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Developing an Employee Training Addendum for a Sustainable Hospitality Operation

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DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE TRAINING ADDENDUM
FOR A SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY OPERATION

by

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Bachelor of Science
Iowa State University
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of the requirements for the

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ABSTRACT**Developing an Employee Training Addendum for a Sustainable Hospitality Operation**

by

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As sustainability has become an important part of everyday life for American consumers, it is important that the hospitality industry do whatever it takes to meet their needs. Consumers expect businesses that they patronize to have policies in place for waste reduction, air and water conservation, and improved air quality and environment. Without the support of the front line employees, however, a hospitality operation has no chance to obtain sustainable success in these arenas. By creating addendums to previously existing employee handbooks, businesses are able to provide their employees with new policies and expectations of sustainable behaviors. This professional paper serves as a source of information for topics relevant to sustainability in the hospitality industry, as well as an example of an employee training addendum.

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Part One

Introduction

In today's eco-conscious environment, very few guests are able to set foot in a hotel or restaurant without being bombarded with the advertisements of sustainable practices at that location. Ranging from the re-use of linens in a hotel room to the inclusion of local, organic produce on a restaurant menu, the topic of sustainability is heavily trending within the industry. While these actions highlight a move toward a more sustainable future, they ignore the most vital portion of the hospitality industry—the people. With over 12 million Americans employed in the industry, a move toward sustainable employee development will be ever growing. While formal research has previously concentrated on the general topic of sustainability and business decisions, more has begun being presented as it relates to human resources within the hospitality industry, particularly in the area of training and development. Using available research and documentation, this paper will present information in a literature review format.

Problem Statement

In order for a sustainability program to be effective in a hospitality enterprise, it requires the support of all levels of employees. Meaningful change is unlikely to occur if employees see a movement toward sustainability as extra work for them with little or no understanding. According to Willard (2009), employees need to understand the strategic case for pursuing sustainability, the threats associated with ignoring it, and the opportunities it presents for business improvements. Without explicit documentation, however, this can be an extreme challenge for any operator.

Purpose

The employee handbook, which summarizes company policies and serves as a reference

material for both employers and employees, is one of the best platforms for distributing information regarding operational changes. The purpose of this professional paper is to develop an addendum to an employee manual focusing on green practices within a hospitality operation. Upon completion, this paper can serve as reference material for business training models and human resources development programs.

Justification

As companies continue to compete in a tightening economy, the need for sustainable behaviors will greatly increase. With the hospitality industry making up a large portion of the market share, and serving as a frequent gauge for new trends, it is of vital importance that the operations within it practice sustainable responsibility. Execution of this responsibility occurs when employees are hired with, or trained in, sustainable practices. Many companies have achieved great success with implementing these actions into their human resource practices. By identifying these trends, industry professionals will be capable of maintaining or improving sustainable practices and, in turn, creating more viable future business.

Constraints

This paper is researched and written during one short executive master's course. As a result, research is limited. Therefore, time constraints are the most challenging aspect of this paper. In addition, while a great deal of research has been conducted heavily on sustainability, both within and outside of the hospitality industry, less has been conducted in the field of sustainability training for employees. As an additional challenge, many sustainable implementations within operations were put on hold with the decline in the economy, leading to less information and innovative operations in recent years. With these limitations being present, this paper should be used reasonably and with the appropriate amount of skepticism.

Part Two

Literature Review

Introduction

The green movement has become widespread and accessible to the general public, through an influx in information through the internet, and through the publicity of movies and bestselling books such as “The End of Food,” “The Omnivore’s Dilemma,” and “The End of Oil” (Prewitt, 2008). These ideas are of particular interest to the hospitality industry. Today’s products for a typical American meal average a distance of between 1,500 and 2,500 miles of travel by the time they reach the consumer’s table (Doyle, 2008).

With increased information at their fingertips, consumers make more decisions based on green initiatives, and studies have shown that they tend to have more optimistic and approving attitudes when companies put environmental protection programs in place (Chen & Jeong, 2009). Despite knowing this about consumers, many hospitality organizations continue to operate in non-sustainable manners. While implementing eco-friendly programs can save considerable amounts of money for a company in the long run, the common view from the business perspective is that launching new, green initiatives is extremely pricey, with many start-up and repeat costs involved, including “training, purchasing new equipment and materials, and reducing waste and consumption of these materials” (Levey, Mayer, & Abdel-Moty, 2009). These views will remain unchanged until decision makers in the industry are educated on the true, long-term costs and benefits of creating sustainable operations.

