

Sample Continual Action Plan

Y.O.U.R Company
Annual Report
June 2004



Y.O.U.R. INC.

Environmental Performance Report Page 5 of 5

Again this year, Y.O.U.R Company has demonstrated our commitment to continual improvement of our environmental performance. This year's improvements in energy efficiency and the reduction of hazardous waste production are important milestones, but they are not the end of our work to find environmental opportunities that meet our business goals. Therefore, we commit to the following plan for continual improvement:

- ◇ Y.O.U.R. Company will use new advancing technologies to improve our efficient use of environmental resources.
- ◇ The Annual Report of Y.O.U.R. Company will include a section analyzing the environmental impacts of our business practices and our progress in meeting our stated environmental goals.
- ◇ The company's Environmental Policy Statement will be reviewed by a team of employees biannually.
- ◇ All proposals for major equipment or process changes will include an assessment of their environmental impacts.
- ◇ Y.O.U.R. Company's Environmental Policy Statement and annual environmental report will be posted on the company website along with a tool for community and employee suggestions.

Through these efforts we hope to continue our tradition of profitable, environmentally responsible business practices.

Next steps to increase your profitability through environmental practices...

Online Resources:

GreenBiz Toolbox Guide: www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/howto_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=42055

GEMI Publications: www.gemi.org/docs/PubTools.htm

Look in the BEA's How-To Guide Series for:

- #1: Developing an Environmental Policy Statement
- #2: Carrying Out an Environmental Assessment
- #3: Setting Environmental Goals and Objectives
- #4: Accessing Environmental Resources (Two Parts)
- #5: Educating Your Employees About Sound Environmental Practices
- #6: Evaluating Profitable Environmental Opportunities
- #7: Measuring Performance

Disclaimer: The information in this brochure is presented for the convenience of the reader. The information provided here is not intended to replace an EMS strategy and should not be used as the sole source for environmental strategies.



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BEA How-To Guide #8:

Developing Continual Action Plans



Photo by: Susan & Neil Silverman, Sonoma County, CA



"profitability
through sound
environmental
practices"

Sonoma County
Business Environmental Alliance

What is a continual action plan?

A continual action plan is a commitment to ongoing improvement of your company's environmental performance.

Whether such plans take the form of an unwritten understanding among managers or a specific, formal written document, they all have the same purpose. The purpose of making plans for continual improvement is to maximize the value of environmentally responsible business practices and to incorporate environmental goals in your company's overall management.

Continual action moves your environmental commitment one step beyond measuring performance towards the most profitable, environmentally friendly business practices.

Why should I make a continual action plan?

A commitment to continual improvement will allow your company to realize sustained savings rather than one-time savings from introducing environmentally preferable business practices. Businesses with continual action plans are better able to recognize and profit from environmental opportunities as technologies and practices change.

Your plans for continual improvement will also demonstrate a long-term commitment to the environment and your community. Your plans may include ways to incorporate employee and community feedback in company decisions, which will increase your responsiveness to community issues and distinguish your company from competitors. With a continual action plan, your positive choices are more likely to be remembered by your customers, clients, and stakeholders because they are not simply a one-time gesture.

Who should make our continual action plan?

The employees and senior managers that worked to create your company's Environmental Policy Statement, goals, and objectives should be part of the team that sets your plans for continual improvement. Your continual action plans should also allow for input from other stakeholders including your customers/clients, community members, investors, and full staff.

How do I get started?

First, assess whether your company is ready for continual improvement. Have you established environmental policies, assessed your current environmental impacts, set goals, and identified some profitable environmental opportunities?

Next, once those steps are accomplished, your company can put some of its environmental goals into practice and begin measuring how your environmental performance changes over time.

Finally, you can set your plans for continual improvement. Start with a general schedule and guidelines for receiving input and performance data, and move on to incorporating your environmental goals into overall decision-making.

What kinds of improvement should be included in a continual action plan?

Continually Review Environmental Goals

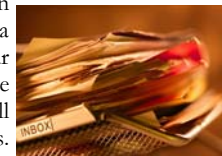
The most obvious areas to target for continual improvement are the environmental goals set by your company. A continual action plan would include a commitment by company management to review company performance and set new goals, as well as a schedule for doing so. For resource use goals, your continual action plan might assign an employee to monitor emerging technologies and make recommendations for using them to further reduce your use of water or energy. Your continual action plan should focus on turning one-time actions into sustained practices, and sustained savings.

Continually Improve Performance Measurement

Your initial environmental assessment and subsequent performance measurements are based on the data collection and reporting abilities of your staff and your site. Improvements to either your data collection processes or your reporting methods will help you to continually improve your environmental performance. For example, automated data collection of resource use on a particular machine or process will save time and institutionalize your continual measurement of how you use valuable environmental resources. Similarly, a continual action plan could include improving your reporting methods to make your environmental performance data more accessible and more useful to your stakeholders. This could be accomplished by posting your environmental reports online or showing multi-year trends in those reports.

Continually Integrate Environmental Goals Into Business Decisions

Another goal of having a continual action plan is to make environmental factors a part of future business decisions. Your plan should include ways to integrate environmental policies and goals into all of your company's business decisions. From capital investments and new product lines to advertising and public relations, all aspects of your company should begin to integrate your commitment to profitable environmental opportunities.



What form should our continual action plans take?

Since the continual action plan is a commitment to continuing efforts already undertaken by your company, it does not need to be a new document. A series of statements included in your existing annual report, for example, could outline your strategies for continual improvement. Continual action plans for improved environmental performance could be included in long-range planning documents and meetings, or be written as a stand-alone document. For a small business, your continual action plan could simply be an agreement among the staff that continual improvement of environmental performance is a company-wide priority.

How often should we review our continual action plans?

The most effective continual action plans outline principles that become a part of all business decisions. Therefore, they are constantly in practice and can be adapted to increase profitability as new situations arise. Part of the commitment to continual improvement, however, should be a schedule for reviewing performance and adjusting environmental goals.

Continual Action Checklist

- Our environmental performance is measured at regular intervals.
- We have made a commitment to continually review our environmental goals and objectives.
- We continually look for better ways to measure and report on our business decisions' environmental impacts.
- Management incorporates our environmental policies and goals into business decisions.