Impact at Work

Planner's Guide

Impact at Work provides a set of structured set of resources and work-sheets to explore ways you can make an impact at your workplace. We wanted to offer this as a resource for your Chapter and members. It was created a few years ago, so please note that some of the links and emails in the guide are older and may not work. However, the overall content is still relevant and helpful so we hope you find it useful.

NET IMPACT

NET IMPACT

Impact at Work Toolkit

INSIDE:

Welcome to your toolkit

Looking to make positive change through your job? Use the Impact at Work Toolkit to kick off a social or environmental project at work, and discover how you can make a *net impact*.

Who should use the toolkit?

Technically, anyone!

- Junior level employees looking to gain project management and leadership skills
- Mid-senior level employees seeking tools to help lead project teams
- Non-CSR professionals who want to initiate projects that make a positive environmental or social impact at work

What can you do with the toolkit?

The toolkit is designed to be extremely flexible. With the tookit, you can:

- Start a conversation within your organization about the benefits of impact initiatives
- Provide focus and direction for an existing Green Team
- Identify and develop environmental projects and initiatives
- Identify and develop social impact projects and initiatives
- Build community among coworkers and departments
- Support your organization's mission and business goals through impact opportunities

1. **Define** your project

Every project has to start somewhere. But diving in head-first isn't necessarily the most effective way to make change that truly lasts; taking the time to map out the direction of your project can make all the difference.

Identify potential projects. Start by brainstorming a list of ideas. Get creative: what problems have you encountered that need solving? Do you have any particular areas of interest that you're passionate about? Does your organization have any specific strengths it can leverage? Use the themes from **WORKSHEET 1** to help spur ideas. Catalog and sort these ideas using **WORKSHEET 2**.

Evaluate the benefits and challenges. To help narrow down your list of potential projects, use **WORKSHEET 3** to assess the benefits, challenges, level of difficulty, and potential for impact of each idea. Getting these elements onto the page will help you prioritize your list and identify the projects with the most potential to succeed.

Select and define a direction to pursue. Once you've narrowed down your ideas, it should become clear to you which project idea makes the most sense given your interests and resources. Use **WORKSHEET 4** to expand on your idea. Completing this worksheet will help you strengthen the idea, and ensure it's viability in the workplace.

2. **Engage** stakeholders

To make lasting change, you can't go it alone. Identifying and engaging your stakeholders early on in the process will help secure commitment and buy-in.

Build a team. Identify a core leadership team to take charge and help enage others throughout the organization. Choosing a diverse group will allow you to tap into a range of talent and ideas. Take a look at other teams or departments in your organization - what traits do other successful teams have that you could replicate? Finally, assign roles using **WORKSHEET 4**.

Map the stakeholders involved. Use **WORKSHEET 5** to think about who will be affected by your project, as well as those who might have influence on its success or failure. Gaining the support of key stakeholders will help build credibility for your team, and potentially speed up progress.

Communicate your message. Trying to get people on board can sometimes be challenging, so think carefully about different ways to engage, entice, and educate your audience. What about your project will your stakeholders care about? If you're asking them to adopt new behaviors or give up old ones, what might make them more likely to accept these changes? It's important to think about this from their point of view, because the imperative to change may not be as clear to them as it is to you.

3. **Deliver** Results

Once you've kicked off your project and gotten your team on board, it's time to make sure it sticks around. Understanding how your efforts are paying off in the real world can help keep a project moving forward, and even help it grow.

Define your project and create a plan. Setting clear objectives and then breaking the project down into realistic milestones keeps big projects managable and lofty goals on track. Use **WORKSHEETS 6** and **7** to ground your project in actionable phases and next steps.

Chart your progress. It helps to gather as much data as possible to validate and track your efforts, particularly if you'll need to report progress to senior leadership. But consistent data can also tell you if you're on the right track, or if you need reassess your approach. Use **WORKSHEET 8** to decide what metrics will be most valuable to your team — and the organization at large — for tracking progress, and then start recording.

Share your results. Not only will you want to conduct regular check-ins with your team to stay on track, it's critical to celebrate your project's milestones - big and small. Share your experience (both successes *and* lessons learned) with the rest of your organization to build momentum and encourage others to get involved. And don't forget to share your learnings with the Net Impact network by submitting the online story form at: **netimpact.org/mystory**

Team Impact

You can use the **Impact at Work Toolkit** on your own to kick-start a project, or you can expand your impact by bringing together a small (or large!) group of colleagues.