History of the Green Movement

As consumers have begun to see the negative effects of previous environmental abuse, demands and expectations have changed significantly. Twenty years ago, the idea of recycling,

purchasing organic produce or driving hybrid cars may have been extreme. Today, it has become the norm, and businesses have had to adapt to this new, environmentally savvy consumer (Graci & Dodds, 2008). Despite being a more pronounced movement as of late, sustainability and environmental preservation is not a new concept. Instead, progress in this area has been made over the last century.

Before 1980

Hospitality has been deeply involved in environmental protection techniques since the late 1920's. During early development, practices concentrated on energy and water conservation, improving air quality and ventilation, and waste reduction and safe disposal (Chen & Jeong, 2009). As new technology was introduced to the world and to the industry in the early 20th century, conservation was pushed to the wayside, and mass production became the focus. By the 1960's, a counterculture movement had begun in the United States, and environmental protections once again became a topic of great importance. This time period, dubbed the "First Age of Green," created an awareness that had previously not existed. With that, consumers began changing their behaviors, with many quickly becoming the original green consumers (Levey et al., 2009)

1980's and 1990's

During the mid to late 1980's, the "Second Age of Green" began to take shape. In contrast (or perhaps directly related) to, the technological development during the First Age of Green, significant environmental fallout began. At this stage, disease and manmade natural disasters were at the forefront, and media coverage brought the reality into everyone's home. During this time, a variety of events transformed our view of the need for sustainability. Problems were everywhere as "AIDS and famine were affecting many Third World nations; a

chemical plant explosion killed 22,000 in Bhopal, India; the hole in the ozone layer above the Antarctic grew larger; the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant melted down; and the Exxon Valdez created an environmental catastrophe” (Levey et al., 2009, p.1).

2000’s

As corporate social responsibility became increasingly important to consumers, the hospitality industry was forced to shift into another phase of green development. Consumers had become much more aware of needed changes and, in response, operations began to address the important social and business issues that their customers demanded: environmentally friendly products, sustainable, local and organic food, reduction in waste and chemical use, and energy conservation (Chen & Jeong, 2009). With the “Third Age of Green” upon them, corporations constantly face new challenges from those with a stake in the company: consumers, employees, general public, media, politicians and shareholders. Today, organizations are expected to meet and exceed environmental goals while still delivering a superior product and increasing profits. During this time period, access to green products and services have become almost unlimited through the internet, and the numbers of green consumers are at an all time high. It is now commonly believed that competitive advantage is the primary driver of going green (Levey et al., 2009)

Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry

The consumers of today demand fresh, healthy food. Examples may include organic food (grown and treated without pesticides or artificial fertilizer); hormone- and antibiotic-free dairy products; and local or regional meats, grains or produce and fewer processed foods. With statistics putting most meals thousands of miles away (and thus resulting in high fuel consumption), the focus is on close and simple foods (Doyle, 2008). The concept of transitioning

menus and staff to accommodate these items can be overwhelming to a restaurateur or food service operator, but in actuality, require only “a minimal capital investment in environmental practices results in big savings of operational costs” (Chen & Jeong, 2009, p.41). Aside from decreasing operational costs there are also many other advantages to embracing sustainability in the broadest possible sense. Indeed, today, new eco-friendly procedures are also often viewed as leading to improved productivity and increased competitiveness, improved internal and external image, an increase in employee morale and health and safety within the operation (Graci & Dodds, 2008).

Practices

A number of studies have been conducted in the field of environmental sustainability in a corporate setting. However, many organizations remain reactive to the movement, instead of more progressive, proactive behavior (Graci & Dodds, 2008). While the main reasons that a hospitality operation choose to implement green programs vary, there are generally two major factors behind the move: economic opportunities and ethics. By putting environmental practices in place, the hospitality industry can (over time) lower their operational costs, increase competitiveness in the marketplace, and generate positive relationships with consumers and the community at large (Chen & Jeong, 2009). Levey et al. (2009) suggested a more specific breakdown of drivers toward green practices. According to them, CEOs typically are driven by one of the following ten themes: “government legislation or threat of legislation, cost savings, market advantage, protection or enhancement of reputation or brands, avoidance of risk or threat of environmental accidents, a “champion” within the organization, pressure from shareholders, pressure from consumers, pressure from non-government organizations and societal expectations” (Levey et al., 2009, p.4). Unfortunately, even with green drivers present, many

hospitality businesses are still not implementing eco-friendly practices or, worse yet, don't believe that their small actions have the potential to make a difference or be of financial significance to their companies. For example, according to Graci & Dodds (2008), a full 50% of hoteliers that participated in a study believed that changing environmental practices offered no financial benefit to the company. However, that same study noted that 69% of those observed admitted that there was a benefit to resource protection when implementing green policies.

