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First Edition

January 2009

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“Helping Entrepreneurs Reach the Next Level of Success...”

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“Going Green”

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NXLEVEL® GOING GREEN INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL

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How to Use the Instructor’s Manual

Your NxLevel® Instructor’s Manual is designed to facilitate the teaching process by providing a comprehensive set of materials for the NxLevel® Going Green class. The manual makes teaching this course easier for first-time instructors and seasoned NxLevel® trainers, by coordinating in-class activities with workbook and homework assignments. This convenient manual allows you to keep all materials together in one binder, while documenting a coordinated teaching effort designed specifically for certified NxLevel® trainers.

Instructor Outline

Each participant in the NxLevel® class will receive a shrinkwrapped packet containing the *Going Green: NxLevel® Guide to Environmental Solutions* text, the Worksheets, and a one-page Participant Outline. Your Instructor’s Manual has the same outline, so you can see exactly what the participants are looking at, and provide any additional information they need as the class progresses.

The Instructor Outline has the same agenda information as the Participant Outline, but serves as a more detailed topic and time guide for the class. Standard class segments are described below, with suggestions for maximizing their efficiency and effectiveness. The Instructor Outline starts with a set of learning objectives, which should serve as minimum learning/teaching goals.

Getting the Class Started

After collecting participant applications or registration forms, collecting money, and distributing books, the instructor should build credibility as a business professional and facilitator by informally setting forth his or her qualifications and accomplishments, asking for questions, and so forth.

Afterwards, students should introduce themselves and their businesses. When the introductions are complete, they will have five minutes to review the book. At this point, you should explain how the worksheets can be used **outside the class** to create feasibility studies and a tailored NxLevel® Green Action Plan.

Instructor Topics

The goal of this segment is to familiarize participants with the content of the textbook, and provide information that will help them to understand and complete the worksheets. The lecture period will include demonstrations of calculations used in the worksheets, with a strong focus on choosing courses of action that are **appropriate, affordable, and attainable**. As such, the emphasis should be almost entirely on the practical, economic side of green business, with no distracting detours into political or theoretical issues.



Note: Instructors are expected to read the textbook before teaching. Knowing what the students are reading will prepare instructors for specific questions that may arise during class, as well as refreshing or enhancing instructor knowledge on the session topics.

Break

Four hours is a long time to concentrate, particularly at the end of an already full work day. Many participants will not even have a chance to eat prior to attending class. It is suggested that the thirty-minute break be used to offer participant refreshments, a bathroom break, and informal networking activity.

Instructors should establish that participants are expected to stay on premise during the break.

How to Use the Instructor’s Manual

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Guest Speaker

Possible guest speakers for this class might include an energy auditor from the local utility, a green marketing expert, an administrator from the local EPA office, or someone from the local recycling or household hazardous waste facility. Be sure to allow time for a question and answer session, so that participants can raise issues of concern to them.

Additional Instructor Notes

The Additional Instructor Notes provide detailed information and suggestions about the main teaching headings:

- Instructor Lecture Topics
- Overheads (OHD) and Handouts Available for the Session
- Suggestions for Handouts and/or Supplemental Materials
- Instructor Notes and Reminders

Instructor Lecture Topics

Instructors are encouraged to highlight key topics from the reading material and provide additional knowledge and understanding by offering real life experiences and related information, while keeping in mind that this class must cover a large amount of ground in a very short time. You must be careful to avoid distractions in order to complete the lecture on schedule. With this in mind, please use the Instructor Lecture Topics as your main guide, customizing them as appropriate for your particular class.



Note: Enhancing the class with personal experiences can be very valuable. However, spending an excessive amount of class time on “war stories” is discouraged.

The notes on the lecture topics are detailed, and will provide an excellent guide to the topics. Instructors are once again reminded to read the text prior to teaching, to make sure that their interpretation of the notes agrees with and complements what the students are reading.

If time allows, going through some of the workbook material in class is an effective tool for focusing participants on the goal of the class, and tends to clarify questions before they arise. The instructor should discourage filling out worksheets in class, except as needed for demonstrations. Reading the text, and completing the worksheets, are activities that participants will do on their own time.

Overheads and Handouts Available for the Session

Overheads are referenced by number in the Instructor Notes. They are listed sequentially, with title, in this section. Instructors have the option of using some, all, or none of the overheads, and can also turn overheads into handouts. In order to appeal to all adult learning styles, we recommend using a variety of visual materials, so you should consider using at least some of the overheads.

Suggestions for Handouts and/or Supplemental Materials

Participants should be encouraged to read, seek additional information, and be aware of their market and their industry. Instructors can use supplemental materials to show that there is a vast array of material available, and serve as a role model by bringing interesting materials to class. Suggestions are listed for the categories of material relevant to the class.

Instructor Notes and Reminders

As you teach this class, you will want to keep notes on the actual supplemental materials you used, along with any customizing you did, and general reminders for in-class activities. Noting these details in this section will make teaching future NxLevel® classes that much easier.



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Recognizing Your Audience

Recognizing the needs of adult learners may help as you facilitate NxLevel® training sessions. Remember that people have different learning styles, and that adult learners have different expectations and preferences. During your NxLevel® training certification, you will receive several handouts relating to specific learning styles and adult learner preferences and expectations. Spend some time compiling a variety of visual and printed materials that will tap into the various learning styles identified. Remember: Not all participants will learn the same way you do! Even though a particular teaching aid may not appeal to you, it may enhance the learning experience for your participants.

Participants in NxLevel® training courses are looking for outcomes that will positively affect their lives. Theory alone will not provide the kind of learning experience desired in a business training course of this quality. Keep your sessions lively, interesting, and directed to the participants' needs.

Suggestions on Customizing

Every group of participants will require that you do some customizing of pace and material. Where time allows, encourage the more experienced entrepreneurs to share their experiences and serve as a mentor base for start-up entrepreneurs.

Summary

This manual has been designed with you, the instructor, in mind. Suggestions are always welcome for further enhancements, additional materials, expanded teaching methodologies, and so forth. Just as the NxLevel® program keeps pace with the changing business environment, we encourage you to keep pace with the ever increasing demands on the instructor's information requirements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SUGGESTIONS, AND COMMENTS PLEASE CONTACT US:

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www.nxlevel.org

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THE HISTORY OF THE NxLEVEL® TRAINING PROGRAMS

We are pleased to welcome you to the network of community service providers who have adopted the NxLevel® Entrepreneurial Training Program. We hope you will agree that NxLevel® is the best and most affordable entrepreneurial training program on the market, and we believe you will appreciate the support services NxLevel® provides.

The NxLevel® Entrepreneurial Training Program was funded in 1992 by a grant from the U S WEST Foundation to the University of Colorado at Denver. Initially, NxLevel® was marketed under the name of the Western Entrepreneurial Network (WEN), with partners located in the 14 western states that comprise U S WEST Communications' corporate territory. After beta-testing the NxLevel® materials in the spring of 1996, WEN received numerous inquiries about NxLevel® and began expanding nationally. In order to reflect the program's national scope, the name changed from WEN to the NxLevel® Education Association (NEF).

At the same time, NxLevel® received requests from participants, educators and state coordinators for practical training materials that would cover the issues entrepreneurs face daily when starting or expanding a business. With this in mind, NxLevel® developed new course materials and curricula based on the collective expertise of educators and successful entrepreneurs. The goal was to produce easy to use, conveniently packaged training materials that met the stated needs of over 4,500 previous participants.

