

The 8 Most Common Myths about Earth-Responsible Business Practices

And Some Myth-shattering Facts to Get Companies Thinking Green

Myth: Big business and environmental concerns are natural-born enemies.

Fact: Large businesses have the most to gain from Lean and Green practices. In fact, some of the best-known companies have earned millions and even billions of dollars by adopting environmental policies.

Myth: Earth-friendly practices are best tackled once our business has its financial feet squarely planted on the ground.

Fact: Companies have failed owing to needless expenditures on wasted materials and inefficient production. Starting Lean and Green practices early in your business will get you on sound financial footing sooner.

Myth: Environmental concerns take time and resources away from business.

Fact: On the contrary, time spent addressing environmental policy is time well spent. IBM, for example, estimates that for every dollar spent on environmental benefit or pollution prevention, two dollars are added to its bottom line.

Myth: Environmental programs slow down the manufacturing process by adding a layer of complication.

Fact: Lean and Green programs can actually get new products to the market faster by jumping over environmental-permit hurdles, for example.

Myth: Most consumers don't really care about "green" practices. They are looking for value.

Fact: Some of the best-selling products in their field are the ones advertised as being kind to the earth. Examples are Organic Horizon Dairy and Thomson Multimedia's "green" television.

Myth: Lean and Green practices cannot be our company's highest priority right now.

Fact: Analyzing your company's efficiency, department by department, and examining where you can save money and reduce waste is a priority of every well-run business.

Myth: We would like to adopt environmental policies, but our traditional, conservative executives will never go for it.

Fact: Environmental practices are not job perks. Committed managers who have done their homework well can provide figures to back up their argument that Lean and Green practices will lower expenses and increase revenues. The bottom line speaks volumes to decision makers who are uncommitted.

Myth: If we take time out and divert resources to working on an environmental policy for our company, our competitors will get a jump on us.

Fact: Successful Lean and Green companies use earth-friendly practices to their competitive advantage. For example, Philips Electronics N.V. studied competitors' environmental practices and determined to do better. As a result, they have gained a larger piece of the consumer market with their "green" products.