

Sustainability as a Core Business Value: PlayNetwork Goes Green

by [Marcos Cordero](#) on July 15, 2011

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Saving money is a great benefit of going green, but it's only one of many reasons that companies choose to pursue sustainability initiatives. Some, like [Green Business Bureau](#) member [PlayNetwork](#), are simply dedicated to green practices as a part of their company's core values. PlayNetwork creates a wide range of creative and innovative media for clients, including programming for music, video, web radio, artist promotions and events, A/V systems, advertising networks, and XM satellite radio. Though these materials don't necessarily have an environmental focus, the company has considered the environmental impact of its actions since its founding in 1996.

One of the company's most significant challenges was finding a group of dedicated employees to spearhead their green undertakings, but the work to create the "PlayGreen" team paid off. This core group has served to keep momentum toward achieving their goals and has been instrumental in implementing eco-friendly policies in all aspects of the business. Over the past few years, the team has launched a number of high-impact initiatives:



A truck arrives to pick up electronics recycling from PlayNetwork.

- Acting to both reduce its carbon footprint and engage the staff, the company has established a pre-tax benefit setup for employees who choose to ride the bus, light rail, or train to work. PlayNetwork also says, "We're in the process of setting up a loaner bicycle program for employees so they can utilize alternative transportation to get to work and have the option of using bikes to run errands and get lunch. And that's not even the best part! Our loaner bicycle program will be put into place with funds from grant money that we had applied for."
- Providing even more opportunity for employees to work sustainably, the green team has also developed a program dedicated to recycling any old and broken electronics, CDs, CFL bulbs, and batteries.
- Although financial savings has not been the primary goal of these initiatives, PlayNetwork is realizing savings of over \$4,000 each year through a paper reduction campaign. Having printers default to double-sided printing, reusing single-sided paper for internal forms and fax receipts, and reusing paper to make internal "notepads" for meetings are just a few of the ideas the campaign has put into practice. PlayNetwork comments, "We can see the difference within our company and we have the numbers to prove we're saving a lot of money and making a difference."
- Water and energy conservation have also become important parts of their business operations. "We're saving a lot on water usage with our sink aerators, as well as energy with CFL bulbs for desk lamps and motion-detecting lights." These changes have been relatively quick and inexpensive, but have made a difference for both its carbon footprint and utility bills.



PlayNetwork swag bags. Each bag is made of post-consumer recycled material and contains a recycled clipboard, a repurposed single-sided paper notepad, a staple-less stapler, and a stress relief ball.

Another major challenge faced by PlayNetwork had been documenting its initiatives and communicating its green efforts to its clients. Through the Green Business Bureau, it was able to take advantage of a dynamic online portal to help direct and track these initiatives, and it quickly found that its previous efforts had already earned it a Platinum level of certification (the highest tier for GBB business certification). The team says, "In the past 10 years of attempting to lessen our carbon footprint, we had already put into place many of the initiatives featured in [the GBB] program, which made us quickly realize the Platinum certification was in reach. We knew the Platinum certification tier was attainable and dove into documenting our work. We're really proud to have accomplished so much in such a short amount of time."

In communicating these accomplishments to its clients, PlayNetwork has found its sustainable practices to have a strong positive effect on the company's brand. Says the company, "We have clients who are like-minded in the sense that they view sustainability as an important and responsible role of any company, and they really appreciate us for all we do on a professional level and on a sustainable level as well. Some clients chose to do business with us over others based on many attributes our company holds and being actively green has been one of those attributes.

"Our clients that take the time to look into our company core values and see what we're doing to be more eco-friendly love everything we have put into all of these initiatives. Plus, it makes us all feel great that we're doing the right thing."