

# MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

Institutional Advancement Division

## Corporate Council

### Sustainability Initiatives Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, January 17, 2013 – 4:30 p.m.

Shoenberg Administration Building

#### Committee Members Present

Brian Bauer (PNC Bank)

Ellen Dierenfeld (Novus International)

Rick Hunter (Microgrid Energy)

Jennifer Larsen (Maritz)

Wally McClellan (Office Essentials)

Émer ÓBroin (Monsanto)

Joseph Ostafi (HOK)

Deb Seidel (Bunge North America)

#### Committee Members Unable to Attend

Cheri Cooper (Wells Fargo Advisors)

Rick Halpern (Daniel and Henry)

Teesha Hernandez (Emerson)

Dan Jay (Christner)

Eric Lobser (Laclede Gas)

Megan Ridgeway (Arcturus)

Deb Slagle (Sigma-Aldrich)

Suzy Stone (Macy's)

#### Also in Attendance

Garden staff: Kristine Gruver, Jean Ponzi

#### Meeting Summary

##### RCGA Green Business Challenge Update

Jean provided an update of the 2012 RCGA Green Business Challenge. Details include:

- 87 participants began the 2012 Challenge and 84 completed it
- 30% of participants were new, and 30% had participated in each year of the Challenge
- Of the 12 companies awarded a “Greatest Gain,” seven were new participants
- 58 participants provided case studies, greatly increasing the quantitative data available to show the benefits of green business for both the company and the community
- 15% of participants earned a third-party certification (SITES, EnergyStar, LEED, etc.)

Details for the 2013 Green Business Challenge include:

- The RCGA has contracted with EarthWays Center to be the Green Resource Advisors again
- The program has a goal of at least 60 companies participating in the standard Challenge
- The standard Challenge will continue to be a seven-month program beginning in March
- The Challenge will continue to include the “High Performance” tab, partnering with the USGBC and the RCGA’s greenprint for the region
- The Challenge will begin to integrate biodiversity initiatives more fully as a part of the High Performance tab
- The program has a goal of 20 new business participating in “Green Business 101” a new, four-month “feeder” program for companies new to implementing the concept of green business
- The program is developing a new Sustainability Masters Program for high-achieving businesses to continue to grow, network, and influence larger “green business goals” across the community, including green operations and economic development

- The Challenge will be available only to RCGA members as a benefit of membership

The Sustainability Subcommittee agreed to continue supporting the RCGA Challenge through participation and recruitment outreach. Jean agreed to share the subcommittee's ideas with the RCGA Challenge planning team. Recruitment ideas included:

- Partnerships with media outlets such as the *St. Louis Business Journal* and Nine Network
- Consider social media components to make Challenge and its benefits visible
- If Challenge is a membership benefit, consider paying a staffer or EarthWays team member to call RCGA members one by one and try to recruit them
- Aggregate qualitative data from past Challenges and use it to create impactful marketing materials
- Consider the four targets of RCGA member advocacy (Transportation, Education, Energy and Environment, Economic Development) as points for outreach and marketing tools
- Make marketing about saving money, talent retention, employee benefits, and market needs
- Show how sustainability = operational excellence
- Consider attributes of Forbes "Top Places to Work" companies and apply them to marketing and outreach

#### Marketing the Garden's Sustainability Services for Business

At the November meeting, the subcommittee indicated a need to focus on the breadth of sustainability resources, services, and support available through the Garden for businesses, especially for Corporate Partners. To support that focus, the Garden developed a rough draft of a flier promoting the services and expertise of the EarthWays Center. Feedback on that flier was detailed and thoughtful. Some main points to consider included:

- Explain why the Garden's staff is involved in the business world
- Use business language and terms to "sell" the services with language that "sizzles"
  - i.e. "The Garden has helped over 100 St. Louis companies save money through green operations in the RCGA Business Challenge. Here's how we did it."
  - "EarthWays Center experts provide strategic, sustainable business consulting. We can align a business sustainability strategy around your company's needs."
  - "Our great strength is our expertise and network. The Garden can connect you to what you need to save time, effort, and money."
  - "So much information exists about sustainable business practices. Our experts can sort confusing content for you, honing in on the best practices for your situation."
- Show how "The Garden can benefit your company in these ways, through these outputs"
- Find out what can be quantified from the services and their history; use those examples to show value
- The "philosophy" section is actually a value proposition
  - The values should relate directly to the menu of services
  - Provide links to case studies that illustrate values/services in action
- Title menu of services to reflect on "what the service does for the company" i.e. "Recruitment and Retention" rather than "Education and Motivation"
- Prioritize the information to make the business case and "sell" the value of your expertise
- Use specific examples that relate directly to the value of your services

The Garden team will use this feedback to further develop electronic and print promotional pieces to promote sustainability services. The subcommittee will be asked to continue providing feedback and support.

#### Sustainability in Action Examples

Seven members of the subcommittee provided a short example of how the Garden's sustainability expertise has helped their business, as requested at the November meeting. Remaining subcommittee members will be asked again to provide an example. Examples will be used by the Garden team during the development and refinement of sustainability service promotional materials.

#### Green Ball

Subcommittee members were asked to save the date for the Green Ball, a fundraiser to support the programs of the EarthWays Center. The Green Ball will be held Friday, April 26 at the Moonrise Hotel. Further details will be provided when available.

#### **Action Steps**

- Subcommittee members should provide a one-paragraph example of how the Garden supported advancing sustainability within their business, if they have not already done so.
- Subcommittee members are asked to consider purchasing tickets, attending, promoting and otherwise supporting the Green Ball fundraiser on April 26.
- Garden staff will continue to develop sustainability service promotional materials and seek the subcommittee's feedback.
- Garden staff will continue to provide feedback on the RCGA Challenge, including the responses to the subcommittee's suggestions.

#### **Next Meeting**

Corporate Council

Thursday, February 7

7:30 a.m.

Monsanto Center

Missouri Botanical Garden

4500 Shaw Boulevard

St. Louis, Missouri 63110

Sustainability Initiatives Subcommittee

Thursday, May 9

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Shoenberg Administration Building

Missouri Botanical Garden

2345 Tower Grove Avenue

St. Louis, Missouri 63110