NxLevel® moved to Utah in 2002, and is now run by the NxLevel® Education Association. Today, NxLevel® is the world's largest and most effective entrepreneurial training network. Since 1994, over 120,000 students have participated in NxLevel® training, and some 5,000 people have been certified as NxLevel® instructors. Training has been implemented in 49 states, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico. At its current pace, NEF will teach over 20,000 new participants over the next two years. NxLevel® is also used in many other countries around the world.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The University of Calgary was commissioned to determine the economic impact of the NxLevel® courses. They found that the average existing business experienced a 32-percent increase in gross sales within one year of graduation, and created 1.3 new jobs. Graduates with smaller companies (annual gross sales less than \$200,000) experienced an even more dramatic success rate, with an average increase of over 200 percent in sales.

With regards to business start-ups, 40 percent of participants start a business within one year of completing the course. Another 20 percent continue to work on developing their business concept. When surveyed after three years, over 93 percent of the businesses were still in operation, whereas the national average is a mere 16.5 percent for the same time period. The survey also showed that the majority of the NxLevel® participants use the business plan created in the course to obtain financing for their business.

NxLevel®'s goal has always been to build sustainable programs at the community level. Therefore, its training materials are designed to be affordable for both the training partner and the participant. Because the U S WEST Foundation agreed to underwrite the cost of these materials and donated NxLevel® copyright profits back into the program, the cost of the materials is substantially less than that of other programs.

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GOAL OF THE NxLEVEL® TRAINING NETWORK

NxLevel®s goal is to develop business-oriented training programs that help entrepreneurs to be better businesspeople, strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit in our communities, provide quality training materials at an affordable price to partner organizations and participants, and assist states and communities in implementing their training programs.

NxLevel® is the result of listening to the needs of business service providers and students in 49 states over the past 15 years. They said they wanted training programs that:

- 1. Provided basic business skills training, including preparing a business plan.
- 2. Provided practical guidance in bookkeeping, marketing, financial projections and negotiating with lenders.
- 3. Provided a standardized curriculum that was cost-effective, yet flexible and focused on the community level.

NxLevel®s response was to develop training courses that met all of the above needs. The basic premise behind the courses is that success requires planning. Therefore, NxLevel® has put a premium on teaching entrepreneurs better planning skills, from concept development to the actual preparation of a comprehensive business plan.

Unlike other education programs, NxLevel® addresses the special needs of the entrepreneur by providing a practical, hands-on, commonsense approach to small business development. As a customer-driven organization, NxLevel® has learned what people like about entrepreneurial training courses, and has incorporated the following features:

- Experienced business educators, with prominent business leaders as guest speakers for each teaching module
- Networking and learning opportunities with local business leaders and participants
- Comprehensive textbooks, workbooks, and resource guides
- One-on-one business counseling and support as needed
- A learning environment that promotes critical thinking and creative problem-solving

By combining education, counseling and networking, NxLevel® helps entrepreneurs reach the next level of success.

THE NxLEVEL® ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

The NxLevel® Entrepreneurial Training Programs were designed to train both potential and existing entrepreneurs. Although they were developed for the general business community, they can be customized to the needs of special populations, such as business owners in rural communities, displaced workers, women and minority entrepreneurs, and micro-enterprises. Each entrepreneurial training program is a turnkey package that includes all training materials, syllabi, and books in addition to instructor manuals.

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NxLevel® for Business Start-Ups. This 10-session, 30-hour course is dedicated to developing a start-up business plan that will test the feasibility of a business idea and act as the blueprint for a start-up venture.

NxLevel® for Entrepreneurs. This 12-session, 36-hour training program is designed to produce a comprehensive business plan that will guide business expansion decisions and activities.

NxLevel® Youth Enterprise Academy. The NxLevel® Youth Enterprise Academy (YEA) comprises 13 teaching modules in a 39-hour format. It's a fun way to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to test the feasibility of a business concept.

NxLevel® for Agricultural Entrepreneurs. This 10-module, 30- to 36-hour course is aimed at individuals who have started or are thinking about starting an agricultural venture that is not tied to large scale, commodity-style production.

NxLevel® for Micro-Entrepreneurs. The goal of the course is to help participants achieve self-sufficiency through self-employment. This 15-session course can be taught in a variety of configurations to achieve the development objectives of the training organization.

NxLevel® for International Trade. This course is designed to help students who have an interest in starting or growing an export or import business develop a comprehensive marketing plan. It can be configured as an 11-session course or a 2-day workshop.

NxLevel® Hot Topics. NxLevel® is developing mini-courses that will serve students with topical material. Normally configured in a one-session, 3- to 4-hour class, these courses provide entrepreneurs with a quick study on important topics. Courses currently available include *NxLevel® Signage for Entrepreneurs* and *Going Green: NxLevel® Guide to Green Solutions*. Classes on personal finance and marketing to seniors are under development.

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TRAINING MATERIALS

The following is a brief description of the NxLevel® training materials. Please note that the Workbooks and Resource Guide are designed to be incorporated into a 3-ring binder that makes them user friendly to the trainee. All materials are beta-tested before being marketed nationally. Additionally, all training materials are re-edited periodically based on the feedback of participants and instructors.

NxLevel® Guide for Business Start-Ups. This text provides a comprehensive overview of entrepreneurship, with emphasis on concept development and entry strategies. Used in conjunction with the **Business Start-Ups Workbook**.

NxLevel® Business Start-Ups Workbook. This workbook is a step-by-step guide to developing an abbreviated business plan to test the feasibility of a business concept.

NxLevel® Guide for Entrepreneurs. This book is a comprehensive overview of the art of business and how to improve business operations from marketing to financial controls. Used in conjunction with the **Business Plan Workbook**.

NxLevel® Business Plan Workbook. This workbook takes the participant through a step-by-step planning process to develop a comprehensive business plan.

Business Plan Basics: NxLevel® Guide for Micro-Entrepreneurs. This text explains how to use self-employment as the means of becoming self-sufficient.

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Business Plan Basics: NxLevel® Guide for Micro-Entrepreneurs. This text explains how to use self-employment as the means of becoming self-sufficient.

NxLevel® Business Resource Guide. This useful text includes a list of business resources for research, financing or assistance, as well as legal forms and samples of practical business letters, library resource information and additional reading references.

Get the Buzz on Biz: NxLevel® Guide for Enterprising Youth. This text provides a comprehensive overview of business concept development and entry strategies for youth interested in starting a small business. It is designed as a text, workbook and resource guide.

Tilling the Soil of Opportunity: NxLevel® Guide for Agricultural Entrepreneurs. This text provides a comprehensive overview of how to start or expand an agriculture-based operation producing non-commodity products.

Going Global: NxLevel® Guide to International Trade. This text is designed for students who have an interest in starting or growing an export or import business, and is designed to assist the international entrepreneur in developing a comprehensive marketing plan.

NxLevel® Guide to Signage for Entrepreneurs. This text explains the importance of well-designed and properly positioned signage, and describes the legal and technical aspects of designing, manufacturing, and siting effective signs.

Going Green: NxLevel® Guide to Green Solutions. This text takes a comprehensive look at current green business options. It teaches participants to conduct feasibility studies, and create an action plan that will help them reach appropriate, affordable, and attainable goals.

Business Plan Library. Comprises sample business plans that have been reviewed and “sanitized” (proprietary information removed) and provided in universal formats.

