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**Strategic issues associated with the development of internal sustainability teams  
in sport and recreation organizations: A framework for action and sustainable  
environmental performance**

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**Strategic issues associated with the development of internal sustainability teams in sport and recreation organizations: A framework for action and sustainable environmental performance**

**Abstract**

Developing environmentally related strategies is difficult as resource issues enable and constrain strategic planning. These issues affect the levels of awareness, knowledge, and actions of sport and recreation managers. The purpose of this paper is to reveal the strategic planning process developed for internal cross-functional sustainability teams to oversee environmental issues within sport and recreation organizations (i.e., the *sustainability team*). Analysis of the strategic construction of this team is examined using a conceptual strategic planning framework grounded in a resource based view of the organization (Hart, 1995; Wernerfelt, 1984). Key elements of the development process include selecting individuals to serve on a sustainability team, utilization of tangible and intangible organizational resources, culture, size, roles, and leadership and management issues related to governing the sustainability team.

Keywords: sustainability; sport; strategic planning; cross-functional team

**Strategic issues associated with the development of internal sustainability teams in sport and recreation organizations: A framework for action and sustainable environmental performance**

**Introduction**

When used in organizational/business contexts, the term *environment* often referred to strategic market conditions such as the actions of competitors, customers, or governments. Today's strategic landscape requires a balance between organizational goals and objectives and natural environmental issues in pursuit of the organizational goals and objectives. This balancing act, from paper to pollution, makes for difficult strategic planning, yet is becoming an expected part of management actions (Hart, 1995; Maguire, 1999; Thibault, 2009). With increasing pressure from stakeholders and emphasis from all quarters of an organization, environmental issues are inherently strategic and interwoven into each area of an organization; from the smallest daily task to broad, strategic planning processes.

For many managers in the sport and recreation industries, addressing sustainability issues is not part of his or her job description or personal skill set/area of expertise (Fineman, 1997). Thus, there is a risk that attempts to address organizationally-related environmental strategies have the potential to fall short of goals and/or expectations. Nevertheless, the need to address natural environment issues are driven by rising awareness of the environmental impact of material consumption and production and the increasing social, economic, and political connections among people (often facilitated by technological changes) (Hart & Milstein, 2003). The inevitable and unpalatable results from the previous issues (e.g., poverty, economic disparity, and social injustice) are critical drivers as well (Hart & Milstein, 2003).

Resource issues enable and constrain strategic planning and an individual's level of awareness, knowledge, and action regarding the natural environment. Such a situation raises barriers to success and work to hamper strategic change efforts. This paper addresses a key strategic element regarding the integration of environmental issues into strategic planning processes of sport or recreation organizations. The purpose of this paper is to reveal the strategic planning process developed for internal cross-functional sustainability teams to oversee environmental issues within sport and recreation organizations (i.e., the *sustainability team*). This strategic planning process is

a conceptual framework grounded in a resource based view of the organization (Hart, 1995; Wernerfelt, 1984). Internal environmental or sustainability teams find themselves at the intersection of theoretical and applied contexts making them useful departure points for scholar and practitioner study and dialogue.

### ***Contextual Review of Literature***

Cross-functional teams have been a foundational component of organizational studies for many years (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Galbraith, 1973). The emerging environmental issues in sport are often addressed through the use of cross-functional teams, but the lack of prior awareness and knowledge on behalf of many managers in this area make it difficult to develop and to manage such a team (Casper, Pfahl & McSherry, 2010; Briethbart & Harris, 2008; Hums, Barr, & Guillon, 1999; Godfrey, 2009; Thibault, 1999). Many sport and recreation managers in charge of environmental operations are working to comply with standards and guidelines (e.g., governmental standards) while integrating environmental issues into daily practice (e.g., recycling at a venue) (Rigby & Tager, 2008). These actions reflect general corporate social responsibility principles, but are not necessarily integrated into broader organizational strategic planning processes (King 2001; Lachowetz & Irwin 2002; Rigby & Tager, 2008; Sheth & Babiak 2009). Like cross-functional teams designed for any number of different strategic actions (e.g., product development teams), the sustainability teams are enabled and constrained by various internal and external resource elements (including the sustainability team itself) (Denison, Hart, & Kahn, 1996).

