
FOOTNOTES



May 2007

☀ Integrating risk management with global stewardship to collectively reduce our eco-footprint

Welcome to the premier issue of *FOOTNOTES*, a publication of Sustain-NW, with topical information on the relevance of sustainability and constructive suggestions and resources for integrating the "triple bottom line" into your life and your organization. Your comments and feedback are always appreciated! *Jill*

What Does It Mean?

~ definitions and other details ~

Sus·tain·a·bil·i·ty

Sustainability is a term derived from the United Nation's 1987 [Brundtland Report](#), which defined sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

In practice, sustainability promotes the understanding that all activities on the earth, from seemingly small personal choices to multi-billion dollar business decisions, are deeply interconnected and therefore integral parts of the whole. From this whole-system, cyclical viewpoint, there is great opportunity to contribute to strong economies, healthy communities and a stable environment. This is often referred to as the Triple Bottom Line: people, planet and profit.

Triple Bottom Line Accounting

from Wikipedia

In practical terms, **triple bottom line accounting** usually means expanding the traditional company reporting framework to take into account not just financial outcomes but also environmental and social performance. The phrase was coined by John Elkington, co-founder of SustainAbility, in his 1998 book [Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business](#).

Three Easy Steps that truly make a difference:



- 1) Use Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) and save 500 lbs of CO₂ with each one. They come in many sizes, use about ¼ of the power and last up to ten times longer than incandescent bulbs.
- 2) Unplug all electronics and chargers when not in use, or put them on a surge protector and turn it off. This saves their 'convenience' or 'phantom' draw, which is between 45 and 75% of the ON draw!
- 3) Support a local business.

Sustainability is Risk Management

We live in a world where the climate and business rules are changing faster than ever before. The first rule of business is to remain "profitable", but what does that really mean in today's global environment? Profitable for shareholders or for society in general? Profitable for the current quarter or two, or for the next ten, twenty or fifty years?

Companies are being sued today for practices that took place years ago. Lead paint manufacturers have been held responsible for millions of dollars in cleanup and mitigation costs. A federal jury recently recommended half a billion dollars in payment and penalties by cold war military contractors who built and tested nuclear bombs over 50 years ago.

What is your company doing today that could be perceived in the future as socially irresponsible and/or detrimental to the environment?

Check out the profile of Sustain-NW's founder in the [Portland Tribune's Sustainable Life article from 3/13/07](#).

The Rose City is #1

Portland was named the most sustainable city in the country. The 2006 SustainLane US City Rankings were developed using a combination of primary and secondary research directed by SustainLane. Fifty US Cities were included in the study. Data and information are drawn from surveys and interviews from 2005-2006, and publicly available sources published between 2002 and 2006. Areas of focus include:

- Air Quality
- Metro Public Transit
- Planning/Land Use
- LEED Buildings
- Waste Diversion
- Tap Water Quality
- Energy/Climate
- Local Food/Ag
- Knowledge Base



Photo: www.portlandground.com

See www.sustainlane.com for more information.

Did you know that the **Vancouver (WA) Hilton** was the first major hotel in the country to earn the **LEED®** certification from the U.S. Green Building Council? LEED (for **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design**) promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health:

- 1) sustainable site development
- 2) water savings
- 3) energy efficiency
- 4) materials selection, and
- 5) indoor environmental quality.

Check out the **Calendar on the Resources page of www.sustain-nw.com for upcoming events!**

What is an Ecological Footprint?

An eco-footprint is the degree of impact that we, as humans, have on ecosystems due to our overuse and degradation of land, water, and other natural resources. According to www.ecofoot.org (where you can measure your footprint), there are 4.5 biological acres per person available worldwide. The average ecological footprint in the USA is 24 acres, which means that if everyone in the world lived like we do, we would need 5.3 planets – or 4.3 more than we have!



Diagram from www.bestfootforward.com

SUGGESTED READING



Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things

William McDonough, noted architect, and Michael Braungart, chemist, have collaborated on a manifesto calling for the transformation of human industry through ecologically intelligent design. This excellent read and resource provides the map for "a new design paradigm, offering practical steps on how to innovate within today's economic environment. Part social history, part green business primer, part design manual, the book makes plain that the re-invention of human industry is not only within our grasp, it is our best hope for a future of sustaining prosperity." [2002] (North Point Press)

www.mcdonough.com/cradle_to_cradle.htm