NxLevel® Business Resource Guide. This useful text includes a list of business resources for research, financing or assistance, as well as legal forms and samples of practical business letters, library resource information and additional reading references.

Get the Buzz on Biz: NxLevel® Guide for Enterprising Youth. This text provides a comprehensive overview of business concept development and entry strategies for youth interested in starting a small business. It is designed as a text, workbook and resource guide.

Tilling the Soil of Opportunity: NxLevel® Guide for Agricultural Entrepreneurs. This text provides a comprehensive overview of how to start or expand an agriculture-based operation producing non-commodity products.

Going Global: NxLevel® Guide to International Trade. This text is designed for students who have an interest in starting or growing an export or import business, and is designed to assist the international entrepreneur in developing a comprehensive marketing plan.

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INSTRUCTOR MATERIALS

All training programs include an Instructor’s Manual that comprises curricula, overheads, and session by session instructor notes. These manuals are based on the feedback of participants and instructors. Ongoing support is provided by NxLevel®’s website (www.nxlevel.org).

IMPROVEMENT OF MATERIALS

NxLevel® is a customer-driven organization that continually seeks input on improving its training materials and curricula. We encourage users to provide constructive critique. We plan to re-edit every two years to keep the materials fresh and applicable to the business climate.

PROGRAM / ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

NxLevel® has a small, dedicated staff with expertise that supports NxLevel®’s mission. Staff will assist each state or community in evaluating the overall performance and effectiveness of its NxLevel® class, and help the sponsoring coalition correct any identified problems. Local administrators will also be trained on program evaluation and problem solving.

While it is more cost-effective to assist statewide efforts, our staff can help individual communities develop appropriate training programs by offering the following assistance:

- Staff will meet with interested officials and leaders to explain the program and assist in structuring a community-based sponsoring mechanism to implement NxLevel®.

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- Staff will meet with interested officials and leaders to explain the program and assist in structuring a community-based sponsoring mechanism to implement NxLevel®.

- Staff will assist in the development of a workplan to obtain funding.
- If a state or community decides to use NxLevelL[®], staff will provide training on program development, management and implementation. Key areas of developing and sustaining NxLevelL[®] training are addressed in a training workshop.
- Staff will assist state coordinators or local managers in solidifying a sponsoring coalition and funding, and the recruitment and training of qualified Instructors. Each instructor will receive a detailed instructor’s guide. Training for instructors comprises a one and a half day workshop customized to the types of NxLevelL[®] courses to be offered.
- NxLevelL[®] will assist states and communities in marketing and promoting NxLevelL[®] by providing a camera-ready copy or computer disk of all marketing and promotional material. All materials are downloadable from NxLevelL[®]’s home page.
- Staff will support each state with follow-up consultations on program marketing, administration and implementation as needed. NxLevelL[®] holds an annual meeting of State Coordinators to discuss problems and share lessons learned. States are encouraged to hold their own annual meeting of sponsors and instructors as a means of sharing information.

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ORDERING TRAINING MATERIALS

One text should be ordered for each participant. The cost of the materials does not include shipping. Shipping is dependent on when the training materials are needed. Generally, NxLevelL[®] ships via FedEx. Based on past experience, most training sites order materials about a week before the start of a class. The Order Form can be downloaded at www.nxlevel.org. NxLevelL[®] expects payment within 30 days upon receipt of invoice.

RETURN AND REFUND POLICY

NxLevelL[®] has a 30-day return policy if the training materials are unused and in as-new condition. Organizations can return 10% of books ordered within 30 days by paying shipping to return the books. Books over 10% of the original order and books returned after 30 days will be charged a restocking fee of \$10 per book. If the organization has already paid for the training materials, we will issue a refund check or credit depending on the wishes of the organization. Refunds take about 3 weeks to process. Return authorization is required prior to returning books.

FUNDRAISING AND SPONSORSHIP

The NxLevelL[®] Education Association is a nonprofit organization. As such, it is somewhat dependent on outside funding to carry out its mission. Most revenues are generated through book sales. However, in order to make sure the classes are affordable for all, the cost of the books and teaching materials remain well below market prices. Naturally, there are also costs associated with the creation of the intellectual property, marketing, and so forth. Accordingly, NxLevelL[®] gladly accepts donations and/or sponsorship from individuals, corporations and other foundations who find our mission and extraordinary results a compelling reason to give.

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- Learning Objectives**
- Understanding the course curriculum and materials
 - Understanding feasibility studies and capital budgeting
 - Understanding opportunity costs and externalities
 - Identifying and prioritizing green opportunities
 - Review NxLevel® Feasibility Study Outline
 - Learn to create and use the NxLevel® Green Action Plan

Going Green

Date: _____

Class Overview and Instructor Topics (____ min.)

- (____ min.)

1. Getting the Class Started
 - **Administrative Details:** Collect participant applications or registration forms, collect money, distribute books, etc.
 - **Instructor Introduction:** Introduce yourself with appropriate background information; build credibility as a business professional and facilitator
- (____ min.)

2. Participant Introduction
 - Have students introduce themselves and their business
- (____ min.)

3. Class Introduction
 - **Introduce NxLevel® Green Action Plan:** Explain that the purpose of the class is to show how the textbook and worksheets can be used outside the classroom to create a tailored NxLevel® Green Action Plan
 - **Textbook Review:** Introduce content of supplemental textbook, and allow participants five minutes to review the book
- (____ min.)

4. Instructor Topics
 - Why Go Green?
 - Is It Feasible?
 - Weighing Advantages and Disadvantages
 - Project Management
 - Saving Money By Saving Resources

Break (____ min.)



Guest Speaker (____ min.)

- Green marketing expert
- EPA administrator
- Local recycling expert
- Energy auditor from local utility

Instructor Topics (____ min.)

- (____ min.)

4. Instructor Topics
 - Pollution Prevention and Product Redesign
 - Green Branding and Marketing
 - Green Export / Import
 - Staying Green
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(ITEM 1 IS SELF-EXPLANATORY)

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

Ask participants to introduce themselves in turn. They should describe their business, or new business idea, explain why they’re taking the class, and mention one green business idea that excites them. (Be careful not to let any one student monopolize the introduction time.)

Listen carefully to the reasons people state for taking the class. This can lead to some great discussions about goals, failure, insecurities, planning, and so on, and will also help you to tailor the class towards the participants’ stated needs.

CLASS INTRODUCTION

Explain that the purpose of the class is to demonstrate how the textbook and worksheets can be used **outside the classroom** to create NxLevel® Feasibility Studies and the NxLevel® Green Action Plan. This will guide participants’ efforts to achieve green business goals that are appropriate, affordable, and attainable.



NOTE: Students should understand that this class is not designed to produce a business plan. After the class, they may decide to create a full-fledged business plan. If so, recommend *NxLevel® Guide to Start-Ups*, or *NxLevel® Guide for Entrepreneurs*.

Use **OHD 1** to run briefly through the sections of the supplemental textbook, and explain what information they provide and how they should be used outside the classroom. Obviously, this segment of the class will be most effective if you have already familiarized yourself with the text.

Allow the participants five minutes to browse the material, and answer any questions they may have before proceeding.



NOTE: Inform the students that you’ll be making a list on the blackboard of all green ideas that come up during the class. At the end of the class, you can use this list as a template for discussing the NxLevel® Green Action Plan, by breaking it down into projects that require a feasibility study and those that don’t, and adding all worthwhile ideas to the action plan.

Be sure to emphasize that the class is primarily a review of the materials and concepts in the textbook, and that most of the work will be done on their own time, after the class.