### ***Adding the Environment to the Competitive Environment***

A resource based view of the firm reflects an organization's key competencies and resources, which are the foundation for its competitive advantage (Russo & Fouts, 1997; Shrivastava & Scott, 1999; Wernerfelt, 1984). Historically, this view did not explicitly include the natural environment. Including environmental issues in strategic planning helps organizational leaders develop policies and procedures designed to facilitate success in short term and long term strategic planning (Hart, 1995). A natural resource based view of an organization incorporates an interwoven relationship among the organization, its stakeholders, and physical and skill-based resources (Hillman & Keim, 2001; Shrivastava and Scott, 1992). It can also help organizations develop and utilize a variety of resources to demonstrate a commitment to environmentally friendly internal operations to organizational members, external stakeholders, and society in general (Hart, 1995; Russo & Fouts, 1997). In other words, such a view allows an organization to

move beyond compliance and into active prevention of environmental problems (Russo & Fouts, 1997; Shrivastava, 1995).

Organizations in the sport and recreation industries require a resource based view as much as traditional corporate organizations. Thus, sport and recreation personnel can enhance competitiveness, generate revenues, and lower costs in environmentally responsible ways (Hart, 1995). Organizational managers can draw upon unique competencies, skills, tacit resources (i.e., skill based, relationship orientation), and socially complex resources (i.e., environmental knowledge) to address environmental issues (Hart, 1995; Hart & Milstein, 2003).

### ***Unique Competencies and Skill Sets***

A sustainability team is a planning and policy making team. Its impact extends into internal organization operations (e.g., green mission and vision statements; rewards for environmentally sound behaviors) and the external world of its stakeholders (e.g., environmental education, fan behavior changes such as recycling at an event). However, the internal dynamics of the sustainability team become critical to the success of any environmental initiative. By drawing on various environmental experiences of organizational members and the resources available at the moment, a sustainability team enacts a strategic plan as it simultaneously develops one. Utilizing a resource based view helps to frame the actions and processes of sustainability teams because they offer strategic departure points to develop the team and its work (Hart, 1995; Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998).

As with examinations of competitive advantage and firm performance, a resource based view examines the compilation of people and resources into a cross-functional team reflecting the contextual nature of environmental strategy (Judge & Douglas, 1998; Barney, 1991). Organizational and sustainability team resources include functional coverage across the team (i.e., representation of organizational areas), resources provided (i.e., time, talent, financing), environmental issues integration into strategy, financial performance (e.g., cost savings, electricity use reduction), and environmental performance (e.g., LEED, ISO) (Judge & Douglas, 1998; Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998). In addition, firm size, the integration of stakeholders, stewardship actions can also be utilized for environmental change purposes (Judge & Douglas, 1998; Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998). Specific and important resource areas for sport and recreation managers include internal and physical assets and operations, the intangible firm assets

and expertise of the sustainability team members (and general staff), and external stakeholders.

### ***Internal and Physical Assets***

Resources available to a sustainability team are similar to those of corporate organizations, especially the physical assets (Wernerfelt, 1984). Physical assets and accompanying technologies often refer to pollution management practices (e.g., carbon emissions, water) (Hart, 1995; Russo & Fouts, 1997). Sport and recreation organizations often differentiate themselves through facilities, venues, or other physical assets. In terms of pollution prevention and physical assets, these organizations can utilize internal expertise to provide stewardship in local communities by revising and changing physical assets to be more environmentally friendly. By focusing the same level of attention to detail as with fan/user centered strategies, sport and recreation organizations can retrofit or design environmentally friendly physical assets to impact the pollution factor of their existence and demonstrate an outward commitment to environmental change.

### ***Intangible Assets***

The intangible assets of a firm and the expertise of the sustainability team and other organizational members are resources to draw upon to improve environmental efforts. Utilizing the environmental awareness and talent within an organization, coupled with the skills available to daily organizational operations, means sport and recreation managers can begin to enact strategic planning process and actions. Often, facility management personnel are already ahead in this area because they have had to comply with various legal and oversight issues (Hart, 1995). Adhering to these standards can be a foundation to build sustainability team operations. In addition, sport and recreation managers, especially major professional sports teams, can leverage the power of their organizational brand to promote environmental change and their own efforts at it (Hart, 1995; Russo & Fouts, 1997). More than brand identity and reputation, however, is the stewardship these organizations can provide given their social contracts with local communities (and beyond) and the high profile and media placement of sport and recreation in many societies.