In advance. Start by reaching out to colleagues any way you can — send out emails, hang up flyers, or just talk to folks by the water cooler. Consider this: even if you get just one other person interested, that's twice as many as you started with (really; you have to start somewhere). Set a date to kick off the planning process, and send out **WORKSHEET 1** in advance to get the ideas flowing.

Meeting 1. Use this time to get to know the reasons participants are interested in making an impact at work. Dig into **WORKSHEETS 1** and **2** (breaking into smaller groups if you've got a crowd). Discuss the results within the larger group, selecting the top 3-4 projects to explore. Move onto to **WORKSHEET 3**, continuing group discussion until you've narrowed in on the first project you'll tackle. Finally, before you break, assign roles using **WORKSHEET 4**. *Homework: Individuals or breakout groups should work on* **WORKSHEET 5** *before the next meeting.*

Meeting 2. Okay, so it's been a week (but not much longer; you don't want to lose momentum). Kick off this meeting by sharing the results of your group's homework, and completing a final version of **WORKSHEET 5**. Then define your project and create an action plan using **WORKSHEETS 6** and **7**. Now you're really cooking! With all that energy, do a group brainstorm using **WORKSHEET 8** to identify the right metrics for success. This could even be spun off into a third meeting. From here, it's time to put your plan into place, launch your project, and track your progress!

Worksheet 1

Themes

THEME	PROJECT(S)	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	DIFFICULTY LEVEL	WHERE TO START
WASTE REDUCTION	• Recycling • Compost • Water bottles • Paper usage	• Highly visible • Quantifiable • High existing awareness • Low up-front investment • Reduced costs	• Incentivizing behavior change • Working with facilities management • Establishing benchmarks & monitoring progress	• Low (e.g. increasing existing recycling levels) to high (e.g. establishing a new recycling program)	• Contact facilities manager to discuss options • Conduct waste audit • Identify materials w/ re-use/reduction/recycling potential • Host waste awareness event
ENERGY	• Energy conservation • Renewable energy use • Sustainable computing • Green buildings	• Quantifiable • Cost effective • Direct relationships to carbon emissions	• Incentivizing behavior change • Working with facilities management • Creating tracking methods • May require substantial investment	• Low (e.g. encouraging employees to turn off lights) to High (e.g. energy efficiency retrofitting for buildings)	• Contact facilities manager to discuss options • Conduct energy audit • Research industry benchmarks • Host awareness event
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	• Employee volunteerism • Dollars for Doers program • Nonprofit pro bono partnership	• Team building • Skills development • Positive PR value • Improved relationships with local community • Increased staff engagement	• Fitting events into work schedules • Securing time off for employee participation • Connecting employee skills to community needs	• Medium to High (depending on size of program)	• Work with HR manager to gauge employee interest • Survey staff on interest areas • Conduct nonprofit outreach • Host meeting to recruit volunteers
SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING	• Environmentally/socially preferable procurement policies	• May reduce costs through more efficient purchases • Positive PR value • Stronger vendor relationships • Stay ahead of compliance regulations	• May increase costs (perceived or real) on some purchases • Long-term ROI may require patience/vision • Potential vendor resistance	• Medium to High (depending on breadth of policy implemented)	• Contact purchasing dept. to discuss current policies • Draft list of issue priorities • Compile sustainable vendors & pricing options • Draft proposal for pilot policies
TRANSPORTATION	• Carpooling programs • Incentive programs • Alternative transport options • Flexible workspaces • Bike parking • Telecommuting	• Reduced commuting costs • Reduced overhead (for telecommuting/flex schedules) • Shorter commutes may increase productivity	• Dispersed populations • Culture change in organization • Availability of alternative options	• Low (e.g. carpooling) to High (e.g. telecommuting)	• Contact HR dept. to discuss current policies • Survey staff on commuting habits • Calculate costs/carbon outputs for current habits • Draft pilot project outlining carbon/cost savings

Worksheet 2

Identify Potential Projects

Emotional Approach **What unsustainable activities bother you in the workplace?**

_____

_____

Rational Approach **What sustainable activities might benefit your organization?**

_____

_____

_____

WASTE REDUCTION	ENERGY	COMMUNITY	SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING	EMPLOYEE GIVING
EXAMPLES: RECYCLING, COMPOSTING, PAPER USE, ELECTRONICS DISPOSAL	**EXAMPLES:** ENERGY CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE COOMPUTING, COMMUTING	**EXAMPLES:** EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERISM, NONPROFIT PRO BONO CONSULTING	**EXAMPLES:** ENVIRONMENTAL PROCUREMENT, SUPPLY CHAIN STANDARDS	**EXAMPLES:** UNITED WAY, EMPLOYER MATCHING PROGRAMS

Worksheet 3

Project Evaluation

Use this worksheet to identify the project most worth pursuing, based on the benefits and challenges of each project idea.