Lodging

Many steps that hotel owners can take to improve energy or water consumption require little, if any, capital investment, yet they result in considerable savings. Examples include the installation of low flow showerheads, toilets and faucet aerators in guest and community restrooms, replacement of leaking pipes or steam systems, installation of sensor based in-room energy management systems, and solar energy systems which are able to store energy for up to two weeks without any sun. Despite an initial start-up cost for these initiatives, the long-term savings significantly outweigh them, and soon sustain the hotel with little to no additional cost (Graci & Dodds, 2008). Another example of a no-cost sustainable program is a linen re-use program, where guests are encouraged to re-use sheets and towels during a multiple day stay. Housekeeping will only change linens upon request. After many years of adjusting to green initiatives, consumers are now becoming used to seeing them in their guest rooms. Many hotels even proudly proclaim their sustainable behaviors and policies through advertisements and personal websites. According to a 2009 study, for instance, while only 1 out of 28 of Las Vegas' largest hotel properties openly posted information about their green initiatives on their websites, many of them still took actions, including the hiring of garbage vendors to organize and separate waste and recyclables, optional eco-friendly disposables for all conferences, replacement of

traditional incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient CFL or LED lighting (Levey et al., 2009) While guests may choose to stay at a particular hotel for its location or amenities on a first visit, they are likely to base repeat business based on a lodging establishment's commitment to responsible environmental behavior (Graci & Dodds, 2008).

Restaurants/Food Service Operations

There are many opportunities for greening in food service operations. Among the most simple is choosing local, in-season food for menus, and adjusting as necessary. Aside from being more environmentally friendly, the product will be fresh and can be used to highlight the particular food gems of a region, state, or even city (Doyle, 2008). Such local products reduce environmental problems by eliminating travel costs. In addition, commercial kitchens can reduce their carbon footprint by creating compost for outdoor gardens or landscaping, and by eliminating the common practice of pre-setting water on guest tables. Since the Chef serves as the head of the kitchen, it is of great importance that they are on board for sustainable behavior. Significant training of this individual, as well as additional key kitchen personnel is vital to the record keeping and analysis of energy consumption, food waste, and composting (Manson, 2011).

Materials Usage

There are also numerous opportunities for green program development within hospitality operations by simply switching to biodegradable or compostable service items, such as plates, cups and flatware. Previously, disposables had been made by the non-compostable and non-recyclable Styrofoam and plastic products, resulting in more waste, toxic production methods and high levels of energy consumption (Doyle, 2008). Disposables can even be done away with altogether, and replaced with washable, re-usable china or another sturdy material. According to

Doyle (2008), the use of 1,000 disposable plastic spoons results in 10 times the energy and natural resource consumption of a stainless steel spoon being produced, used and washed 1,000 times.

Meetings and Event Industry

With the high count of attendees utilizing disposable cups and plates, energy consumption to heat, cool or light the room, and resources used, it's of little surprise that recent environmental movements have shifted toward the meetings and conference industry. The topic has become so important that Fairmont Hotels and Resorts introduced a conference program branded 'Eco-meet' that educates attendees on environmental topics in conjunction with their meetings. Eco-meet has four key components: eco-service (which includes disposable-free food and beverage, recycling stations, and conference materials made from recycled or renewable materials), eco-accommodation (linen re-use, bulk amenities, and water conserving bathroom fixtures), eco-cuisine (seasonally-driven meals derived from locally sourced food products), and eco-programming (activities and speakers related to both the conference topic and sustainability). Each aspect of Eco-meet has specific tasks and goals, and the program has proven to be wildly successful with attendees and meeting planners, as well as Fairmont Hotels and Resorts (Graci & Dodds, 2008).