### ***Inclusion of Stakeholders***

The sport and recreation industries are relationship-oriented industries because they provide a product-service in conjunction with other stakeholders (e.g., food and beverage providers). Stakeholders have their own environmental impacts and sustainability strategies, which can be accessed and utilized by a sport or recreation

manager to further his or her goals (Hillman & Keim, 2001). The stakeholder's additional tangible and intangible resource areas (as discussed earlier) can be drawn upon to strengthen, replace, or fill in weaknesses in an organization's resource base. The relationship management expertise in these industries offer sport and recreation managers a chance to develop intangible competencies and skills sets among the sustainability team members (and others), which is another competitive advantage (Hillman & Keim, 2001; Russo & Fouts, 1997). The sport and recreation industries are inherently human-focused and relationship oriented. This is a built in resource advantage because the stakeholders (e.g., corporate partners, fans, suppliers) constitute an additional source of expertise and resources (Hillman & Keim, 2001). Involving these groups into strategic planning and tactics would offer a competitive advantage, but work to strengthen the existing relationships between, for example, fans and a sports organization.

A well-developed sustainability team offers scholars a chance to renew study of organizational values, political action within organizations, and the historical management functions inherent with operating a cross-functional team. The literature demonstrates the components and perspectives needed to develop a sustainability team. The resource areas discussed in the literature provide a conceptual and actual foundation from which to build and grow an internal sustainability team. The operations of a sustainability team are designed to offer competitive advantages (e.g., cost savings; revenue generation through partners) (Hart, 1995; Wernerfelt, 1984). In addition, the nature of the sport and recreation industries means sustainability team work, in its stewardship capacity, can foster relationships with and among stakeholders, including *competitors* (i.e., two sport teams in a market) (Hillman & Keim, 2001).

However, environmental issues have to be addressed in perpetuity, which necessitates integrating environmental issues into various levels of organizational strategic planning (Elkington, 1997; Norman & MacDonald, 2004). The literature also provides a departure point to increase personal environmental awareness and knowledge and to develop more informed management actions/decisions, especially in relation to developing the sustainability team (Ajzen, 1991; Sharma, 2000). The closer the alignment between environmental issues and organizational strategic planning, practices, policies, and procedures (and personal value systems), the better the sustainability team can perform its tasks (Hart, 1995; Judge & Douglas, 1998). The

resources based view of the organization provides the foundation for the sustainability to be created and begin operations.

### ***Developing a Sustainability Team***

Most sport and recreation organizations develop a sustainability team as a primary driver for strategic changes to an organization's environmental practices. The cross functional sustainability team is often comprised of internal organizational members from across the organization (Daily & Huang, 2001; Denison, Hart, & Kahn, 1996; Kitazawa & Sarkis 2000). They are charged with developing and conducting a variety of operational changes, organizational policies, and daily/strategic practices. Their position allows them to act as the leaders of strategic environmental changes. While the teams can go by many names (e.g., environmental steering committees, environmental action teams), their goal remains the same (Anderson Strachan, 1996). While the strategic process outlined in this paper appears linear, it is matrix-like with overlap among the components. Crucially, the composition and actions of a sustainability team will vary by each sport or recreation organization because of differences in resource issues (e.g., internal/physical assets, intangible assets, and stakeholder relationships).

### ***Sustainability Team Strategic Foundations and Actions***

The specific foundations and actions of individual sustainability teams will vary, but essentially the mission is to develop environmental mission and vision statements, to develop an understanding of organizational practices as they relate to environmental issues, and to act as a central repository and disseminator of information, practices, ideas (Kitazwa & Sarkis, 2000). Of course, all sustainability team actions are subject to oversight and review by senior management to ensure strategic compatibility. Sustainability team members are also advocates for environmental change because of their centrality to environmental operations and key channels of communication to stakeholders (Katzenbach, Beckett, Dichter, Feigen, Gagnon, Hope, and Ling, 1996; Macnaghten, 2003).

Finding the proper balance among competing issues and agendas for a sustainability team is crucial to initiating, maintaining, and evaluating its success (Esty & Winston, 2006). With a resource based view of the process, sport and recreation managers can gather the best available human, financial, and physical assets/resources and deploy them in pursuit of sustainability goals. To begin a change process, sport and recreation managers need to carefully construct the infrastructure for a sustainability team (e.g., culture, size, and roles). Along with this, the leadership infrastructure for the

sustainability team can be developed to ensure proper oversight and management (e.g. training). Once these two pieces are developed, the sport or recreation managers and sustainability team leadership can concentrate on operational aspects of the team (e.g., budget revisions, strategic planning for team activities).

