

The Truth about Sustainability

ESI's John Culver Explains Sustainability Myths

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, April 22, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For nearly 30 years, Environmental Services, Inc. (ESI) employees have worked to minimize environmental impacts through mitigation, management and expert science. During that time, we never really considered ourselves a [sustainability management](#) company. Though we have facilitated responsible business growth by preserving hundreds of thousands of acres of forests and wetlands, helping clients cleanup contaminated soils and water, documenting numerous cultural resource sites, reducing and offsetting carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions all around the globe and protecting more endangered species than we can count, we didn't see our services as sustainability related.

ESI employees thought "sustainability" was just another business buzzword - like vertical cross-functional synergy - that was reserved for annual conferences "live-tweeted" by 20-somethings watching the webinar from their couches. We could name every tree along the highway and recite the

3R's like everyone else - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle - but it wasn't until our founder, Rhodes Robinson, made the connection between what we have been doing all along and what we could be doing in the future, that everything became clear. Rhodes expanded our team and expertise to include a Sustainability Specialist who taught us how truly beneficial and widespread the opportunities associated with sustainability really are.

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Contact John Culver @ (904) 470-2200 or jculver@esinc.cc for questions, comments, concerns or to discuss how ESI can help you or your business develop a customized sustainability plan.

John Culver



ESI's John Culver

[ESI's Sustainability team leader](#), John Culver, encouraged us to forget what we thought we knew about sustainability. He demonstrated what an integrative, systems-thinking approach to sustainability was capable of accomplishing for ESI and other industries. He explained that sustainability is about using less, to do more, better and for longer. We saw that developing a vibrant economy and diverse community can be accomplished while improving the environment. We learned that advanced technologies and techniques without education won't solve all of the world's environmental issues.

[As we have grown](#) into our ever-evolving, sustainable way of thinking, we have bumped up against a number of sustainability barriers and myths. Hopefully, the following list will help you avoid the same obstacles and pique your interest enough to leave you wondering what sustainability management could help you, your family and your business achieve.

Myth 1: Sustainability is all about the environment.

Sustainability's goal is to balance and maximize the economy, society and environment. These three sectors are often referred to as the Triple Bottom-Line, or "People, Planet, Profit."

Even the foundation of most environmental laws in the U.S., the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, stressed balancing social, economic and environmental needs.

Myth 2: Sustainability and "Green" are the same.

"Green" is primarily focused on producing, using and disposing of goods in an environmentally superior and conscious way, which is a good thing. However, it often falls short of its goal because it doesn't always take in to consideration the economic and social impacts of those goods.

E.x. A product that is biodegradable is, generally, better for the environment than something that isn't. However, if that product is disposed of and sent where it cannot biodegrade, like a landfill, it is no better than something 100% non-biodegradable

Myth 3: Implementing sustainable solutions into your personal and professional lives is expensive. Initially, incorporating sustainability into your daily life might be more complex or time-consuming than what you've done in the past. However, if you add up all of the benefits of incorporating sustainable solutions and compare them to conventional solutions, sustainability cost you less money in the long run.

E.x. Take the defacto mascot of sustainability, LED lightbulbs. It is a fact that an LED lightbulb costs significantly more than its CFL or incandescent counterparts but, once you factor in the energy savings, improved lifetime (leading to fewer bulb purchases and cost associated with replacement), and the reduced heat load (leading to lower A/C costs), the LED bulb out performs all other options

Table 1. Light Bulb Cost Comparison.

LED CFL Incandescent

Purchase Price \$8.00 \$2.00 \$1.25

Wattage (all equivalent to a 60-watt incandescent) 11 14 60

Lifetime (assuming 3hrs/day, every day) 22.8 years 7.3 years .9 years

Heat Emitted (btu/hr) 3.4 30 85

Lifetime cost (based upon LED lifetime) \$38.21 \$44.69 \$195.81

Source: Product declarations available on manufacturer's websites and Home Depot product descriptions. All bulbs currently available at Home Depot.

Myth 4: I have to buy something new to be sustainable (like LED lightbulbs).

Using a new product or piece of equipment certainly can help, but it isn't required. Examining what and why you do what you do will likely reveal the potential for a more sustainable option.

E.x. Turning off your lights when you leave a room or opening a window's blinds and using natural sunlight uses 100% less energy than a LED, CFL, or Incandescent bulb.

Taking a bus with other riders:

- Gets you out of your car saving you gas and money,
- Reduces congestion, which saves other drivers gas, time, and money,
- Spares the environment from additional GHG emissions and the need to extract additional resources

- Creates at least one job (the bus driver) for someone in the community possibly leading to:

- o More money for their family
- o Better food,
- o Better healthcare,
- o More education, etc.

Using double-sided paper, reusing old paper as scratch paper for notes or drafts, turning off computers, car-pooling, using dishware from home at your workplace are all sustainable and don't require new purchases either.

Myth 5: No matter what I, or my business does, we aren't making a real difference.

If your sustainability initiatives never leave your desk, then this is true. However, if your business truly engages its employees and teaches them how to be more sustainable at home, then the impact has been multiplied. Furthermore, engaged employees will share how they saved money with their friends and family, who will then share with their friends and family and workplace, multiplying the impact again. This cycle is what makes sustainability work and THAT is what will change the planet, one family and business at a time.

Read more @ <http://www.esinc.cc/environmental-services-inc-esi-green-news/the-truth-about-sustainability.html>

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