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## **Northern California Organizations Continue to Prove the Business Case for Sustainability**

### **Eight East Bay organizations and cities present action plans at True Market Solutions Sustainability Circle program event**

April 16, 2014 – This March, representatives from eight companies including the cities of Pleasanton and Hayward, presented their Sustainability Action Plans at the final session of the most recent True Market Solutions Sustainability Circles™ Program. Outlining over 200 combined current and proposed sustainability initiatives across dozens of areas, the organizations mapped opportunities for substantial direct savings in energy efficiency, resource use, and waste along with additional qualitative benefits pointing to longer-term ROI.

The organizations that completed the 6-month program included the City of Hayward, the City of Pleasanton, Columbus Foods, Cranbrook Group, Drakes Brewing Company, Holy Names University, Metropolitan Golf Links, and Topcon Positioning Systems. The program was partially funded through Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

“This is the third time Pleasanton has gone through the Sustainability Circles program; we’ve found it that valuable,” said Daniel Smith, Director of Operations Services, City of Pleasanton. “The City of Pleasanton is committed to helping our community thrive and sustainability is essential to that effort. It’s also the most fiscally responsible way to run the city.”

TMS is currently collaborating with the City of Pleasanton and Hacienda Business Park to convene a Pleasanton Sustainability Circle. Slated to launch in late May, this Circle will also be partially funded through PG&E support. Based on interest from companies attending an April 8<sup>th</sup> Circle preview meeting hosted by Hacienda, TMS expects that this Circle will fill quickly.

The Sustainability Circle™ Program developed by True Market Solutions (TMS) is designed to empower small to mid-size businesses (SMEs) as well as cities, schools and cultural organizations to build competitive advantage, profitability, and brand leadership. The 6-month program brings together two representatives from 10 organizations for monthly workshops, individual coaching, on-sites, and idea exchange. The comprehensive curriculum is geared toward behavior change and spans a wide range of sustainability-oriented topics, from energy, and resource efficiency to sustainable value and employee engagement.

The outcome of the program is a customized Sustainability Action Plan that addresses the frustration that many businesses face who feel the need and desire to incorporate sustainability but are challenged by implementation, where and who to turn to, and ROI.

“As a golf course we absolutely need to be smart about water and energy,” explained Shelley Hara, General Manager of Metropolitan Golf Links. “We are also committed to leading the industry in sustainability, but needed help to get there. We now have a very detailed plan, based on actual numbers and realistic projections. We are very excited and confident in our prospects now.”

Based on individually declared target goals — such as a 20% reduction in energy consumption by 2020 or being the first in their industry to receive Green Business Certification — the participating businesses highlighted low-hanging opportunities including shifting printed documents to digital and adding occupancy sensors for lighting, to significant investment initiatives such as solar, new and far more efficient lighting and HVAC units, and alternative fuel vehicle procurement.

“As someone who founded and was very involved with small business my entire career, I know how tough it is for businesses in California,” said Elliot Hoffman, True Market Solutions CEO and founder of Just Desserts. “Sustainability can still be seen as a costly add-on that companies don’t have the time or money to deal with. We began TMS to show that there is not only a critical need, but also very strong business case for sustainability. I’m very happy to see our Circle participants proving that true.”

For more information on True Market Solutions Sustainability Circles, or to apply for the upcoming Pleasanton Circle, visit [truemarketsolutions.com/sustainability-circles](http://truemarketsolutions.com/sustainability-circles) or call 415.484.9044.

*This program is funded by California utility customers and administered by PG&E under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.*

#### **About True Market Solutions**

True Market Solutions (TMS) empowers small to mid-size businesses to embrace sustainability as a platform for innovation and value creation. Using the latest tools, technologies, and best practices — in the context of peer-learning cross-industry Sustainability Circles™ — TMS catalyzes business to co-create positive change in their organization, their community, and the world by connecting people, resources, knowledge, and new ideas.

We help organizations ensure tangible results through guided self-generated Action Plans that engage and inspire stakeholders and employees, and help embed sustainable business practices throughout the organization.

TMS was founded by business leaders with deep personal passion and decades of experience in the world of business and sustainability. We believe that business can be a force for positive change. TMS is headquartered in San Francisco and currently operates in California and the Mid-West. More information at [www.truemarketsolutions.com](http://www.truemarketsolutions.com).