn. I see new equipment and new building materials and ask, is that really right for me? Do I need that or is there something even better?

We are inundated with all that is green on a daily basis and it's sometimes overwhelming. How can you sort through it all?

#### Do Your Research

Would you knowingly purchase a computer that is five years old? Of course not. You would likely conduct a

little research and make your purchase based on the latest technology that fits within your budget and meets your needs.

The same is true for green products. You shouldn't purchase building materials and equipment based on old technologies that could be less energy efficient and less sustainable — and without doing some research beforehand. As you plan to remodel existing stores or build new ones, make use of the best materials available, which should not only combine initial cost effectiveness with return on investment but also meet your energy efficiency goals.

Visit Web sites and contact organizations that can help you in your search for information. As you develop your file on all things green, you build your organization's knowledge base and a network of resources for easy access to the most current information (see sidebar).

#### It Takes a Team

As with most things in life, building a sustainable business takes a little work, but the good news is that you don't have to be a green expert to build a green store, and you shouldn't have to do it alone. A few simple steps will help you build a solid team and create a game plan that can get you pretty far down the road to sustainability:

- 1. Build your team** — which should include senior management, marketing, operations, an industry design consultant, architect, contractors and other key consultants — early in the process and challenge them to think outside the box.
- 2. Conduct a green review** of your existing facilities and current plans with your team, and seek out opportunities for improvement. Key areas include building materials, energy management systems, lighting, equipment, water usage, recycling and operations. The NACS Green Toolkit and the LEED certification checklist are both good templates to use while conducting your green review.
- 3. Break down each category and assign a subcommittee to evaluate.** For example, in the energy management category, the subcommittee should look at multiple products from different companies for savings opportunities. Look at current electrical usage and challenge other manufacturers to share the usage rates with their system. In addition, look for additional functionality, such as remote access and programmability, before making a recommendation. Once the subcommittee makes their evaluation, the final decision is easier. Breaking the tasks into smaller pieces like this makes the task less daunting.

## Green Resources

### ORGANIZATIONS

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

**U.S. Green Building Council**  
[www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

**U.S. GBC Green Home Guide**  
[www.greenhomeguide.org](http://www.greenhomeguide.org)

**Energy Star**  
[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

**Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design**  
[www.usgbc.org/LEED](http://www.usgbc.org/LEED)

**World Green Building Council**  
[www.worldgbc.org](http://www.worldgbc.org)

**Forest Stewardship Council**  
[www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)

**Organic Consumers Association**  
[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)

**Sustainable Furniture Council**  
[www.sustainablefurniturecouncil.org](http://www.sustainablefurniturecouncil.org)

**Greenguard Environmental Institute**  
[www.greenguard.org](http://www.greenguard.org)

**Green Seal**  
[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)

### DOCUMENTARIES

**"Who Killed the Electric Car?"**  
[www.whokilledtheelectriccar.com](http://www.whokilledtheelectriccar.com)

**"The Story of Stuff"**  
[www.thestoryofstuff.com](http://www.thestoryofstuff.com)

### BOOKS

***Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things***  
William McDonough and Michael Braungart, 2002

***The Green Book: The Everyday Guide to Saving the Planet One Simple Step at a Time***  
Elizabeth Rogers, 2007



GOING GREEN  
IS A SHIFT IN  
YOUR CORPORATE  
CULTURE THAT  
SHOULD START  
WITH YOU.

**4. Share the results** with your design team and architect and task them to use the results in all aspects of the design process.

This process is not a one-time event, but a proven technique that ensures better energy efficiency and cost savings with each project you undertake.

**But It Starts With You**

And yes, this should be a project you take responsibility for. Going green is not something that can be relegated to the construction department or outsourced to your architect. It is a shift in your corporate culture that should start with you. So take charge and take a few moments to set some goals for yourself and your company.

And if your company employs a contingent of young folks, you might be surprised at how passionate they are about going green. For this group, the green movement is not just a good idea, but a way of life – it's about where they shop, where they live and where they want to work.

Build a green team within your company, include some younger employees, and stand back and let the magic happen. You will be amazed at the effects that your green movement can have. **NCS**

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