

Sustainability Consultation Report: Shepley Bulfinch
Executive Summary
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The building design and construction industry plays an important role in satisfying the needs of society, enhancing the quality of life, and contributing to the economic growth of a country. However, it has been heavily criticized for being a major contributor to carbon emissions, environmental degradation, and global warming due to its utilization of a large proportion of natural resources and energy consumption (Doan, 2017). Opportunities for the greatest gains in sustainable development begin with design professionals like Shepley Bulfinch, a national architectural firm.

Shepley Bulfinch was engaged in this project to better understand how the firm is currently performing. This project used a three-part business sustainability assessment which consisted of: a five-level organizational sustainability systems map, assessment of current sustainability implementation, and application of a Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) (Broman, 2017). Three peer firms: Lake | Flato, Gensler, and WRNS Studio were assessed using the same method for comparison.

A sustainability engagement session was held at Shepley Bulfinch's Phoenix office using the ABCD-procedure of the FSSD (Broman, 2017). The purpose of the session was to create a vision of what a Sustainable Shepley Bulfinch would look like, identify current challenges and assets, possible solutions, and form a strategic plan.

The results of the business sustainability assessments of Shepley Bulfinch and peer firms found opportunities for Shepley Bulfinch to improve. Lake | Flato showed that it is possible to engrain sustainability principles into the mission, culture, and day to day processes of the firm. Examples from Gensler and WRNS Studio demonstrated the importance of sustainability champions and the potential of innovative practices to mitigate the effects of climate change and combat its root causes.

The sustainability engagement session brought to life a vision of what a 'Sustainable Shepley Bulfinch' could look like. Current challenges to this vision and assets were identified. The group brainstormed possible solutions to overcome these challenges, and finally created a strategic plan to transform the current state of Shepley Bulfinch into the sustainable vision.

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A compilation of the findings of the business sustainability assessments and the engagement session informed four recommended focus areas: company culture, education, marketing/branding, and business operations. Shepley Bulfinch has many assets and opportunities that if acted upon, could transform the firm into a sustainability leader.