All throughout the process, the sustainability team members must be in dialogue with various levels of management for support and motivation because the team members will be the voice of the organization's change to the internal and external stakeholders. The processes of and requirements for selecting individuals to serve on a sustainability team will vary by organization, but should begin with sustainability team culture, size, and roles.

### ***Sustainability Team Culture***

Culture is an important part of an individual's identity, an organization's internal operations, and its external identity. In this case, culture refers to the various cognitive, emotional, psychological, social, and applied elements inherent in individuals and in communities, groups, or organizations (Pfahl, 2001; Pfahl, Chomngam & Hale, 2007; Esty & Winston, 2006). Sustainability teams in general, and their membership in particular, need a balance between top-down and bottom-up leadership for cultural shifts to take place; a total cultural *and* personal commitment (Esty and Winston, 2006). Thus, a sustainability team will be creating its own culture within the framework of the multiple cultures within an organization (e.g., accounting, sales, facility management), enhanced by the cultural elements of the individuals on the team. The cultural elements will vary by sport organization and change with membership turnover. A second point important to sustainability team development is the size of the sustainability team itself.

### ***Sustainability Team Size***

If each area of an organization is represented on the sustainability team by one person, there will be too many individuals involved, destroying the concept of *team*. Further, resource constraints make such a system impossible. Anderson Strachan (1996) suggested five to seven individuals is sufficient, but ultimately, this number will be driven by organizational resources, specifically the existing workload of individuals on the sustainability team and budgetary considerations. It is suggested, at minimum, key areas of the organization with significant stakes in the environmental mission of the organization should be included: facility management, marketing and/or sales, human resources, information technology, and food and beverage service (including an external stakeholder representative). All should be linked to middle and upper management

structures via the sustainability team leader(s). Finding the correct human resources requires balancing existing sustainability team duties with daily job tasks. Once selected, sustainability team members will utilize intangible assets skills and enact various roles as part of the team's operations.

### ***Sustainability Team Skills/Roles***

Roles are the responsibilities given to individuals to accomplish the goals of the sustainability team. The roles are directly related to the goals and objectives developed by the team. For example, each person can become the liaison between their functional area and the sustainability team. Additional roles can be developed as needed. Although each sustainability team member should be apprised of the efforts of other sustainability team members, developing competencies and expertise is an important part of organizational and individual learning, especially if there is sustainability team turnover (voluntary or otherwise) (Denton, 1999). It is strongly suggested individuals with existing green expertise and experience are identified (e.g., facility operations personnel). These individuals are highly valued resources and will act as internal change agents and provide leadership within the team. While having members with expertise is important, it is not mandatory. Some even see it as an inhibitor to team development as the *experts* might be tempted to go beyond their roles and duties (Anderson Strachan, 1996; Beard & Reese, 2000; McClosky & Smith, 1997). Nevertheless, sustainability team personnel will be constrained in their duties by the daily routines and tasks of their given job positions. Balancing sustainability duties with daily work is a primary challenge for team leaders (and team members). The sustainability team is centrally placed as a strategic planning unit, but it is also an oversight body making it an interesting component of the overall organizational structure (Sadgrove, 1992). Oversight and governance of the team becomes more complex because of its liminal position in the organizational structure.

### ***Sustainability Team Oversight***

Few sport or recreation organizations have a senior level management position to handle environmental operations as has been seen in the corporate world (Anderson Strachan, 1996; Sammalisto & Brorson, 2006). With sustainability teams the hub of environmental actions and strategically located at the intersection of numerous organizational operations, it should remain as close to daily operations and senior management as possible. To facilitate oversight of the sustainability team, a leader for the team is needed, especially to train team members at the outset of green change efforts.

### **Leadership**

Green leadership often takes the form of an appointed person, usually with a mid level management position or higher. Oftentimes, the person is given these new duties on top of existing ones. For example, at the Cleveland Cavaliers of the National Basketball Association (NBA), the green operations are overseen by the Director of Business Development and Organizational Sales. Such a situation makes it difficult to devote appropriate time and effort towards environmental change programs. To facilitate optimal sustainability team performance and management, sport and recreation managers must create a management position responsible for sustainability team management. This person is responsible for helping select the sustainability team members and manage and lead the team's strategic plan of action. As a precedent, positions in sport and recreation organizations have been created to address previous competitive environment changes such as the interaction between technology and sales (Sports Business Journal, 2008; Sports Business Journal, 2009).