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WHY GO GREEN?

Ask the question: *How would you define “green” business? What’s the difference between a green business and a regular business?*

Definitions may vary greatly. Explain that from the NxLevel® standpoint, a green business is a business that has the following four goals:

- Improving efficiency
- Reducing waste
- Being a good citizen and neighbor
- Meeting consumer needs and desire for green products

Note that all of these goals can improve the bottom line. Examples: More efficient lightbulbs reduce energy costs; reducing hazardous waste lowers regulatory costs; and being a good neighbor builds your brand and earns consumer goodwill.

Practical issues like these are what this class is all about, and participants should understand this from the outset. It’s not about debating climate change, or dissecting political personalities, or pitting liberalism against conservatism. Any attempt to start such debates should be politely but firmly discouraged, with a reminder that the ethical and political considerations of going green are well beyond the scope of a four-hour class.

Whether participants hope to save the world or simply to beat the competition is up to them; this class deals with identifying and prioritizing opportunities to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and earn a reputation as a responsible business.

As such, its bottom line is financial. The goal is not to go broke trying to get your business completely off the grid, or to save money by dumping your old chemicals in the creek, but to arrive at achievable and profitable environmental policies. Simply put, the orientation of this class is *realism*. That means accurately assessing costs, considering consumer needs, paying close attention to seemingly minor details, and giving up wishful thinking and business as usual.

Some participants may have tried to implement green policies before, and become frustrated by what seem like constantly shifting targets and standards. Explain that this really isn’t different from other areas of business. There’s a lot of trendy advice relating to quality management or computer software, and not all of it is accurate or useful. But quality management and computers are here to stay, and the same is true of green business: focusing on pollution prevention and energy efficiency offers enormous benefits, and will continue to do so as long as the laws of physics hold sway.

The goal of the NxLevel® Green Action Plan is to assess and prioritize options that are **appropriate, affordable, and attainable** for participants and their target customers, and to set benchmarks to ensure that they actually work. This is the focus of the next section, which deals with feasibility studies.

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Prioritizing Green Goals

Use **OHD 2** to discuss the typical goals of green businesses. Allow 5 minutes for participants to work individually on the **Green Goals Worksheet** by filling in the chart for themselves, and then for their employees and customers. They should enter a “1” for low-priority goals, a “5” for high-priority goals, and a question mark if they don’t know the answer.

Once the worksheet is done, ask participants to look at the columns where they entered a question mark. **Ask the questions:** *Does this lack of knowledge affect your ability to succeed in your business? If so, how can you learn the things you need to know?*

Good answers might include market research, surveys, casual conversations with customers, or a poster or info sheet with a comment box.

If a business owner has a high-priority goal that customers don’t seem to care about, does this mean that the business owner shouldn’t pursue that goal? Not necessarily! Suppose you have a favorite fishing hole, and run-off from cement surfaces is polluting it to the point that the fish population is dwindling. This may not be a problem your customers would think about, normally. But if you educate them politely and positively, and explain why the issue is important to you, they may come to appreciate and support your efforts to reduce water pollution.

Ask the questions: *How can you make these numbers match? If your customer cares less about an issue than you do, how can you change that? And if you care less about an issue than your customers do, what could they say to change your mind?*

The point of this exercise is to identify gaps between the participants’ perceptions and those of their customers and employees, because this will affect the feasibility of their plans, as well as their marketing strategies.

Is It Feasible?

In this class, “feasible” means appropriate, affordable, and attainable. To be feasible, a goal must be appropriate for you, your employees, and your customers; it must be affordable, in terms of your available capital and/or investment from cash flow; and it must be attainable, given your resources and the expertise of your personnel.

Never forget the old-fashioned definition of a “sustainable business”: one that takes in more money than it pays out! Covering your building with solar panels is great...but if you can’t afford the monthly payments, your business won’t be around long enough to make a real difference.

Ask the question: *What simple green ideas interest you?* Write the best of them on the blackboard, for later use in the Green Action Plan segment.

Fortunately, a lot of green solutions are simple. It’s always feasible to turn off lights, and set computers to go to sleep after ten minutes, and recycle waste paper. Any business can do these things, and all of them should.

But some policies will require a bigger commitment. The goal of a feasibility study is to allocate your resources wisely, so that you’ll get the biggest environmental bang for your buck while maintaining your day to day operations, and keeping in mind that profitability is always the goal of any business.

Obviously, then, you need to know what it costs to maintain your day to day operations, which means looking for waste, inefficiency, and the hidden costs of business as usual.

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This is a good place to introduce two frequently overlooked costs:

- **Opportunity costs** are what you give up by choosing one course of action over another. Suppose using styrofoam packaging saves \$10,000 a year, compared to environmentally friendly packaging. And then suppose that having environmentally friendly packaging would enable you to sell an additional 25,000 units per year in Europe, for a total profit of \$75,000. In this case, the opportunity cost of keeping the styrofoam packaging is \$65,000 (i.e., the \$75,000 you didn’t earn, minus the \$10,000 you saved).
- **External costs** are the costs of doing business that society inadvertently pays on your behalf. The classic example is air and water pollution; noise pollution and traffic congestion are other examples. In these cases, a business produces an economic cost, but does not fully pay that cost. Apart from the ethical issues involved, being perceived as a producer of external costs can hurt your business. Note that the opposite situation occurs with **external benefits** (e.g., having a well-maintained storefront, which may attract customers or improve property values for nearby businesses).

Calculating external costs and benefits is a complicated process that’s beyond the scope of this class. The goal here is to challenge the concept of business as usual, by explaining how hidden costs like these can affect a business’s competitive advantage and profitability. Participants should come away from this discussion with a more realistic sense of costs and benefits, and be prepared to take them into account in their feasibility studies.

This is a good place to introduce the concept of the **Triple Bottom Line**, which measures environmental and social profits and losses, as well as financial ones (i.e., **People, Planet, Profit**). Note that “environmental and social profits and losses” is another name for external costs and benefits.

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Elements of a Feasibility Study



Note: Throughout the textbook, we use “product” as the generic term for products and services, except in cases where it’s important to make a distinction. Please make sure participants understand this. If you like, you can use this fact to make a point: Every time we add the words “and services,” instead of simply saying “products,” we use more ink and more paper. It seems like a very small expense, but as we print more copies, it starts to add up to real money and resources. This is a good analogy for efficiency efforts: little things can have big effects!

Basic Feasibility Study

Participants should conduct feasibility studies for any and all opportunities that involve substantial risk. Obviously, switching to CFLs doesn’t require in-depth research. Although there’s no harm in comparing brands and assessing claims, the energy savings of CFLs are well established and comparatively stable, and the upfront cost is small. Feasibility studies should be reserved for major purchases like solar water heaters; new product lines; or important, lasting changes to the way you do business.

Have students turn to the **Feasibility Study Worksheets**, and then use **OHD 3** to go over the components of a basic feasibility plan.

Scope

Begin by describing the green business opportunity (e.g., introducing a new product, improving an existing one, switching to renewable energy, or making changes to production methods). This should include a detailed description of the idea’s purpose, its features and benefits, the timeframe for completion, and the goals you hope to achieve by launching it.

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Have students turn to the **Feasibility Study Worksheets**, and then use **OHD 3** to go over the components of a basic feasibility plan.

