



Mission

Create a network of businesses to share sustainable practices and recognize leading green businesses in Omaha.

Background

In support of the Green Omaha Coalition (GOC), an alliance of organizations pursuing a common goal of a Green Omaha, the Green Business Council (GBC) will establish a collaborative network of businesses implementing sustainability programs to improve the environmental performance of their operations.

Focus

The GBC will engage interested businesses from all industries to improve the sustainability of their operations. The GBC will address a wide variety of environmental programs, including but not limited to: procurement, resource efficiency (energy and water), waste reduction (solid and hazardous), climate change, and green building.

The GBC seeks to involve two business groups: (1) those already implementing sustainability programs and (2) those interested but lacking the resources to pursue and implement sustainable strategies. Ultimately, the GBC will become a community resource for businesses to share, learn, and promote sustainable business practices.



Objectives

The GBC has identified four primary objectives that will accomplish its mission of developing a network of businesses with sustainable operations. The GBC will create links that will afford businesses with established sustainable operations the opportunity to share their knowledge of environmental best practices as well as the opportunity to assist emerging green businesses with incorporating better environmental strategies. A brief outline of the four objectives can be found below in Figure 1 with a more definitive description in the next pages.

Short Term		Long Term	
Objective 1 Establish a Framework for Ongoing Leadership of the Green Business Council.	Objective 2 Provide Networking and Education Opportunities to Businesses.	Objective 3 Develop, Maintain, and Distribute a Green Business Directory.	Objective 4 Establish an Awards Program to Recognize Green Businesses.
Establish a leadership team and organizational guidance to manage day-to-day functions of the GBC	Collaborate with alliance organizations to provide networking and training opportunities to Omaha-area businesses.	Compile a directory of individuals responsible for managing sustainability programs for Omaha-area businesses.	Establish a framework for recognizing businesses for exceptional environmental performance.

The Green Business Council will establish a network for businesses focusing on improving their triple bottom line: economic, environmental, and social performance.

Alliances

The GBC recognizes the importance of collaborating with existing organizations to more effectively and efficiently reach businesses to provide educational and networking opportunities. The following provides a preliminary list of strategic alliances the GBC will pursue:

- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce (GOCOC)
- Neighborhood Business Associations
- Flatwater Chapter, U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)
- WasteCap of Nebraska (WasteCap)
- Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)
- International Facility Management Association (IFMA)



Objective 1

Establish a Framework for Ongoing Leadership of the Green Business Council.

Establish a leadership team and organizational guidance to manage day-to-day functions of the GBC.

Activities

Establish a core work group to provide leadership and direction for the GBC, including the fundamental program management requirements to implement other objectives. Activities include:

- Soliciting business participation in and establishing organizational rolls for GBC work group;
- Creating a marketing plan and associated collateral to communicate the mission and objectives of the GBC;
- Conducting initial networking with recognized Omaha-area business leaders to generate interest in and support for the GBC.

Resource Requirements

- Alliance support and endorsement.
- In-kind support of work group.
- Funding for collateral development.

Outcomes and Results

Ongoing leadership and direction for the GBC.

Alliance Support

- All: Participation in workgroup to act as a liason between GBC and organization. Formal endorsement of GBC.

Objective 2

Provide Networking and Education Opportunities to Businesses.

Collaborate with alliance organizations to provide networking and training opportunities to Omaha-area businesses.

Activities

Develop and deliver educational workshops to businesses on a variety of sustainability topics, including but not limited to: procurement, resource efficiency (energy and water), waste reduction (solid and hazardous), climate change, and green building. Host additional networking events to allow Omaha-area sustainability program managers to exchange information.

Resource Requirements

- Advertising for workshops and networking events (multiple media formats: web, newsletters, etc.).
- Venue for workshops and networking events, including logisitcal requirements
- Technical speakers, preferably from Omaha-area organizations, to present on sustainability topics

Outcomes and Results

Increased awareness for businesses interested in sustainability.