This new position can be called the *Environmental Operations Officer* or *Director of Environmental Operations* (EEO/DEO). He or she would oversee the sustainability team and be responsible for directing the organization's environmental policies, goals, and other team functions. This position also establishes a tangible commitment to strategic change and signals the oversight of the environmental impact of organizational activities far into the future (Anderson Strachan, 1996). Further, a dedicated manager for the green operations helps to address the leadership and management issues related to strategic changes and facilitates communication among stakeholders (Kitazwa & Sarkis, 2000). Finally, organizational resources are best used when there is a single contact point to develop the position and sustainability team. Thus, the EEO/DEO is well placed to be the guiding force behind the sustainability team and the first in line to address the various management issues facing the team.

### **Training**

With a sustainability team and leader in place and members prepared for their duties, actually managing the team becomes the challenge. The focus of sustainability team leadership and management is to develop important functions such as training. In this case, organizational resources must be gathered to ensure a constant stream of information and support for the sustainability team, especially in the early days of the team's work. To do this, training the team members becomes a key step in managing their actions.

The skilled organizational resource known as the employees will drive the success or failure of any initiative, but especially environmental ones. Organizational culture is expected to change, but without proper understanding of foundational green issues and guiding vision and mission statements, sustainability team members (and eventually all organizational members) will not be able to maximize their performance (Daily & Huang, 2001; Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004). A proper sustainability vision and mission can spark the creative imagination of sustainability team members in terms of environmental actions, strategies, resource usage/development, and many other areas (Hart & Milstein, 2003).

Training for sustainability team members must be grounded in the different vision and mission statements of the team in order to set the foundation for organizational actions (Hart & Milstein, 2003; Zeleny, 2008). As with overall organizational vision and mission statements, environmental vision and mission statements provide guidance for change efforts and are the foundation of goals and tactics (e.g., training programs). Examples of organizations with useful environmental vision and mission statements include adidas Group and the Philadelphia Eagles of the National Football League (NFL). Both statements can be found on each organization's website and speak to the complexities of the environmental challenge and the ways each will address it. For example, the Eagles' statement reads: To create and sustain championship performance on the field and in the community through programs that promote the quality of life in our region, green the environment to improve our impact on the planet, and enhance our profitability as a business. (Eagles Mission, 2010, ¶ 1)

In addition, Eagles team personnel provide additional evidence of their commitment to the environmental cause via the team's website in the form of a letter from the team owner and his wife as well as a declaration of their intention to use renewable energy sources. These messages send clear signals as to the importance of the environment and lay the foundation for internal changes, including employee training programs.

Developing useful and continuous training programs is needed to explain each person's role as well as to develop the skills and practices of team members. One introductory meeting should be held with the entire team to introduce everyone to each other, the team's purpose and functions, and the vision and mission for the team. It is also important to have time for general thoughts to be shared about the team, its mandate, its processes, and individual viewpoints/knowledge on green issues. Clearly

identifying concerns and expectations from the outset will define the nature of critical concerns or problems, interpersonal difficulties that arise, and other management and leadership issues. Openness and transparency encourages ownership by the team members and an immediate signal that each member is critical to the success of the process. Training must then move to a combination of individual and group sessions. The group training sessions help to have members reach (and stay on) common ground. Individual training sessions are self-directed to avoid interfering with busy daily work schedules. Both meeting types can review the initial information, answer questions and provide clarification, and launch the first phase of the sustainability team's efforts (vision and mission statements development or revision) (Sammalisto & Brorson, 2008).

In the group training sessions, information regarding the purpose and conduct of the sustainability team is discussed to set the stage for additional group training sessions (Table 1). At this time, individuals should have the opportunity to explain their viewpoints on key issues and to raise any questions (Daily & Huang, 2001). Group discussions are a key part of training because they allow individuals to share hopes for what the team accomplish and fears over issues such as workload or resources available for the team to use (Beard & Rees, 2000). The items in Table 1 can be reviewed and questions answered in group sessions and re-examined in individual training sessions.

