



HOW TO BE GREEN AND STAY LEAN

How Being Sustainable Can Save Your Business Money

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(Sam's Club is a division of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (NYSE:WMT))

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DEFINITION OF A GREEN BUSINESS

A “green business” can be defined as an organization that tries to meet the triple bottom line by measuring social, economic, and environmental impacts. By doing things such as conserving energy, recycling, and buying locally, you are helping to implement sustainable practices into your operation.

While the above is the more formal definition of a green business, the definition of sustainability really varies by user. When referring to a simple business model, the term can be a synonym for viability. But for the foodservice industry, sustainability goes beyond economics to examine an operation’s long-term impact on the environment, as well its social responsibility. *Source: True Restaurant Sustainability: More Success, Better Future; NetWorld Alliance*

THE BIG PICTURE: BEING GREEN IN THIS ECONOMY

The notation of a “green economy”—economic activity by companies and customers in the form of products, services and business models that promote economic growth, reduce environmental impacts, and improve social well-being—gathered steam in 2008. One key driver was the United States (U.S.) presidential campaign, the first ever where both major-party candidates discussed accelerating investments in alternative energy, electric vehicles, green jobs, etc. The conversation accelerated when the economy worsened and unemployment rose. Suddenly, a green economy was seen as a pathway out of the current economic situation.

Studies in 2008 found that 2 million jobs in two years could be created from adopting green practices, and 4.2 million green jobs by 2038. Globally, the United Nations predicted that renewable energy could create 20 million jobs by 2030.

It remains unclear, however, as to when and where, exactly, the green-job boom will take place. One reason for the slow growth of green jobs could be that many companies are hiring from within or repurposing existing staff, netting out with fewer jobs. Another challenge is a lack of qualified workers. Employers are applying 20th-century hiring expectations to 21st-century industries, such as asking for years-long experience in fields that are relatively new.