Scope

Begin by describing the green business opportunity (e.g., introducing a new product, improving an existing one, switching to renewable energy, or making changes to production methods). This should include a detailed description of the idea’s purpose, its features and benefits, the timeframe for completion, and the goals you hope to achieve by launching it.

SWOT analysis

Do strengths outweigh weaknesses? Do opportunities outweigh threats? Note that strengths and weaknesses apply to the business itself, while opportunities and threats apply to the market in which it competes.

Here are things to look at when performing a SWOT analysis:

- **Your target market.** Consider where your customers live, and how, why, and how often they buy. Don't forget to look at psychographic factors (e.g., political and social views), and demographic factors (e.g., age, sex, education, income level).
- **Your industry.** Is your industry growing, or slowing down? What technological, social, economic, and political changes are forecast, and how will they affect your business?
- **Your competition.** Who are your direct and indirect competitors? Estimate their market share, as well as their strengths, weakness, goals, and strategies. What barriers will your company need to overcome to compete effectively? What assets and strengths do they have that you don't, and vice versa?
- **Your business.** Describe any critical risk factors, like economic stability and forecasts, investments, internal organization of the company, etc.

Financial feasibility

This comprises three steps:

- a. Determine the costs associated with your new business opportunity, and decide how much of these costs you need to finance. Start-up costs include professional fees, deposits, remodeling, licenses and permits, inventory, equipment, vehicles, and other fixed assets.
- b. Budget annual operating costs, and determine which are fixed and which are variable.
- c. Determine financial feasibility by performing break-even analysis and projected cash flow analysis.

Describe your capital requirements and your strategy. Do you have enough profits from normal business to fund this opportunity, or do you need to seek outside funding (grants, loans, etc.)? What are the costs of borrowing? How do you know your idea will be profitable? When will you reach your break-even point? Will you get an adequate return on your time and money? Could the money be put to a better use (i.e., what's the opportunity cost)?



Note: It is beyond the scope of this class to examine financial management issues in depth. However, it is incumbent upon students to learn how to use these tools in order to minimize risk and achieve success. Students who don't know how to do break-even analysis or projected cash flows should be directed to seek advice from a professional, or better yet, to enroll in *NxLevel® for Start-Ups™* or *NxLevel® for Entrepreneurs™*.

Feasibility of sales volume

How, when, and where will your company generate revenue, and how much will it generate? Are these projections feasible, given your start-up and operating costs?

Advanced Feasibility Study

If the results so far are positive, it's time to do more research. Use **OHD 4** and **OHD 5** to discuss additional elements of the feasibility study.

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Marketing feasibility

Are you going green in response to consumer demand, or will you need to educate your customers? If the latter, how will you communicate the benefits of your green business? Lots of businesses make green claims, so how will you convince buyers you're for real?

What price(s) will you set: a low price to which green elements add value, or a premium price for discerning, high-end buyers? Whichever you choose, you need to know how to market to them, how much it will cost, and who will be in charge of it.

Also, what distribution strategy do your customers prefer: Internet, mailorder, wholesale, retail? How will the strategy help you to meet your pricing and sales goals?

Feasibility of personnel

Do you have the right mix of personnel to make your idea work, and do they have the training they need? Have they bought into the green concept? Are they enthusiastic, and able to explain the benefits to customers and partners? Describe the management and personnel of your business. This section can be a list of prospective key employee names, titles, respective duties and responsibilities and the costs associated with employing these people. You will also want to outline support staff positions and employment costs.

- Senior level management
- Sales management
- Office and clerical support
- Production or distribution
- Professional staff (i.e., lawyers, accountants, engineers, marketing)
- Fulfillment (i.e., mail room, shipping department)

If you plan to outsource (hire another company to do a job for you) order fulfillment, advertising, or other aspects of your company's business be sure to list what functions will be outsourced, to where, and why.

Logistical feasibility

Where do you get the raw materials for your product? How is your product manufactured, and where? What's the turnaround time? Can you use existing equipment, or will you have to expand/upgrade? How are your goods transported and distributed? How will you track inventory? Who are your suppliers and partners, and what will their role be?

- **Materials.** List the parts and materials you need to produce a product or service, and where you will get them. This is a good place to emphasize the importance of performance: if you switch to a green version of a product, will it perform as well and be as durable as the old product? It's important to test new products thoroughly, and to ensure that they'll be available in the quantity and timeframe you require.
- **Transportation.** How will you ship your items? Do they require special packaging, handling or permits? Do discount rates apply (e.g., media or bulk rates via the US Postal Service)? Can your transportation system handle an increase in volume if sales take off? If you offer services, how will trainers, educators, consultants, and sales personnel interact with customers and clients?

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- **Business location.** Do you need an additional or new retail outlet, warehouse, factory, or a distribution hub? Should they be in one central location, or across state lines? Do you need to have special parking considerations for customers or trucks? Do you need to be near other facilities such as an airport, commerce center, or shopping mall?
- **Manufacturing equipment.** Do you have the machines, tools, and facilities you need to manufacture your product? Will existing equipment be able to meet increased sales, or will you need to expand? If your products or components are manufactured elsewhere, will that facility be able to meet your needs if you grow?
- **Other technology.** Do you need telephone networking or teleconferencing systems? Computer hardware? Inventory management, customer management, or accounting software? Cash registers, checkout scanners, credit card and check processing? Devices to accommodate the disabled (e.g., automatic doors)? Alarm or camera systems?

Legal feasibility

Some green ideas or products may be regulated in your city. (For instance, greywater systems that recycle water from washing machines and sinks are illegal in some cities, and require a permit in others.) Describe the regulations and environmental issues your company must address. This should include local, state, and federal laws that you will need to follow, as well as environmental factors like waste disposal plans, international trade policies, etc. that you will need to take into consideration when developing, producing and delivering merchandise or services. You should also consider intellectual property issues (i.e., patents, copyrights, trademarks, nondisclosure and licensing agreements), as well as contracts, leases, and sales contracts.

Environmental feasibility

Consumers expect green businesses to consistently reduce or offset environmental damage, so a business decision that fails to meet that standard may not be feasible. Try to assess the environmental impact of your idea across the product life cycle: resource extraction, manufacturing, storage, shipping, consumer use, disposal. Identify the external costs and benefits for each of these stages, and look for ways to reduce costs and increase benefits.

Social feasibility

Choices that lead to negative or controversial social outcomes (e.g., uniforms made in foreign sweatshops by child laborers) can seriously undercut green marketing efforts. Try to assess the social costs and benefits of your idea across the product life cycle. The classic example here is sporting apparel made in sweatshops, which has caused tremendous PR headaches for companies like Nike and The Gap. Who makes the raw materials for your products (e.g., sweatshop workers, child laborers, etc.)? Can you find other suppliers at a competitive price? Can you contribute to social capital or quality of life in your community or state by buying locally, or donating a percentage of profits to a local charity?

Capital budgeting

Long-term investments like solar heating systems, new equipment, and new product lines require capital budgeting, which assesses the value of such investments.



Note: We advise you to become familiar with capital budgeting before teaching this concept.

One of the most common capital budgeting tools is **net present value (NPV)**, which measures the value an investment brings to your firm by comparing the present value of future net cash flows to the initial outflow required by your investment. This can help you to select the best long-term investments while minimizing risk.

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Use **OHD 6** to define terms and explain the steps, as time allows.

An NPV that’s greater than zero usually indicates a positive business opportunity. However, some projects may be worth pursuing even if the NPV is zero or negative. Your final decision might depend on the amount of risk you’re comfortable with, your degree of commitment to green principles, your competitive landscape, and your brand image.

