



The SSC Green Audit

K-12 Education



STRATEGIC
SUSTAINABILITY
CONSULTING

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Did you know?

- Recent data suggest that poor indoor air quality (IAQ) can reduce a person's ability to perform specific mental tasks requiring concentration, calculation or memory.
- A study of Chicago and Washington, DC schools found that better school facilities can add 3 to 4 percentage points to a school's standardized test scores, even after controlling for demographic factors.
- Implementing green cleaning procedures, equipment and supplies can reduce illnesses by 24%, doctor visits by 34% and courses of antibiotics by 24% and days absent by 46%.
- On average sustainable schools use 33% less energy, 32% less water, 74% less solid waste and reap financial benefits of approximately \$70 per square foot – more than 20 times the cost of going green.

Why go green?

As educators, you have the most important task in our society – raising healthy, learned young people to thrive in the world they inherit. Part of your mission requires modeling responsible stewardship of your community and practicing strong resource conservation while recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. With students and teachers spending 85% to 90% of their time indoors, meeting this challenge requires providing healthy built environments with plenty of light. All this must occur in the context of the tightest operating budget environment since the early 1990s. You have made drastic cuts in every vital program and can't imagine investing money in any new direction. Yet, counter intuitively, implementing waste reduction and energy efficiency measures could free up funds for teachers and staff – the life blood of learning.

Why work with SSC?

Whether you have just started to think about sustainability or would like to take your efforts to a new level, *Strategic Sustainability Consulting* can help with all your green initiatives. We have extensive experience helping small and medium sized firms develop customized sustainability plans in the context of their specific stakeholders and marketplace. Whatever your budget, we will provide you with a workable, cost-saving solution. Using our unique methodology, outlined in the attached SSC Green Audit, we will help identify issues specific to your school. Step by step, we will show you how to seize competitive advantage through sustainability while creating a healthy environment for the young people you serve, your committed employees and community you live in.



The SSC Green Audit

What is an SSC Green Audit?

The SSC Green Audit is a methodology developed by Strategic Sustainability Consulting, specifically designed for organizations that have made a commitment to “going green” but who need help in taking practical steps towards that goal.

Each SSC Green Audit includes the following five components:

The Employee Survey

- We use an online survey to gauge your employee’s attitudes and awareness towards environmental issues at your office. Do they consider themselves eco-conscious? Do they consider the organization to be eco-friendly? What do they think are the top priorities that should be tackled? We’ll help you find out.
- The survey also asks some basic questions about commuting, business travel, and other office practices. This information helps us get a robust picture of your employee-based environmental impacts, and helps inform your organization’s carbon footprint.

The Office/Building Survey

- While employees are taking the survey, you’ll also be collecting information on your office-based environmental impacts, like square footage, utility bills, and IT equipment. This information is added to our carbon footprint data, giving us an accurate picture of your organization’s annual greenhouse gas emissions.
- Don’t have numbers for your electricity, natural gas, and water use? Don’t know how much waste you generate? Don’t worry – we have national averages that can be plugged in when information on your specific impacts are missing.

The Carbon Footprint

- We take information gathered from the Employee Survey and the Office Survey and run it through our carbon footprint calculator. While many different calculators exist that measure carbon emissions, our calculator (co-developed by TheGreenOffice.com) is the only one specifically designed to account for ALL of an organization’s office-based environmental impacts.
- Not only will we tell you the annual tons of carbon emissions that your office emits – we’ll also break it down by key “carbon drivers” so that you know how much of your footprint comes from which type of behavior (e.g. air travel vs. car commuting vs. paper use vs. utilities). That way, you’ll know exactly what “reduce paper use by 20%” means for your environmental impact. One of the most useful things about our carbon footprint is that we’ll not only report your absolute carbon emissions, but we’ll also explain how you stack up against your peers. Compared to others of similar size and in your industry, are you better or worse than the average? This benchmark will give you a good idea of where you’re starting from, and how far you need to go to be considered a leader. Compared to others of similar size and in your industry, are you better or worse than the average? This benchmark will give you a good idea of where you’re starting from, and how far you need to go to be considered a leader.