**Table 1.** *Group Training Areas.*

<i>Training Areas</i> (Sammalisto & Brorson, 2008)	<i>Information Covered</i>
Budgets	Strategic budget, Need for planning internal and activity based budgets
Sustainability team policies	Workload requirements, Release time from other duties
Environmental issues	Language and key terms, Current local and national laws and environmental regulations
Training process	Meeting schedules, future agenda items
Previous green work	Past audits
Management input	Meeting with senior management to discuss the sustainability team
Audit information	Description of auditing process, Single department audit on small issues (e.g., recycling

	habits)
Facility tours	Emphasizing sustainability issues across the venue or facility

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The purpose of the individual sessions is to allow an individual to learn his or her role on the team in relation to broader team goals. Individual sessions give employees a chance to learn at their own pace and make sense of the information without the anxiety that might occur from sharing ones concerns in a group setting. In addition to disseminating information and educating employees, the individual sessions offer the opportunity to collect data. For example, the Cleveland Cavaliers of the NBA use an internal online survey to gauge employee attitudes across a range of environmental issues and personal understandings and practices related to the environment.

The sessions are designed to reinforce group sessions and to provide person/role-specific information. For the individual training sessions, training materials can be placed on a CD (or flash drive, website) (Sammalisto and Brorson, 2008). Computer-based readings and short quizzes can define a person's environmental philosophy and awareness as they reinforce training materials. In addition, it is a simple way to ensure individual accountability as the tests and quizzes can be supplemented with interviews with the sustainability team leader to ensure compliance with expectations.

In general, proper training raises awareness and opens the door for members to speak openly about environmental issues within the sport organization. Initial individual and group training will gradually make way for the team's work to develop measurements, goals, objectives, strategic planning calendars, communication tools, and the other tasks and objectives necessary for successful team operation (Beard & Rees, 2000).

### ***Sustainability Team Operations***

Developing goals and objectives becomes a key task for the sustainability team and are derived from the environmental vision and mission statements. The process of developing them can begin with the training sessions, but all goals should be finalized before training is complete. New goals will be created throughout the overall sustainability change process. Areas to be focused on from the outset include schedules, budgets, strategic alliances, and goal development.

### ***Strategic Planning Calendar***

Sustainability teams must develop a strategic planning calendar in order to help assess progress and track the progress of team goals. It must include long range plans (e.g., auditing) and short term efforts (e.g., decrease printing in a department). Senior level managers, along with the sustainability team leader(s) and members, need to integrate the sustainability strategic plans into short term and long term organizational planning processes. More importantly, proper scheduling integrates resource identification and usage needs with sustainability team activities.

Excellent examples of long-term planning for sustainability in sport organizations and events can be seen in the preparation for hosting the Olympic Games. In London, host of the 2012 Summer Games, planners began work in 2006 and, from the outset, incorporated sustainability issues and thinking into their work. The time period covered ranged from 2006 through 2020, eight years after the Games finish. An example of their planning calendar elements is captured under the category *Realizing the Legacy*, which addressed the economic, social, wellness, and environmental development of East London where many new venues were to be built (London 2012, 2009). Environmentally-related aspects to be addressed in this category over the stated time period included physical and non-physical issues such as: Energy and waste infrastructure, Healthy lifestyles and sport promotion, Legacy park design and function (including integration with local communities, mix of uses and affordable housing supply), Building performance, Promoting healthier, more sustainable lifestyles, Use of legacy sporting facilities, Increased sports participation, healthier living, cohesive communities and volunteering, Raised international profile of London and the UK, [and] Supporting sustainable growth of London and UK economy. (London 2012, 2009, p. 10)

The sheer complexity of hosting an Olympic Games means numerous strategic elements are in process at any given time. Properly planning for events years before and after a Games indicates a need to systematically think long and short term and have proper resources, communication channels, and evaluation measures in place to ensure progress continues as desired. Perhaps the most important of these resources is the organization's budgeting process and financial resources.

### ***Budgets***

Budgets are generally provided as part of strategic planning from upper management, but enable and constrain sustainability team actions. Budget items to consider include facility upgrades and re-fits as well as new purchases to accomplish

sustainability team goals and objectives and outreach programs for education (internal/external). It is expected upper management will be reluctant to spend a majority of resources on the sustainability team. However, it is necessary for the sustainability team leader to prepare a budget for consideration. Part of the integration of environmental operations into overall strategic planning will be the commitment of resources to the sustainability team. However, this will not take place without proper justification from the team itself.

Another key resource for the sustainability team to draw upon is outside expertise. A close relationship with external stakeholders will ease the burden on the sustainability team members and the resources they need to complete their tasks.

