Sustainable Manufacturing

Intended for advanced compliance programs

A large and growing number of manufacturers are realizing substantial financial and environmental benefits from sustainable business practices. Sustainable manufacturing is the creation of manufactured products through economically-sound processes that minimize negative environmental impacts while conserving energy and natural resources. Sustainable manufacturing also enhances employee, community and product safety.

The Business Case for Sustainable Manufacturing

A growing number of companies are treating “sustainability” as an important objective in their strategy and operations to increase growth and global competitiveness. This trend has reached well beyond the small niche of those who traditionally positioned themselves as “green,” and now includes many prominent businesses across many different industry sectors. In many cases, these efforts are having significant results.

There are a number of reasons why companies are pursuing sustainability:

- Increase operational efficiency by reducing costs and waste
- Respond to or reach new customers and increase competitive advantage
- Protect and strengthen brand and reputation and build public trust
- Build long-term business viability and success
- Respond to regulatory constraints and opportunities

Companies engaged in sustainability efforts include those of all sizes, ages and sectors. Companies move forward along the path to sustainability by improving performance and reducing their resource footprint. Ways that companies progress further on the path to sustainability include:

- Address sustainability in a coordinated, integrated and formal manner, rather than in an ad hoc, unconnected and informal manner
- Focus on increased competitiveness and revenues rather than primarily focusing on cost-cutting, risk reduction and improved efficiency
- Use innovation, scenario planning and strategic analysis to go beyond compliance
- Integrate sustainability across business functions
- Focus more on the long term
- Work collaboratively with external stakeholders

Find more information on sustainable manufacturing on EPA's E3 website.

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