

## Teaching Sustainable Business Practices Project

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Sustainable Tourism

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### **Introduction**

When it comes to energy use and ultimately energy savings many companies are missing significant opportunities. According to a 2010 Energy Star fact sheet, the hospitality industry in the United States alone spends almost \$7.5 billion on energy each year. If the energy used was reduced by a mere 10% by all properties the results would be 6 million tons less of greenhouse gases released annually into the atmosphere and a yearly savings of \$750 million. William Dennis Jr., a researcher for the National Federation of Independent Business, found through his research that business owners pay more annually for energy than they do for employee wages, materials and supplies, and other operational cost.

### **Discussion**

In my role as graduate assistant working at the Greenville-Pitt County Convention and Visitors Bureau I help companies understand the importance of sustainability and energy conservation, There are a number of ways properties and businesses can reduce their energy usage and utility cost annually, and not all of those ways require a pricey initial investment. Some examples I like to use:

- If all employees set their computers to enter sleep mode after a period of time, creating short energy breaks, the result could be an overall energy saving of 70%
- A thorough cleaning of a building's HVAC system annually or semi-annually can reduce energy usage by as much as 10%.
- Replace all exit signs and lights with LED light bulbs, which can last almost twenty-five years and the savings on that aspect of utilities is astronomical
- Installing motion or occupancy sensors in rooms such as conference rooms, vending areas, and staff break rooms will permit limited energy consumption

Other benefits of running energy conscious businesses are that through your efforts you are creating a niche for your business. A new trend for consumers is becoming more socially conscious of businesses that are environmentally and socially aware and advertise as such. There is also a marketing and publicity benefits of having a sustainability conscious company as well.

The methods for establishing an energy conscious work place begin with employee training pertaining to how they can conserve energy in the work place and becoming knowledgeable about the businesses efforts. A creation of policy is the next important step for the business owner to establish and share at informational meeting. These policies are the company's environmental policy and the more important is the EPP Policy) Environmental Preference Procurement Policy.

## **Conclusion**

With the growing trend of sustainability becoming more and more emphasized, it is vital for business large and small, public and private, to see the reduction of energy usage as a wise business endeavor. Future work at this juncture in my academic career will include continuing the process of assisting businesses in Pitt County to become NC GreenTravel Certified. Thus far I have been able to aid the Greenville-Pitt County Convention and Visitors Bureau with their certification and have recently submitted two more certification for lodging entities in Greenville, North Carolina.

## **References**

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