Professional Organizations

According to Graci & Dodds (2008), several environmental guidelines have been developed by various hospitality organizations, including the International Hotel and Restaurant Association, the American Hotel and Lodging Association and the International Hotel Environment Initiative [now under the umbrella of the International Tourism Partnership]. While these guidelines aren't necessarily government-sanctioned, the organizations' introduction of

them have had a significant effect on operations, and allows them to meet standards at more lax time frames, before they become laws. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, more commonly known as LEED, is a rating system established by the United States Green Building Council to certify hotels and buildings. Business with LEED certification, which is a voluntary process conducted by an independent, third party, have seen lower operating costs, increased property value, healthier and safer environments, and have certified recognition of their green practices. This often results in positive publicity and a new, eco-conscious customer base (Johnston & Breech, 2010). “Enlightened businesses are aware that regulations do not have to be a negative restraint on their daily operations—in fact, they can offer opportunities to gain advantage over competitors. Some environmental regulations are good for economic competition as they stimulate innovation that can offset the cost of compliance” (Graci & Dodds, 2008).

Hospitality Employee Training

Employees, much like the average consumer, are becoming increasingly aware of, and concerned about environmental responsibility. Employees with a passion for this topic have the potential to enthusiastically lead the charge in sustainable practices, and are likely to support and identify with an employer whose principles and practices follow or lead with current trends (Graci & Dodds, 2008). In addition, when staff gets involved with the sustainable culture of a hospitality business, it becomes a natural part of daily operations. When these employees are allowed to have input, they are likely to make a significant impact (Manson, 2011).

Employers have discovered that their staff is among their most valuable asset in the fight for sustainability. As such, many hospitality operations have begun putting together “Green Teams” of employees to motivate other employees, deliver word-of-mouth information about initiatives to clients and customers, and to ensure processes are being properly implemented.

Businesses gain value through these teams through “cost savings by integrating energy efficiency into the workplace and products and services; attracting and retaining the best and brightest talent who want to work for companies with an authentic green commitment; and increased market share and revenues resulting from a stronger brand and new, innovative green products and services” (Fleischer, 2009, p.1). In an ideal environment, green teams are made up of a variety of employees, from different levels and departments (Manson, 2011). Having a diversified team allows maximum input from all areas of the company, and it empowers even entry-level employees to work toward goals in which they believe. Much success has been achieved through such green teams, and a number of businesses have used these environmental initiatives as staff incentives, where savings earned through them are transferred into prizes, trips or events for those who participated (Graci & Dodds, 2008). Just as hospitality enterprises are more inclined to implement environmental improvements if it saves money, so will employees. By explaining to employees how small steps make a difference in the workplace, they’ll be able to implement their own energy savings at home (Manson, 2011).

Part Three

Introduction

The following serves as a sample addendum to the employee handbook of “Restaurant X.” As an addendum, it will not contain many of the typical contents of an employee handbook, including general company information, the Equal Employment Opportunity statement, attendance policies, dress code, safety and accident prevention, harassment, drug and alcohol policies, compensation and benefits, vacation and leave, worker’s compensation or labor laws (Small Business Notes, 2011). While those topics are not included for the purpose of this paper, it should be assumed that they would already exist in a completed employee handbook. This addendum, instead, serves as new information for a hospitality enterprise venturing into a more sustainable operation.

Sample: Addendum to “Restaurant X” Employee Handbook, Revised December 2011

I. Restaurant X Commitment to Sustainability

Restaurant X has made a commitment to acting as sustainably as possible, with some actions being immediately implemented. There are a number of positive reasons for this commitment, and they are achieved through a variety of ways.

- a. Environmental Benefits
 - i. Decreased carbon footprint
 - ii. Improved quality of food (produce and animal)
 - iii. Improved future
 - iv. Cleaner water
 - v. Decrease in waste

b. Social Benefits

- i. New customer base
- ii. Marketing opportunities
- iii. Community recognition
- iv. Pride

c. Food Sourcing

- i. Restaurant X is committed to responsible food sourcing by discontinuing a contract with a national food supplier, effective immediately.
- ii. Restaurant X is committed to responsible food sourcing by contracting food products from local farmers, all within 100 miles, effective immediately.
- iii. Restaurant X is committed to responsible food sourcing by purchasing organic foods whenever available, effective immediately.
- iv. Restaurant X is committed to responsible food sourcing by increasing the number of vegetarian items on the menu by 25%, effective one month from addendum date.
- v. Restaurant X is committed to responsible food sourcing by adjusting menus seasonally, effective one month from addendum date.

d. Waste Management

- i. Restaurant X is committed to reducing waste by eliminating the use of Styrofoam products, effective immediately.
- ii. Restaurant X is committed to reducing waste by using biodegradable disposables, effective immediately.

