



Supplier Engagement

You know your supply chain best. As a large manufacturer, you will identify and nominate those suppliers who you think could benefit most from joining the Green Suppliers Network; your role is to facilitate supplier selection and engagement. When choosing suppliers to pilot the program, we recommend that you select companies with whom you already have a strong relationship. By working with these suppliers, you will be able to facilitate the assessment process and demonstrate success, which will encourage your other suppliers to participate.

Your company might also consider undergoing a Green Suppliers Network assessment. Not only will your company become more familiar with the assessment process, but you also will be able to more fully explain the benefits of participation to your suppliers. Keep in mind, however, that Green Suppliers Network resources are directed toward smaller suppliers that might not otherwise be able to afford such an opportunity, and that large manufacturers who engage in assessments would be expected to cover their full costs.

Below are a few strategies you may find useful in selecting suppliers for a Green Suppliers Network assessment. While this list is not all-inclusive, it includes strategies that other large manufacturers have used successfully to engage their suppliers.

Forming your team

- Involve staff from your purchasing and supply chain management departments in addition to environmental, health, and safety professionals when assembling your internal Green Suppliers Network team. This approach allows for multiple perspectives on your selections and encourages internal dialogues about continuous improvement and overall efficiency as you select suppliers for assessment.

Supplier selection

- Choose suppliers with which you already have a strong working relationship, and those who would be most open to the opportunity that a Green Suppliers Network assessment provides. These suppliers might already include an interest in sustainability as part of their own corporate goals.
- Select critical suppliers from which you purchase a significant amount of materials, or that already conduct a large amount of business with you. This might provide you with significant leverage to encourage the supplier to engage in Green Suppliers Network assessments, as these companies have greater interests in your corporate initiatives.
- Consider suppliers that are most affected by emerging manufacturing trends, such as energy efficiency or chemical management issues, to help focus supplier attention. Examples include the international directives that restrict chemicals.
- Focus on suppliers from a particular industry with a high level of environmental impact. This is an opportunity to realize significant environmental gains and consequently, cost savings in your supply chain.

- Choose suppliers that provide a particular product line within your company. This approach might make it easier to identify and track cost savings in a single product. Additionally, managers of these product lines can be included in the assessment process and become internal champions of the Green Suppliers Network within your company.
- Nominate suppliers from a certain geographical area, such as those located closest to your corporate headquarters. After successful assessments, you might want to consider expansions to other states and regions of the country. (Note: Suppliers' facilities for assessment must be located in the United States or Puerto Rico.)
- Select suppliers that complement additional corporate goals. For example, choose among your suppliers to achieve corporate goals related to diversity or social benefits.
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