If time allows, you might also mention other capital budgeting techniques: **internal rate of return (IRR)**, **payback**, and **profitability index**, and suggest that participants consult an accountant in order to find out which method makes sense for their business.

Weighing advantages and disadvantages

No matter what steps your feasibility test entailed, it makes sense to subject your ideas to one more test before you commit time and resources: make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of moving forward.

What do you see as the pros and cons of the idea? What do your employees think? How about your suppliers and other partners? And most important of all, your customers? Not all the opinions you get will be equally valid, but the more input you have, the less likely you are to miss something crucial.

Next steps

Once you’ve gone through this process, take a thorough look at your feasibility study. Review the business opportunity in terms of personnel, finances, markets, and other factors. This is your final chance to refine your idea before implementation. Mention that later in the class, you will explain how to organize this information using the NxLevel® Feasibility Plan Outline.

Feasible ideas should be added to the **NxLevel® Green Action Plan**. For each feasible idea, you will fill out a page that details the next steps, the personnel who are responsible, important benchmarks (such as completing research, or having financing in place), and projected dates of completion. Make sure that you also connect each benchmark with a specific business function such as financial requirements, personnel requirements, etc.

Project Management

Use **OHD 7** to explain the basics of project management. The primary tool here is the Gantt chart; use **OHD 8** to explain how to fill it out. Emphasize the use of Gantt charts as a tracking tool; by adding columns for predicted and actual costs, you can catch variances and improve budgeting.

For more complex projects with many interrelated steps, critical path analysis may be necessary. The critical path comprises activities that must be completed on schedule in order to complete the entire project on schedule; usually if an activity on the critical path is delayed by one day, the entire project will be delayed by one day.

Project management software makes it easy to create Gantt charts and critical paths, and it can also help keep your entire team informed, on schedule, and on budget.

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SAVING MONEY BY SAVING RESOURCES

Most of this long section comprises information and advice on saving energy, water, paper, and other resources. It offers a look at the pros and cons of some common green options, and tells participants how to get more detailed information. It's a great resource, and one we hope participants will refer to often, but it's not really practical to run through it in class.

Instead, we recommend briefly discussing the costs and benefits of compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and solar hot water systems, which will serve as examples of the business calculations introduced in this section.

Prior to teaching the class, read the sections on compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) and LED lighting, and use them to illustrate the concepts of purchase price and value in use. Here are the main points to remember:

- Incandescent bulbs convert about 95% of the energy they receive into heat.
- Fluorescent tubes have been saving energy for decades in offices and schools, but CFLs are cheaper, easier to use, more energy efficient, and contain less mercury.
- CFLs are more expensive than incandescents. However, their total cost is much less. 50,000 hours' worth of incandescent lighting would cost \$12.50 for the bulbs, and \$300 for electricity — a total cost of \$312.50. If you used CFLs, the same number of hours would cost you \$34.50 for the bulbs, and \$75 for electricity — a total cost of \$109.50.

It's common for people to be concerned about the mercury in CFLs, and this may come up in class. If so, two points will almost certainly need clarification:

- More than half of America's electricity comes from coal-fired power plants, which are the nation's largest source of mercury pollution according to the EPA. The extra power traditional bulbs require releases more mercury than CFLs over the life of the bulb.
- Contrary to a popular Internet myth, breaking a CFL will not bring the EPA down on your business, or require you to call in a hazmat team! Sweeping up the glass and wiping the area with a damp cloth is sufficient. Note that Costco and Wal-Mart offer free recycling bins for CFLs.

That said, most experts consider CFLs to be a transitional product. More efficient, mercury-free LED bulbs are expected to become standard within the next decade.

Next, you can discuss solar hot-water systems with an emphasis on the time needed for return on investment. Suppose the system costs \$5,000. How soon will it pay for itself? Ask participants to raise their hand if they have a gas water heater at home. Choose one respondent, and ask him or her to estimate how much natural gas costs per year.

Generally, 20% of this cost goes to heating water. So if the participant spends \$1,200 a year, the water heater probably accounts for \$240 of that total. At that rate, a \$5,000 solar water heater would take about 20 years to pay for itself. However, state or local rebates or grants may cover a substantial part of the cost, which would decrease the amount of time necessary to break even.

Also, consider what happens if natural gas prices increase. Solar water heating may offer you some cushioning against rate hikes. Does this mean it's a good idea to install one? That depends. For businesses in sunny areas that use a lot of hot water, it could be a very good idea! But you can't know until you take all the factors into account, and do the math. Every item that falls under your company's capital budget (e.g., long-term assets) should be evaluated by utilizing techniques that assess their long-term benefits (e.g., net present value).

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POLLUTION PREVENTION AND PRODUCT REDESIGN

Whether you want to protect the environment, save money, or avoid burdensome regulations, pollution prevention is the way to go. Use **OHD 9** to explain the basic steps:

- Collect data, either by monitoring your waste stream or getting a waste audit
- Set appropriate, affordable, attainable goals
- Educate and involve all employees
- Set standards for handling and disposing of hazardous waste, trash, and recyclables
- Practice good inventory management to reduce potential for spills and spoilage
- Research materials substitution and green procurement options (e.g., replacing styrofoam peanuts with biodegradable material). The text lists resources to aid in this process.

Product Redesign

The goal of product redesign is to get rid of unnecessary inputs and production stages, and where possible, to use more environmentally friendly designs, materials, and processes.

- Take a long, hard look at everything that goes into your product
- Assess its economic and environmental impact at every stage of its life cycle (resource extraction, manufacturing, packaging and shipping, consumer use, disposal)
- Make improvements that are appropriate, affordable, and attainable

This also applies to service businesses, which should take a careful look at how, when, and where they deliver their services.

Product redesign can also change consumer behavior. The text contains a description of the evolution of soda-can tabs, which is a simple example of responsible design. This is a good story to familiarize yourself with, so you can discuss it in class. Note that the modern fixed-tab can reduced pollution *without* asking consumers to change their behavior.

Ask the question: *Suppose you don’t want the plastic packaging for your product to end up littering the streets or taking up space in landfills. How could you redesign it?*

Good answers might include using biodegradable or recyclable packaging, using a package that people can use for something else when they’re done (e.g., an attractive tin or box), or getting rid of packaging altogether. Encourage them to think about other options, and remind them that innovative packaging can provide a competitive advantage, reduce shipping costs and breakage, communicate your brand identity, and so forth. (Note that any option that’s chosen has to meet the basic requirement of protecting the product during transit.)

Ask the question: *Has anyone used Wal-Mart’s new milk cartons?* If so, discuss how they feel about them as consumers, versus the benefits they offer Wal-Mart (e.g., lower shipping, labor, and refrigeration costs; less breakage).

If time allows, a few words on cradle to cradle design may interest participants. The point here is not to encourage C2C design, which is probably too complex for most small-business owners, but to provide a look at cutting-edge design.

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Ask the question: *Has anyone used Wal-Mart’s new milk cartons?* If so, discuss how they feel about them as consumers, versus the benefits they offer Wal-Mart (e.g., lower shipping, labor, and refrigeration costs; less breakage).

If time allows, a few words on cradle to cradle design may interest participants. The point here is not to encourage C2C design, which is probably too complex for most small-business owners, but to provide a look at cutting-edge design.

Have participants turn to the **Materials Substitution Worksheet**. Explain that they will need to choose several products or ingredients used in their business, and research green alternatives. The goal here is to make participants familiar with the research process.

