

Module 2 Toolkit

As you can see from the small selection of examples provided in this chapter's video presentation, there are numerous options for each category of business case returns. A good place to start is to brainstorm possible returns in each category. Below, in each category, you will find a few questions to get you started.

Don't worry if you are unsure how to answer the questions listed below. These are just ideas to expand your thinking. Use what you already know about your job area or the organization to come up with potential options to implement sustainability in a way that is beneficial to the organization.

TIP: Remember this is a brainstorming phase and you will refine these into goals and activities for the Green Team; however, you should **be as specific as possible** because this will lay a solid foundation for selling and executing your ideas. For example, avoid stating an idea like this: "Replace light bulbs with LEDs." Instead you should **provide more context and justification**: "The bulbs in the lobby, which are on all day, should be changed to LEDs. The lights in the back of house hallways and storerooms should be put on motion sensors, as it seems they are often left on for hours when almost none one is using them."

If your organization already has stated goals related to corporate responsibility and sustainability, you should draw inspiration from those for this exercise, but don't be limited by them.

The goal of sustainability is ultimately triple bottom line: social, environmental, and economic returns. You can certainly include the people and planet aspects in this exercise, but the key goal here is developing the business case – the profit, because that's what it will mostly likely take to sell this within your organization.

Business Case Returns Categories:



Operational Efficiency

- What are the energy usage trends for your business over the last 1 to 5 years? Is it moving up or down?
- Have you had an energy audit or commissioning performed on your building? If so, be sure to consult the results.
- Ask the same questions above regarding water usage.
- What major expenditures or projects are on the horizon that could be considered through the lens of sustainability? For example, replacement or upgrades to HVAC, major appliances, windows, fixtures, etc.
- How much waste do you generate each week/month/year? Are there opportunities to increase the amount recycled?
- Have you performed a study or audit to minimize food waste through order and prep reduction?
- Have you reviewed your purchasing contracts to reduce packaging and shipping frequency, arrange for take backs, or other purchasing optimization?
- These questions are just a few of the many you can ask in this category. For a more comprehensive review of operational efficiency, have a formal sustainability assessment performed on your operations.



After reviewing the above, what are the top 3 opportunities you feel are realistic for pursuing over the next 12 months.

Opportunity 1:

Opportunity 2:

Opportunity 3:

Customer Acquisition

- What does our target audience think about sustainability? Do they prioritize it? Is it a younger or older generation? Is it a midscale market or a luxury market?
- What comments on Yelp, TripAdvisor, and other review sites, or directly from customers, can be directly attributed to sustainability (or lack of sustainability)?
- Do RFPs contain language related to green practices?
- What brands outside of your category do your customers love? What are those brands' sustainability story or appeal? How do they use social media to share sustainability features and achievements?
- What are your competitors doing in terms of sustainability? Are any of them eco-certified? Do they feature sustainability in their messaging?
- How do you leverage some of the top trends in your sector? For example, in the hospitality industry, are you making the most of the *buy local* movement (such as, Farm-to-Table), health and wellness consciousness, allergy awareness, and others?
- What is the sustainability trend in your community or region that is attracting customers?



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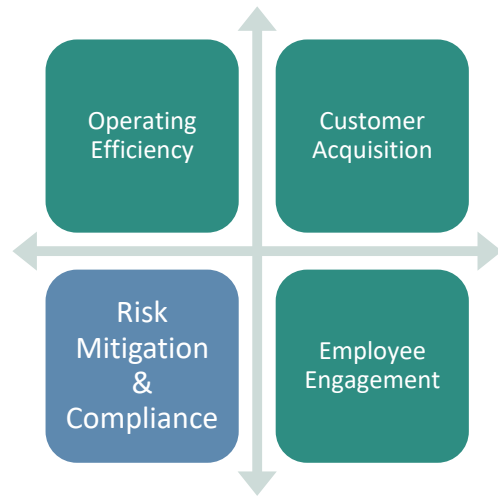
Opportunity 1:

Opportunity 2:

Opportunity 3:

Risk Mitigation and Compliance

- How does climate change impact the region where you are located? Are there elevated risks of flooding, drought, or other conditions that could impact operations?
- Are there any stakeholders that have high expectations regarding sustainability or corporate responsibility? In what ways to investors and creditors expect disclosure on sustainability performance?
- Are there reporting frameworks the company does or should use?
- Does the business have an updated emergency plan? Have employees prepared for emergency response by performing drills and keeping policies and procedures up to date? What are the most significant threat risks the business faces?
- Have you trained and prepared employees to deal with human rights violations, such as sex trafficking?
- What local laws, or potential new policy, related to environmental, social, or governance issues might impact your business in the next 12 months?



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Employee Engagement

- How has your company performed on most recent engagement scores? What areas of weakness need to be addressed? What strengths can be leveraged?
- What current corporate responsibility initiatives are employees actively engaged in? Are there any they ignore or pass on? What have employees expressed interest in with regards to involvement and volunteerism?
- Which causes are employees most impacted by or passionate about?
- What is the turnover rate? How difficult is it to find employees with the right knowledge and skills for open positions? How does you compare with competitors in terms of benefits and opportunities for employees? What is your commitment or policy on diversity and inclusion?
- How often are employees trained? Are there any special development or leadership opportunities? Are employees trained on the corporate responsibility mission and activities of the company?
- How are employees included in the decision-making process regarding changes that affect them? Do employees resist change? What are examples of new systems or procedures introduced in the last 1 to 3 years that employees have not embraced? What projects have failed due to lack of employee engagement?



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Opportunity 2:

Opportunity 3:

Business Case for a Specific Idea

The pages above help you explore what business case opportunities might exist, but perhaps you already have an idea and you want to create a business case for that.

Choose ONE idea from the pages above and use the sections below to further explore the **potential benefits, challenges**.

Describe the idea and why it is your top pick:

Explain the potential benefits in detail for each aspect of the triple bottom line:

What environmental benefits, if any, does this idea have?

What social benefits, if any, does this idea have? Keep in mind social benefits can include ways the idea would positively impact employees and customers.

What economic benefits does this idea have? Or what do you think the Return on Investment (ROI) might be on this idea? This could come from decreased costs, increased productivity, sales on a new product or service, or other sources of savings or revenue.

What do you think this idea will cost? What resources (time, materials, money, etc.) are needed to implement this idea?

What challenges or obstacles do you foresee with this idea?