Alliance Support

- GOCOC: allow workshops and to be offered as part of the Chamber Academy or other established programs. Advertise the availability of these events on GOCOC website or other appropriate mechanism.
- WasteCap, Flatwater Chapter: provide/recommend speakers to deliver technical presentations; cross-promote the availability of these events with regular communication.
- Neighborhood Business Associations, BOMA, IFMA: cross-promote the availability of these events with regular communication.



Objective 3

Develop, Maintain, and Distribute a Green Business Directory.

Compile a directory of Green Businesses in the Omaha area who have established sustainability programs.

Activities

Collect contact information of individuals responsible for managing and implementing sustainability programs for inclusion in a Green Business Directory. As a centralized source of contact information, the directory will facilitate networking for green-minded organizations in Omaha.

Resource Requirements

- Spreadsheet/database for collecting, compiling, updating, and otherwise maintaining Green Business Directory contacts.
- Self-reporting criteria for determining what businesses should be included in the Green Business Directory.
- Methodology for updating the Green Business Directory
- Online forum for distributing Green Business Directory.

Outcomes and Results

- Centralized resource for sustainability contacts in Omaha.
- Informal recognition for businesses listed in Green Business Directory.

Alliance Support

- All: Identify and solicit business contacts for listing in the Green Business Directory. Provide permanent link to downloadable copy of Green Business Directory from organization's website.

Objective 4

Establish an Awards Program to Recognize Green Businesses in Omaha.

Establish a framework for recognizing businesses for exceptional environmental performance.

Activities

Develop a tiered awards program to recognize Omaha-area businesses for exceptional environmental performance. Host annual awards event.

Resource Requirements

- Tiered award criteria to establish multiple levels of sustainability achievements.
- Application process and review committee.
- Venue and logistical support for awards event.
- Communication activities to solicit award applicants and recognize award winners.

Outcomes and Results

Recognition for Omaha-area businesses demonstrating exceptional environmental performance.

Alliance Support

All: promote availability of the Green Business Directory with regular communication. Provide link to awards process from organization's website and announcement of award winners.

GOCOC: incorporate Green Business awards into other Chamber awards programs. Assistance with awards event logistics.



Recognized Challenges & Keys to Success

The following are recognized challenges and fundamental questions that will be addressed by the GBC work group as the GBC moves forward. Alliance support and identifying champions within the Omaha business community are imperative to the success of the GBC.

Challenge	Solution
<p>Financial Resources To become a financially sustainable organization.</p>	Identify financial resources through in-kind contributions, grants, and potential program revenue streams through service offerings.
<p>Earning Support of Leading Omaha Businesses Gain acceptance and earn credibility for widespread interest.</p>	Engage champions from leading Omaha businesses to peak interest of other businesses.
<p>Engaging Small- to Medium-Sized Businesses Structure the program to make it assessable and beneficial to small and medium sized businesses.</p>	Provide services that small and medium size businesses cannot complete on their own; provide resources for them to enhance their business practices.
<p>“Green” Perception Overcome the perception that “green” is a trend not practical for the business world.</p>	Educate on triple-bottom line concepts and showcase successful case studies.

Relationship to Other Environmental Organizations

Though we may share the values and intent of other Omaha environmental organizations, the GBC’s focus is unique in that we focus on serving businesses. Furthermore, the GBC’s scope encompasses all aspects of sustainable business operations and is fluid to incorporate a variety of technical topics. And while the GBC will collaborate with our peer organizations, our purpose is clearly distinct.

Green Omaha Coalition Green Business Council	U.S. Green Building Council Flatwater Chapter	WasteCap of Nebraska	Omaha By Design
Create a network of sustainable businesses to share environmental best practices; recognize green businesses in Omaha through a tiered awards program.	To serve as a catalyst for change in the Eastern Nebraska/Western Iowa region by promoting green building practices, technologies, and standards through partnerships with other organizations.	To provide resource conservation assistance to Nebraska businesses.	Advocate for the creation of great public spaces by supporting projects and initiatives that promote the development of great places throughout the Omaha area.

Contacts

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