Note that the first row in the chart has been filled in with (fictional) products, along with their source and cost. The green features checklist will be self-explanatory. Explain that once participants have filled in the blank spaces, they should choose one product for further research, and continue working through the questions. This will serve as an introduction to the process that participants should go through every time they consider materials substitution.

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GREEN BRANDING AND MARKETING

Branding is about creating a consistent message for your business, and making sure it comes across loud and clear whenever and wherever you interact with the public.

When customers see your name or logo, it promises them certain things. When you deliver on that promise, your brand is strengthened. When you don’t, your brand is weakened.

Remember: **Brand identity** is how you want to be seen; **brand image** is how you *are* seen.

Many businesses are trying to build green brand identities. Which raises an interesting question: What happens to these businesses when *every* brand is green? Unless there’s more to their brand than being green, they probably won’t make it!

The lesson? Don't be a green business; be a business that embraces green principles in support of a larger mission. **Ask the question:** *What makes you passionate about your business? What makes you confident that you have more to offer than your competitors? How do you make your customers aware of these ideals?*

Branding must communicate and celebrate the business’s passion and excellence, above and beyond environmental ethics. Customers should feel that the green aspects of your business are a natural outgrowth of qualities and values that inform everything you do. Don’t get so wrapped up in being green that you lose sight of the other things that are special about your business, your employees, and you!

Green Marketing

Use **OHD 10** to go over the reasons that consumers buy products.

Ask the question: *How many of you are always careful to buy products that help the environment?* In a typical class, few hands will be raised. This makes an important point: Studies show that most consumers want to make environmentally sound buying decisions, but they also show that very few consumers put their money where their mouth is.

Like branding, marketing needs to communicate more than a green ethos. Instead, promote all the traditional benefits of your product, and then use your green credentials to seal the deal. Studies show that when customers have a choice between two products of roughly the same price and quality, they overwhelmingly prefer the greener option. For this reason, your green marketing claims should be consistent with, and enhance, your overall message about your product’s quality, convenience, and so forth.

Use **OHD 11** to discuss the basic rules for green marketing claims.

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Pricing

Consumers worldwide say that they’re willing to pay more for products and services that help the environment. But as we’ve seen, they don’t always follow through.

Some businesses sell green products at a premium price. Unless you have a new or unique product, this can be a risky strategy, especially in a volatile economy. When possible, it’s wise to keep prices competitive with those of non-green alternatives. Remember: given a choice between two products with a similar price, most people prefer the greener option!

That said, competing solely on the basis of price may not be possible, now that price-slashing giants like Wal-Mart are going green. Shrewd branding, high quality, and excellent customer service can differentiate your business, and decrease the importance of price to your customers.

Ask the question: *What kind of features might lead you to pay more for a product?* While answers will vary, many of them will boil down to brand image (e.g., reputation, trust, reliability, goodwill). This is important to emphasize, because it makes the connection between branding and pricing: Perceived value depends to a huge extent on brand image.

Other reasons might include convenience or time savings, security or reduced risk, and improved social status. Once again, the more of these things you can offer, the more likely you are to get a premium price. While green practices can add value, most consumers are more concerned with performance, reliability, honesty, excellent service, time savings, and convenience.

Premium Pricing

Are there markets in which sustainability is more important than price, availability, ease of use, or convenience? Yes, and these buyers are more likely to pay a premium price. However, they’re also likely to check green claims carefully, and to demand a higher level of environmental commitment. If you’re going to target these buyers, be very sure that you understand their needs and their psychology, and that you can deliver on any promises you make. If you fail to deliver for these buyers, they’re unlikely to give you a second chance. Also, a premium-pricing strategy that misfires can hurt your image in other target markets. On the other hand, if you have a new, one-of-a-kind product, a premium price strategy could work very well for you.

Placement

Placement describes everything involved in getting your product to your customer. Your distribution strategy ought to reinforce your image as a green business. That’s why it’s important to work with distribution partners who are familiar with green business concepts, and are willing and able to communicate the things that make your business special.

Service businesses must also have a distribution strategy. If you’re offering a service, think about where you’ll serve your clients, and what environmental consequences this has.

Things to take into account when selecting a distribution strategy include delivery time, perishability, profit margins, customer expectations, competitors’ strategies, and resource use (e.g., offering downloads instead of hard copies, or using delivery or service vehicles that run on alternative fuels).

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FINDING MONEY, GETTING HELP

The text lists a number of federal, state, and local resources that offer information on grants, loans, subsidies, and other assistance for green businesses. It also lists some green industry groups and advocates that can provide assistance.



Note: These programs and policies vary from region to region and year to year, so we can't guarantee that they'll be up and running at the time of the class. Always caution participants to contact the relevant federal, state, and local agencies for up-to-date information.

GREEN EXPORT / IMPORT

Thanks to the Internet, and fluctuations in the value of the American dollar, exporting is easier than ever before. Annual exports are currently in the neighborhood of \$1.2 trillion, according to the International Trade Administration. Small businesses currently account for roughly 30% of that total, and that percentage is growing.

Use **OHD 12** to discuss the pros and cons of exporting green goods.

Many foreign markets are very interested in green products. However, this sometimes means that they have stricter regulations for allowable content, packaging, and so on. What's green in the US may not be green in Australia, Japan, or the EU. It's essential to research the environmental standards in your target country, along with the type and amount of competition you face.

Remember our earlier discussion of external costs? Many foreign countries now deal with this problem through **extended producer responsibility** laws, which shift responsibility for waste management from taxpayers to manufacturers. In the US, we're familiar with take-back policies for batteries and toner cartridges, but foreign EPR programs can affect all kinds of products. If you're selling through foreign stores or distributors, it's important to research these laws.

American states and cities are increasingly implementing forms of EPR, especially for electronic products, so compliance with foreign laws could possibly put you ahead of US competitors.

Importing

As noted above, green design and manufacturing is quite advanced in Australia, the EU and Japan; importing green products from these countries can be a great way to expand or launch a green business.

Most export topics apply (in reverse) to importing. Here are a few points to consider:

- **Market demand.** Is there a demand for the product?
- **Quality.** Does the product meet your quality standards?
- **Price.** How does the price compare to that of domestic counterparts?
- **Quantity.** Does your vendor have the capacity to fill your order?
- **Tariffs.** Are there US tariffs or legal restrictions on the product?
- **Political stability.** Will changes in the foreign government affect your business?

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Also, increased scrutiny of imported goods means that you must allow greater time for goods to arrive; you may wish to adjust your order size and inventory levels accordingly.

If you have participants in your class who are running or starting an export or import business, point out that *Going Global*, NxLevel®'s guide to international trade, may be of use to them.

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STAYING GREEN

If green business isn't just a fad, and is really setting a new baseline for best practices and consumer expectations, then staying green is just as important as going green.

This means that the process of assessing your operations, uncovering hidden costs and unsustainable practices, and performing feasibility studies needs to become second nature. You need to be flexible, so that you can act quickly to eliminate waste and improve efficiency, but you also need to be skeptical, so that you're not changing your business around every time some new green product or process hits the market. Emphasize the key points of feasibility (appropriate, affordable, attainable), and point out that this calculation can change over time: what's not feasible today may be feasible tomorrow, so stay on top of new technology, incentives, and rewards.

