

# TOP TIPS FOR EMBEDDING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



## Practical advice for HR professionals

The impact of climate change and potential for reputational risk has increased the need for organisations to address environmental sustainability.

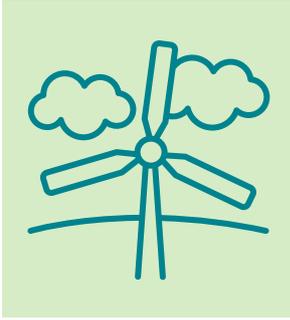
HR professionals can play a key role in driving this work and collaborating with all stakeholders to demonstrate commitment to pro-environmental actions.

- **CONSIDER THE ORGANISATION'S VALUES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS**

Check if your organisation has included sustainability in its overarching principles and translated these into actions. If not, can you influence those who implement the organisational strategies to incorporate relevant issues? You could also facilitate and role-model this through HR practices. For example, consider the carbon footprint of recruitment activities. Can you reduce paperwork or conduct interviews online to reduce travel? See page 6 in our guide.

- **CREATE AN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CULTURE**

More people expect organisations to demonstrate positive actions to protect the environment. An organisation's culture can influence employee and customer attraction and retention. Ensuring consistency between espoused values and actual outcomes creates a culture of trust and loyalty. HR should integrate environmental sustainability throughout all of their policies, procedures and practices, and clearly articulate this to all stakeholders. See page 12 in our guide.



- **CHECK YOUR ORGANISATION'S COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

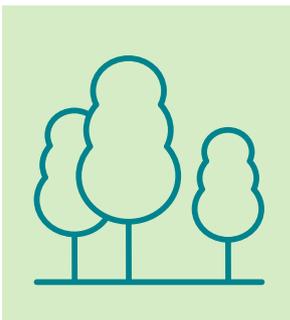
Competencies should contain knowledge about the environmental impact of companies in general, and specifically of those in your sector, as well as recognising the effects of climate change on the activities of your organisation. Skill competencies should be role-specific and behavioural competencies should cover aspects of ethical decision-making at all levels of the organisation. See page 7 in our guide.

- **INCORPORATE GREEN KNOW-HOW INTO JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND PERSON SPECIFICATIONS**

As well as being used for recruitment and selection, job descriptions and person specifications enable employees and managers to understand what is required in any role. Reference could be made to environmental competencies, as well as explaining what the person's responsibilities, authority and accountability are in terms of environmental sustainability. See pages 4-5 in our guide.

- **DISCUSS SUSTAINABILITY IN THE INDUCTION PROCESS**

This is often the employee's first experience of socialisation in the organisation and where its values and culture can be established and encouraged. By explaining 'how we do things here', 'what is important to us', and 'what we expect from you', the induction process can reinforce how the organisation aims to achieve its sustainability targets. See page 9 in our guide.



- **INCLUDE SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TARGETS AND GOALS**

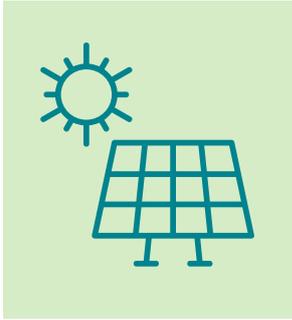
Specific individual and team objectives can be agreed around sustainability targets to help the organisation reach its objectives. Performance objectives could include one-off targets to be completed by specified dates or ongoing standards to be met. See pages 7-8 in our guide.

- **EMBED SUSTAINABILITY INTO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES**

Consider sustainability and the environmental impact of both the content and the process of learning and development. All programme content should reference the organisation's green ambitions and the process of delivery should consider the resulting carbon footprint, for example face-to-face versus online. See pages 9-10 in our guide.

- **ALIGN REWARDS AND RECOGNITION WITH SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

Make sure that employee rewards have a positive environmental impact and that any recognition is aligned to the organisation's values. Feedback and praise can have a greater effect on individuals' self-esteem and engagement than extrinsic motivators. Are your pension fund investments in line with your organisation's ethical and environmental standards? See page 8 in our guide.



- **ASSESS THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF PROJECTS**

The management of projects should consider the financial, equality and environmental impacts. Evaluate the project's potential effects on the environment and whether there are any risks from climate change. Examine these in the context of both carrying out the project and its outputs and outcomes. Pages 2–3 of our guide have more on this.

- **ENSURE THAT LEADERS DISPLAY ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOURS**

Senior management, including senior HR professionals, must be supportive of environmental initiatives. Leaders must be seen to be green if they are to encourage employees to be green too. HR can be the exemplar for this and encourage and enable people throughout the organisation to participate in environmental behaviours and initiatives. See pages 10–11 in our guide.

To explore these recommendations in more detail, see our [guide](#) on embedding environmental sustainability in your organisation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

These Top Tips were written by Dr Jan Maskell CPsychol MCIPD.