- iii. Restaurant X is committed to reducing waste by implementing a composting program, effective immediately.
 - iv. Restaurant X is committed to reducing waste by increasing use of electronic devices and reducing paper usage, effective immediately.
 - v. Restaurant X is committed to reducing waste by outsourcing Greasy Z's, a sustainably reputable company, to recycle restaurant grease, effective immediately.
- e. Energy Conservation
- i. Restaurant X is committed to conserving energy through the controlled, locked thermostat set at 68° F in Winter, and 76° in Summer, effective immediately.
 - ii. Restaurant X is committed to conserving energy through setting the thermostat back 10° during non-operational hours, effective immediately.
 - iii. Restaurant X is committed to conserving energy through the replacement of all light bulbs with CFL or LED light bulbs, effect one month from addendum date.
 - iv. Restaurant X is committed to conserving energy through the installation of sensor lighting in all restrooms, offices and storage facilities, effective three months from addendum date.
 - v. Restaurant X is committed to conserving energy through the installation of energy efficient windows and doors throughout the facility, effective one year from addendum date.

- vi. Restaurant X is committed to conserving energy through the replacement or installation of energy efficient kitchen equipment, effective two years from addendum date.
 - vii. Restaurant X is committed to conserving energy through regular maintenance and cleaning of all kitchen equipment, effective immediately.
- f. Water Conservation
- i. Restaurant X is committed to conserving water through the elimination of automatic water glasses on guest tables, effective immediately.
 - ii. Restaurant X is committed to conserving water through the installation of sensor faucets and low-flow toilets in guest and employee restrooms, effective six months from addendum date.
 - iii. Restaurant X is committed to conserving water by re-using non-potable water for landscaping purposes, effective immediately.
- g. Indoor Air Quality
- i. Restaurant X is committed to a smoke-free environment, both indoors and outdoors, effective immediately.
 - ii. Restaurant X is committed to regular cleaning and maintenance of all HVAC systems, effective immediately.
 - iii. Restaurant X is committed to regular cleaning and maintenance of all equipment, furniture and flooring, effective immediately.
- h. Chemical Usage
- i. Restaurant X is committed to only using chemicals considered environmentally safe by the EPA, effective immediately.

- ii. Restaurant X is committed to using naturally sourced products for cleaning, sanitizing, guest and employee use wherever approved and available, effective immediately.

II. Employee Role in Sustainability

Restaurant X recognizes that without its talented employee team, it would be unable to function successfully. With that in mind, you are asked to support the new sustainable initiatives by following updated policies. Please note, deviation from these policies, effective immediately, will result in disciplinary action. This addendum is not a contract of employment. Restaurant X remains an at-will employer.

a. Food Sourcing

- i. All employees should be aware of source locations of all animal products, and be prepared to share that information with patrons, if requested.
- ii. All employees should be aware of any potential allergens in food products, and be prepared to share that information with patrons, if requested.
- iii. All employees should be aware of the flavors of all food products, and be prepared to share that information with patrons, if requested. A sample tasting of all new menu items will be provided to staff at the beginning of each shift, when applicable.

b. Waste Management

- i. Disposable cups have been discontinued. In accordance with health code, all employees will be issued one reusable beverage cup with lid upon acceptance of employment. There will be a \$5.00 fee for any lost or broken cups, but it is yours to keep upon termination from Restaurant X.

- ii. Styrofoam to-go containers have been discontinued, and replaced with biodegradable paper containers.
 - 1. Employees will only provide to-go containers if requested by the patron.
 - 2. Employees are not allowed to take food home in to-go containers.
All meals must be consumed on premise, unless employee is a full-paying customer.
 - iii. Manual order pads have been discontinued. Servers will now use electronic PDA's to take orders. Information will automatically be delivered to service screens in the kitchen.
 - iv. All compostable food leftovers (fruit, vegetables, grains, eggshells) should immediately be added to the work station compost bins marked "Compost only", and transferred to the large compost bin at the conclusion of each shift. Meat, fish, oils and dairy products should not be added to compost, but instead disposed of into a trash receptacle.
 - v. Used coffee grounds should be disposed of into the container marked "Used coffee grounds" located by the beverage station. They will be added to the compost at the conclusion of each shift.
- c. Energy Conservation
- i. The thermostat will be set at a temperature determined by management. If patrons are complaining about the room temperature, please see the manager for adjustment.

