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Report: Environmentally Educated and Engaged Employees Pay Dividends

New white paper finds how employees help companies save cash and resources

WASHINGTON, D.C. —A new study by the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) finds that environmental and sustainability (E&S) employee education and engagement initiatives help companies achieve a range of business objectives from attracting and retaining employees to boosting the bottom line.

Those findings, along with examples featuring some of the nation's leading companies, were released today by NEEF's Business & Environment program in "The Business Case for Environmental and Sustainability Employee Education," available at www.neefusa.org.

"While in the past, most environmental education programs were primarily for environmental safety and health employees, many companies now realize that to achieve their sustainability goals, they need to involve the entire workforce (or all their employees)," said Diane Wood, president of the National Environmental Education Foundation. "Successful employee engagement programs motivate employees and can be an asset in recruitment and retention."

The publication takes an in-depth look at examples where companies saved money, improved efficiency, built stronger customer relations — or succeeded in doing all three — through E&S education programs, presenting a compelling business case for environmentally literate employees. Company examples indicate that while there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to E&S education, engaging employees at every level of the company is essential to successful initiatives.

But educational programs must compete for resources, so building a strong business case for an E&S education program can be as important as building the program itself. The publication also includes best practices, next steps and resources for making the business case for E&S education.

Some examples highlighted in the report include:

- Lockheed Martin "Green Teams" improved energy efficiency at company sites nationwide, reduced waste and saved money by better managing the use of lighting and air conditioning. Lighting system upgrades at one facility have saved more than \$300,000 and reduced carbon dioxide reductions by 2,511 metric tons.
- A similar employee-led team at eBay's headquarters encouraged the company to build the largest solar installation in San Jose, Calif., reducing carbon dioxide emissions by

more than one million pounds per year and saving the company \$100,000 in energy costs – so far.

- Environmental initiatives at Baxter International Inc. totaled nearly \$91.1 million in savings and cost avoidance over the last six years.

“When it comes to looking at ways to reduce our footprint, we see a direct correlation between reducing our costs and engaging our employees. The Business Case white paper highlights such correlations,” said Carrie Freeman, corporate sustainability strategist at Intel.

“The case studies in this report demonstrate that employee environmental education and engagement helps a business achieve its sustainability goals while also reducing costs,” said Margaret Lindeman, sustainability strategist at Lockheed Martin.

The white paper is a companion publication to “[The Engaged Organization](#),” released last spring. A survey undertaken as part of the publication found that a majority of companies surveyed (65 percent) value environmental and sustainability knowledge in their employees and that more than three out of four surveyed said that knowledge will increase in importance as a hiring factor within five years. [Click here](#) to access the report.

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The **Business & Environment Program** is increasing the ability of business leaders to engage and educate employees to develop and meet sustainability goals.

The **National Environmental Education Foundation** (NEEF) provides knowledge to trusted professionals who, with their credibility, amplify messages to national audiences to solve everyday environmental problems. Together, we generate lasting positive change.

NEEF partners with professionals in health, education, media, business and public land management to promote daily actions for helping people protect and enjoy the environment. Through our primary programs -- Classroom Earth, National Public Lands Day, National Environmental Education Week, Business and Environment, Earth Gauge® and Health & Environment -- we offer Americans knowledge to live by. To learn more, call (202) 833-2933 or visit www.neefusa.org.