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THE NxLEVEL® FEASIBILITY STUDY OUTLINE

This is a good point at which to explain how everything you've discussed fits together. A green business opportunity leads to a feasibility study, which leads to an actionable idea. That idea is added to the action plan, and brought to fruition through project management methods. Note that effective project management provides data that will help you to improve your feasibility studies (e.g., by identifying bad assumptions, variances, and so on).

With this in mind, use **OHD 13** to explain how to arrange and incorporate the data from the **Feasibility Study Worksheets** into the **NxLevel® Feasibility Study Outline**.

Do yourself a favor and be honest when writing your feasibility study. It's easy to paint a rosy picture of your idea, so do a reality check: Are your assumptions accurate? Have you addressed all the questions lenders will ask? Do you have the right skills and resources? Get the input of friends, family, employees, and advisors before you commit to a given project.

Encourage participants to write out a full feasibility outline for every substantial idea, and an NPV calculation for every major investment. It will force them to focus their attention, and provide a working document that will guide the project.

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THE NxLEVEL® GREEN ACTION PLAN

Once ideas have been tested and documented, it's time to add them to the action plan. Using **OHD 14**, explain how to use the **Green Action Plan Worksheet** to prioritize appropriate, affordable, and attainable projects. Advise participants that the Action Plan should be posted on a whiteboard or blackboard where all team members can see it, and that it should be updated every week or two as necessary (with the exception of the cost and time estimates, which must stay the same so that they can be compared with actual results).

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In closing, you can point out that this visual representation of their green goals is a reminder that they are doing good things for their company, their customers, and their society.

Thank participants for coming, and congratulate them on furthering their green business goals with this specialized training.

OVERHEADS AND HANDOUTS AVAILABLE FOR THIS CLASS

Instructor Topics Overheads

OHD	1	Textbook Overview
OHD	2	Why Go Green?
OHD	3	Basic Feasibility Study
OHD	4	Advanced Feasibility Study
OHD	5	Advanced Feasibility Study—continued
OHD	6	Net Present Value
OHD	7	Project Management Basics
OHD	8	How to Use a Gantt Chart
OHD	9	Pollution Prevention Tips
OHD	10	Why Do Customers Buy?
OHD	11	Rules for Green Marketing
OHD	12	Advantages and Disadvantages of Exporting
OHD	13	Writing Your NxLevel® Feasibility Study
OHD	14	The NxLevel® Green Action Plan

SUGGESTIONS FOR HANDOUTS AND/OR SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS



- Articles on challenges faced by green entrepreneurs
- Examples of evolutionary green ideas and products
- Explanations of cradle to cradle design
- Articles on green business opportunities in the EU and other foreign countries
- Examples and explanations of critical path analysis
- Examples of capital budgeting techniques other than NPV

Supplemental materials you decided to use:

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Textbook Overview

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- **PRODUCT REDESIGN.** Making greener products.
- **GREEN BRANDING AND MARKETING.** Building your brand, communicating benefits, and choosing the right pricing and distribution strategies.
- **FINDING MONEY, GETTING HELP.** Resources for green business.
- **GREEN EXPORT / IMPORT.** The pros and cons of selling internationally, and tips on getting help.
- **STAYING GREEN.** Keeping ahead of the competition.
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Why Go Green?

BUSINESS REASONS:

- ◆ Beat the competition
- ◆ Catch up to the competition
- ◆ Win new customers
- ◆ Satisfy a request from customers
- ◆ Earn or save money

LEGAL REASONS:

- ◆ Avoid regulatory burdens
- ◆ Meet legal requirements

ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS:

- ◆ Save natural resources
- ◆ Benefit or protect the environment

POLITICAL REASONS:

- ◆ Achieve energy independence
- ◆ Effect a political change
- ◆ Solve or prevent a crisis

ETHICAL REASONS:

- ◆ Benefit future generations
- ◆ Benefit animals
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Basic Feasibility Study

SCOPE:

- ◆ What is the green business opportunity?
- ◆ What is the purpose? What are your goals?
- ◆ What are the features and benefits?

SWOT ANALYSIS:

- ◆ Your business
- ◆ Your industry
- ◆ Your target market
- ◆ Your competition

FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY:

- ◆ What are your capital requirements?
- ◆ Do you need outside funding?
- ◆ Why will your idea be profitable?
- ◆ When will you reach your break-even point?
- ◆ What rate of return do you expect?

FEASIBILITY OF SALES VOLUME:

- ◆ How, when, and where will you generate revenue?
- ◆ How much will it generate?
- ◆ Why are these projections realistic?

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Advanced Feasibility Study

MARKETING FEASIBILITY:

- ◆ How will you communicate with customers?
- ◆ Why, when, how, and where will they buy?
- ◆ What price, promotion, and placement strategies will you use?

FEASIBILITY OF PERSONNEL:

- ◆ Do you have the right mix of personnel, with the right training?
- ◆ Have they bought into the business idea?
- ◆ What functions will be outsourced?

LOGISTICAL FEASIBILITY:

- ◆ What are your product and performance specifications? How will you ensure that they are met?
- ◆ Can you get enough of the supplies and materials you need? What's the turnaround time?
- ◆ Is your supply chain adequate?
- ◆ Do you have the equipment you need?

Advanced Feasibility Study

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Advanced Feasibility Study— continued

LEGAL FEASIBILITY:

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- ◆ Do you need to protect intellectual property rights?
- ◆ What contracts and leases are required?

ENVIRONMENTAL FEASIBILITY:

- ◆ Will implementing the concept reduce or offset environmental damage?
- ◆ What is the environmental impact of resource extraction, manufacturing, storage, shipping, consumer use, and disposal?
- ◆ Can you reduce external costs and increase external benefits?

SOCIAL FEASIBILITY:

- ◆ How does each aspect of your product and your business affect workers, neighbors, and communities at home and abroad?
- ◆ Can you reduce external costs and increase external benefits?

Advanced Feasibility Study— continued

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NET PRESENT VALUE

$$\frac{R_t}{(1+i)^t}$$

- ***R*** is **net cash flow** (inflow – outflow)
- ***t*** is **time** (t=0 is start-up, t=1 is Year 1)
- ***i*** is the **discount rate** (e.g., the cost of a loan, or an alternative rate of return)

Year	Cash Flow	Present Value
t=0	$\frac{-10,000}{(1+.1)^0}$	-10,000
t=1	$\frac{3,500-500}{(1+.1)^1}$	2,727
t=2	$\frac{3,500-500}{(1+.1)^2}$	2,479
t=3	$\frac{3,500-500}{(1+.1)^3}$	2,254
t=4	$\frac{3,500-500}{(1+.1)^4}$	2,055
t=5	$\frac{3,500-500}{(1+.1)^5}$	1,863
Net present value = 1,378		

NET PRESENT VALUE

$$\frac{R_t}{(1+i)^t}$$

- ***R*** is **net cash flow** (inflow – outflow)
- ***t*** is **time** (t=0 is start-up, t=1 is Year 1)
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Project Management Basics

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- ◆ **Identify every task necessary to accomplish your goals**
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Tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Cost
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Manufacture product													2,700
Advertise product													1,400
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- ◆ **Set appropriate, affordable, attainable goals**
- ◆ **Educate and involve all employees**
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ADVANTAGES:

- American-made green products may enjoy a competitive advantage
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- New markets may have few or no competitors
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- Opportunities for new and improved products
- May solve seasonal cash flow problems
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DISADVANTAGES:

- Focus on international business may hurt domestic business
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- ◆ **Team Leader / Team.** Assign responsibility.
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