

Sustainable Sense Business Consulting

The impact one person can have on the world may seem small, but what about the impact 7.5 billion “one person”'s can have? What about the impact one business can have? Sustainable Sense Business Consulting began as an approach I carried out with my full-time employer, transitioned into a free-lance consulting initiative, and culminated into an examination of the challenges faced by amateurs in the relatively new industry of sustainability. Pre-entry-level sustainability professionals are looking to emulate leaders in business, education, and advocacy to create positive behavioral changes that foster sustainable development. The United Nations emphasizes the importance of, and defines sustainable development as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainability itself is a relatively new term, sustainable development is a relatively new concept, and both are vital to the future of business.

The mission of “Sustainable Sense” became to inspire organizations to operate with the future in mind, arming them with the information and tools they need to sustain themselves, their businesses, and their communities. My goal was to get businesses to say “yes” to letting me consult with them about missed business opportunities in things like energy efficiency, reduced paper waste, and process improvements, communicating the profitability of environmental sustainability. By encouraging organizations to make positive changes such as these, I would help ensure their business can continue to operate well into the future despite the immediate and impending threats of the climate crisis, including energy dependency, pollution, and the planet’s finite resources.

As an amateur sustainability professional, I was faced with many challenges; disapproval by peers and supervisors caused the termination of two initiatives just a few weeks in, dismissal by potential clients and partners prevented the initiation of alternative projects, and other unforeseen obstacles forced the project’s next steps and goals to be repeatedly reset. Sustainable Sense therefore became less of a project with tangible, measurable outcomes and more of a learning experience intended to teach people with business-, environmentally-, and/or sustainability-focused people with goals similar to mine what the challenges are that they will face, how to work around them, and best practices to realize success in such a fresh but vitally important industry.