### ***Strategic Partnerships with External Organizational Stakeholders***

Sustainability teams can utilize strategic partnerships to accomplish training and/or sustainability team work (Coddington, 1993). Third party stakeholders can have direct and indirect links to a sport or recreation organization. They can include various local governing bodies and regulators, environmental groups, private consulting firms, volunteers and others (Ottman, 1998). Finding partners can also come from community efforts and community advisory councils, fan boards, or even placing a supporter or season ticket package holder on the sustainability team. NGOs and other environmental organizations (e.g., Major League Baseball and the National Resources Defense Council), local utilities, governmental offices, corporate partners, league offices and other league teams should be considered as well (Bennett, Freierman, & George, 1993).

To raise revenues for environmental operations, partners from the corporate and non-profit worlds can be found to aid in monetizing environmentally oriented virtual and terrestrial spaces (e.g., websites, community outreach events). Examples of these types of partnerships include FIFA and the New York Jets (NFL), who each partnered with solar-energy systems manufacturer, Yingli Solar (New York Jets, 2010; Yingli Solar, 2010). In addition, the American Le Mans Series (motorsport) developed a strong relationship with the United States Environmental Protection Agency and tire supplier, Michelin. Personnel from the three organizations worked to together to create the Michelin Green X Challenge in which teams can utilize a number of alternative energy fuels and are scored based upon fuel consumption during each race. The winner of the challenge is the team with the best performance and lowest fuel consumption during the season (American Le Mans, 2011). Other partnerships can include non-governmental

organizations, such as the National Resources Defense Council and its partnership with Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association in the United States.

Beyond this, existing partners for a sport or recreation organization most likely have their own environmental change programs from which inspiration and assistance can be drawn. Such partnerships aid cost reduction through environmental actions and develop revenue generation sources (e.g., monetizing virtual spaces related to environmental actions) as the partners share resources and costs (Casper, Pfahl, & McSherry, 2010; Pfahl & Ott, 2010).

The relationship development process for collaborative work with stakeholders of all types can use a strategic process as well (Bennett, Freierman, and George, 1993). The first step is to define sustainability team activities; usually in the form of goals to encourage collaboration efforts are grounded in a common purpose. Second, contact the environmental organizations/NGOs or regional/local branches of national organizations that appear to operate or have expertise in these goal areas. Initial contact will determine whether or not they are willing or able to help. Finally, it is recommended to allow the third party members a place on the sustainability team during the term of the partnership and keep them updated after their part is completed. However, as noted above, collaboration can only begin when each party has an understanding of the other's position (i.e., goals) (Poncelet, 2004).

### **Goals**

Schedules and budgets work in conjunction with goal development. Five common areas to craft goals include operations (e.g., rate of resource usage), partnerships/sponsorships, fan or supporter relationships, employees, and community. Sustainability teams work to balance incremental goals for short-term success and stretch goals, which are long term in nature (Esty & Winston, 2006). These short term goals start the team off with achievable goals that provide experience and motivation to members in order to tackle more complex and higher order goals (Hart, 1995).

A sample goal is to reduce paper usage by 10 percent from existing levels. A subsequent goal could be to continue to reduce paper usage by 10 - 15 percent each year until a targeted level is reached by a particular date. Goals provide the foundation for a green strategic plan, which integrates each of the items discussed in this section (e.g., budgeting, schedules, resource allocation) including partners. They also allow the sustainability team to connect the vision and mission statements with actionable short term and long-term operations (i.e., corporate strategic planning process). The strategic

plan must be comprehensive and carefully constructed, yet remain a living document. The ability for all members of the sport organization to review the plan also helps to disseminate green information throughout the organization. Table 2 provides examples of goal areas and examples of goals.

**Table 2.** *Goal Examples.*

<i>Goal Area</i>	<i>Tactical Area</i>	<i>Example Goal</i>
Resource Consumption	Energy Use	To reduce overall facility/venue energy consumption by XX percent by 20XX
Motivation and Leadership	Leadership	To hire a green operations coordinator by 20XX
	Incentives	To create a fund for use as rewards to sustainability team and other organizational members
Message Communication	In-Venue Signage	To place signage in visible areas of all food and beverage vending areas to encourage recycling
Technology	Technology	To develop a micro-website devoted to organizational environmental initiatives and information
Partnership and Alliances	Partnership Outreach	To partner with local environmental organizations on goal development and auditing processes

These examples are just the beginning. The more comprehensive the goal development process is, the more comprehensive (and manageable) the implementation of the tactics developed to achieve them will be. Two interesting examples of goal setting (and reporting accomplishments) can be found in the Greener Goals Program from FIFA, which began with the 2006 German World Cup and is a guide to environmental actions needed to host World Cup events and the recent Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. Specifically, the Vancouver Games were touted by organizers as the greenest games to date. Specific goals organizers set included a target of “85 per cent waste-diverted-from-

landfill at Games time” (Vancouver Olympic Committee, 2010, p. 38) and to have all buildings built to a minimum *Silver* standard as described under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines (Vancouver Olympic Committee, 2010). More about these and other environmental goals can be found in the final sustainability report (audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers).