PROJECT IDEA:	1.	2.	3.	4.
POTENTIAL BENEFITS/IMPACTS				
LIKELY CHALLENGES				
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY TO IMPLEMENT (HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW)				
IMPACT POTENTIAL (HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW)				

Most attractive project idea: _____

Worksheet 4

Project Roles

In projects where a number of people are involved, it's key to be specific when outlining who is contributing what. Use this MOCHA framework (from The Management Center) to help organize who will do what to make your project a success.

ROLE		DEFINITION	ASSIGNED TO
M	MANAGER	ASSIGNS RESPONSIBILITY AND HOLDS OWNER ACCOUNTABLE. MAKES SUGGESTIONS, ASKS HARD QUESTIONS, REVIEWS PROGRESS, SERVES AS A RESOURCE, AND INTERVENES IF THINGS ARE OFF TRACK.	
O	OWNER	HAS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE PROJECT. ENSURES THAT ALL OF THE WORK GETS DONE (DIRECTLY OR VIA HELPERS) AND THAT OTHERS ARE INVOLVED APPROPRIATELY.	
C	CONSULTANTS	SHOULD BE ASKED FOR INPUT AND/OR NEEDS TO BE BOUGHT IN. ALSO KNOWN AS SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS (SME).	
H	HELPERS	AVAILABLE TO HELP OR DO PART OF THE WORK.	
A	APPROVER	SIGNS OFF ON DECISIONS BEFORE THEY ARE FINAL.	

Worksheet 5

Stakeholder Mapping

List All Stakeholders **Include anyone who is likely to be impacted by your project, or who otherwise might have an interest in its success or failure.**

_____

_____

_____

Identify a Sponsor **Is there anyone in senior leadership who might be interested in "sponsoring" your project? Gaining the commitment of key leaders can help add momentum.**

_____

Map Stakeholders **Identify where stakeholders listed above are likely to fall on the chart below.**

STRONGLY AGAINST	AGAINST	NEUTRAL	SUPPORTIVE	STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE

Solve for Resistance **What can you do to help stakeholders be more supportive of this project?**

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 6

Define Your Project

Project Name   **Which project did you choose?**

_____

Business Objectives   **What metrics could be used to make the case to your organization's leadership to gain their support of your project? Describe the specific benefits to the organization of implementing this project (e.g. cost savings, increased employee engagement, etc.).**

_____

_____

_____

Project Description   **A brief description used to describe the project to potential participants. It should communicate the overall scope and goal(s) of the project clearly.**

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7

Action Plan

Target Impact   **How will you measure the success of this project?**

_____

_____

_____

Next Steps   **What needs to get done in the near-term to get this project implemented?**

_____

_____

_____

Long-term Steps   **What milestones need to be reached to complete this project?**

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8

Metrics Tracking

We've all heard the adage: "what gets measured gets managed." Identifying which metrics you'll use to measure progress before you start can help you measure your impact, inform your decision-making as you go, and build buy-in from colleagues for whom quantitative measures are important. There are many ways to track metrics (including spreadsheets and custom software), but you can start with this basic worksheet as a template.

METRIC	CURRENT BASELINE	POST-PROJECT GOAL
BY WHAT UNITS WILL YOU MEASURE PROJECT PROGRESS? **EXAMPLE:** # OF REAMS OF PAPER USED MONTHLY	*TRACK UNITS OVER THE COURSE A SET PERIOD OF TIME* **EXAMPLE:** 100 REAMS OF PAPER USED PER MONTH	*WHAT SHOULD THE NEW BASELINE BE?* **EXAMPLE:** 50 REAMS OF PAPER USED PER MONTH

Share your impact!

How are you using the Impact at Work Toolkit to make a difference in your organization? Let us know by contributing your experiences: **netimpact.org/mystory**

NET IMPACT