- ii. Lights must be turned off promptly when rooms (i.e.: private party room, dry storage, wine cellar) are not in use.

- iii. External doors must be kept closed at all times when not in use.

d. Water Conservation

- i. Unless requested by the patron, Restaurant X will no longer pre-set or bring water to tables.

- ii. Any beverage water left at the conclusion of a meal should be emptied into the bucket labeled “Non-potable water.” It will be used to water plants and landscaping at the conclusion of each shift. All other beverages should be disposed of down the drain.

e. Indoor Air Quality

- i. Smoking is prohibited by any employee on Restaurant X property.

- ii. Candles are prohibited in the restaurant, unless pre-arranged with management.

- iii. Employees are discouraged from using perfume or cologne. Appropriately cleanliness, however, is required.

f. Chemical Usage

- i. Employees are prohibited from using any non-approved chemical cleaners, sanitizers or sprays.

III. Green Team Development

Restaurant X has developed a “Green Team” for the purpose of employee input, progressive sustainable development, and access to information. Any employee interested in joining is

welcome. Involvement is 100% voluntary, and will not positively or negatively affect employment status with Restaurant X. The Green Team will meet weekly to discuss progress with previously implemented sustainable measures, brainstorm new ideas, and set goals for future sustainable achievements.

a. Goals of Green Team

- i. Work toward 20% reduction of energy by end of 2nd year
- ii. Work toward 5% reduction of water by end of 2nd year
- iii. Work toward 20% reduction of waste by end of 1st year
- iv. Work toward 75% usage of locally sourced food products by end of 1st year

b. Incentives

- i. Actively involved Green Team members (attend 80+% of meetings) will be eligible for a vacation package, paid time off, and gift cards if one or more goals are met in the determined time frame.
- ii. Moderately involved Green Team members (attend 50%-80% of meetings) will be eligible for paid time off and gift cards if one or more goals are met in the determined time frame.
- iii. Slightly involved Green Team members (attend 10%-50% of meetings) will be eligible for gift cards if one or more goals are met in the determined time frame.
- iv. All employees, regardless of Green Team involvement, are encouraged to submit ideas to be eligible for additional prizes if one or more goals are met in the determined time frame.

IV. Additional Opportunities

- a. In recognizing that community welfare plays a major part in sustainability, employees are encouraged to participate in local volunteer opportunities. Verified involvement in community service will also create opportunities for incentives.
- b. Employees interested in taking courses in Environmental Management, Sustainability, or Responsible Hospitality at Xville Community College will be reimbursed by Restaurant X up to \$500 per course, so long as the final achieved grade is a “B” or higher.
- c. Any other sustainability training opportunities should be brought to management for consideration.

Conclusion

With an appropriate understanding of sustainable goals and outcomes, any hospitality operation is capable of making a significant difference in their green behaviors. The importance of strong employee support behind those behaviors cannot be underestimated, however. If an operation wants their sustainable venture to be successful, they must get all employees on board. This is achieved through the creation of an addendum to an employee handbook. The handbook should clearly state the goals and missions of the sustainability plan, the actions of the operation, and the policies and expectations of the employees. A clear sustainability addendums is the key to getting employees involved in operational goals. Without one, the operation runs the risk of employee disconnect, lack of support, and, in turn, failure of their sustainability program.

Glossary of Terms

Employee Handbook- Employee Handbooks are also often called Policy and Procedures Manuals. The Handbook/Manual is a statement of the policies of the business and how the business is to be conducted. The company employee handbook is one of the most important communication tools between your company and your employees (Small Business Notes, 2011).

Green Teams-Self organized, grassroots and cross-functional groups of employees who voluntarily come together to educate, inspire and empower employees around sustainability (Fleischer, 2009).

Hospitality Industry- A broad range of businesses in service sector, often broken into three major categories: food service, lodging and travel/tourism.

Human Resources-People; the workforce of an organization.

Local Sourcing-Products that are made, grown and/or reared locally. “Local” distance is determined by individual retailers or organizations.

Sustainability- Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations. (EPA)

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