The goal and tactic development processes are complicated, even more so as the size of the sport organization or event increases. A key part of this process, however, is the leadership and motivation of and for the sustainability team personnel (and later, the non-sustainability team personnel as changes are made to organizational operations).

### ***Motivating the Sustainability Team Members***

This section examines incentives and other motivational factors used to keep the internal environmental movement going strong. The sustainability team/organization’s environmental mission and objectives requires motivation often in the form of incentives and sharing information with stakeholders.

### ***Incentives for Environmental Work***

Incentives to motivate sustainability team members (and others) are intrinsic or extrinsic and include monetary rewards, job related (e.g., time off), profit sharing or any number of other reward possibilities (Govindarajulu & Daily 2004; Hertzberg, 1966; Kitazawa & Sarkis, 2000). The combination of incentives with participatory decision-making and organizational and sustainability team guidance should be used because it offers a balance of motivational styles and tactics to manage a diverse group of individuals (Kitazawa & Sarkis, 2000).

All individual organizational members will be touched by environmental changes in one way or another. Many of these changes will result in work habit or process changes that can upset people or add work to their daily tasks. Care must be exercised in this case and providing useful and important information can go a long way towards easing work load issues. Monetary rewards must be structured in such a way as to keep employees from creating insignificant changes just to obtain money. Research has shown motivation programs for environmental change/performance using bonus or salary considerations are not infrequently used by organizations (Denton, 1999). Non-monetary rewards such as small gifts (e.g., coffee mugs) or rewards (e.g., paid vacation) are often used instead, but sometimes these can become more important than the environmental issues at hand (Denton, 1999; Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004). Of course, simple managerial steps such as allowing employees to be a part of the environmental

change process and have their voices heard can prove to be useful (Bragg, 2000; Daily & Huang, 2001; Geller, 1991; Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004; Massoud, Daily, & Bishop, 2008). Information exchange and dissemination is an important part of keeping employees informed in order to keep them on task and motivated.

### ***Communicating Green Activities to Stakeholders***

Dissemination of environmental activities must be undertaken in a strategic manner to avoid burdening non-sustainability team employees with too much information (Harris & Ogbonna, 1998). Newsletters, emails, and other mediated communication are useful to spread the word about environmental activities, but they can consume valuable time and resources from the sustainability team. The materials must also be highly relevant to employees or they might be ignored. Useful news and information can include simple descriptions of projects, ideas for green practices suggested by employees, partners, or fans and a complete list of all employee initiated ideas and projects (Denton, 1999). However, managing the behaviors and expectations of sustainability and non-sustainability personnel requires continued vigilance and communication from sustainability leaders and all levels of management. One method to accomplish this is the use of internally and externally accessible websites to report environmental data and information and to educate stakeholders about the environmental efforts of the sustainability team.

Despite rewards and participation opportunities, caution must be exercised as the continuous nature of green operations means sport managers must avoid burning out individuals over time. A rotational plan must be developed as competencies and understandings of green operations move forward. The fresh perspective of new members maintains momentum for the sustainability team. The dissemination of knowledge and experience aids in creating an overall organizational culture of environmental stewardship.

### **Conclusion**

The strategic plan for developing sustainability teams and the resources needed to achieve environmental goals described in this paper provides a departure point to develop green activities in sport and recreation organizations. It also provides a platform for scholars to examine the sustainability teams across a range of disciplines and theoretical perspectives. Practitioners and scholars will benefit from study into issues discussed in this paper such as cross-functional team dynamics, employee value systems in relation to job tasks, monetization of environmental operations (revenue and

cost), and financing/resource allocation for environmental operations. By taking a strategic resource based view of environmental responsibility via sustainability team operations as opposed to simply a corporate social responsibility or marketing view, organizational members will be more likely to stay on task with respect to environmental initiatives because of their integration with organizational operations. The result is an organizational structure, culture, and strategic planning process that accounts for humanity interwoven relationship with nature.

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