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The Onsite Visit

Depending on the type of SSC Green Audit that you choose, our certified auditors will spend between one and three days onsite with your organization. During that time you can expect:

- “Understanding Sustainability” Workshop – The first component of the onsite visit is a 90-minute workshop, an opportunity for everyone in your company to hear about the concept of sustainability and why the company is choosing to “green” its operations. It allows employees to voice any concerns or areas of particular enthusiasm, and will provide the Green Auditor with a contextual understanding of your business operations and goals. Specifically, the workshop will cover issues of organizational culture, existing environmental policies/programs, employees’ vision for the future, and challenges to being more sustainable. While everyone in the organization is encouraged to attend, representatives from the following departments MUST be in attendance: operations/management; facilities; purchasing; human resources; and sales/marketing.
- Facility Walk-Through - After the morning meeting, the Green Auditor will spend several hours walking through the operations and speaking 1-on-1 with select personnel to gather additional data needed to inform the carbon footprint calculation and the afternoon recommendations.
- “Results and Recommendations” Presentation – At the conclusion of the onsite visit, your organization will spend another hour together with the Green Auditor, receiving the results of the employee survey and carbon footprint analysis as well as a PowerPoint presentation outlining the results of the Audit. Topics included: current environmental strengths and weaknesses, “easy wins” that can be implemented immediately, longer-term recommendations.
- Final Green Audit Report – In addition to the PowerPoint presentation delivered during the onsite visit, your Green Auditor will also deliver a formal report back to your organization that includes all of the previously presented information as well as a list of additional resources to get you started.

For clients who choose a more extensive audit with a longer onsite visit, the auditor will schedule additional 1-on-1 interviews with key personnel in departments such as operations, human resources, purchasing, sales, customer service, facility maintenance, and research & development.

You may also choose to have your SSC Green Auditor develop a Sustainability Action Plan, a month-by-month action plan for the first 180 days, specifically tailored to your company and its available staff and budget resources, with the primary goal to identify “low hanging fruit” and opportunities for cost savings through better environmental management.

¹ The SSC Green Audit takes into account the entire scope of your company’s operations in our analysis, but if you have more than one facility we’ll choose the most relevant location and focus there as a starting point. If you want to include site visits to other facilities, we can certainly do that too (for an additional fee).

² Depending on the depth of Green Audit that you choose, this final report may be delivered within 48 hours or within 2-3 weeks.



The SSC Green Audit

How is the SSC Green Office different from other methodologies?

In the sustainability consulting world, there is no true standard for green auditing – each consultant does it a little bit differently. Most consultants will offer something similar – a baseline impact assessment that determines the client’s biggest environmental impacts (e.g. paper vs. energy vs. waste) and then makes recommendations based on those findings. The problem is that this approach often leaves clients with a set of good suggestions but without a clear understanding of how “green” or “ungreen” they are, or how a particular suggestion will impact their overall state of environmental responsibility.

The SSC Green Audit takes the guesswork out of “going green” by providing a consistent methodology that employee attitudes and behavior and combines that with a carbon footprint analysis – all of which culminates in recommendations that are directly tied to your organization’s impacts in a strategic way. We make sure that the green initiatives we propose give you the most “bang for your buck”, and that you walk away with a clear understanding of what going green can mean for your business model.

Is it right for my organization?

In general, our clients are relatively new to the concepts of sustainability, although many will have ad hoc environmental initiatives in place, like office recycling or purchasing recycled paper. Some have already created internal Green Teams, while others are still figuring out how to best approach the issue.

All of our clients have a common goal – to take a big step back and understand what “going green” means for their employees, for their business model, and for their overall environmental impact.

The SSC Green Audit is primarily designed for small and medium-size organizations (those with less than 1,000 employees) and those who are operating in an office-based environment. If you are a larger organization, or are operating in a manufacturing or retail environment, contact us for an engagement package that is specifically tailored to your needs.

What training has my auditor received?

Each certified SSC Green Auditor has a solid background in office-based environmental issues like energy, waste/ recycling, purchasing, and information technology. In addition, they have completed an intense 3-day training course to learn how to effectively use the SSC Green Audit tools and methodology to guide clients through the audit process. Auditors are re-certified on an annual basis to ensure that they are using the most up-to-date recommendations, carbon footprint methodology, and facilitation tools.

Look for the Certified SSC Green Auditor logo to guarantee that you are working with a consultant who understands and applies this rigorous methodology.





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How can I get more information?

Not sure if the SSC Green Audit is right for you? Email us at info@sustainabilityconsulting.com and request a free phone consultation with one of our auditors. We can answer specific questions, give you a price quote, and set up a time for an onsite visit!

The current SSC Green Auditor Network:

