

ACCO Climate Leadership Summit

November 8-9, 2010 | Hyattsville, Maryland

Marriott Inn & Conference Center, University of Maryland University College
(The nation's first LEED certified conference center)

ROUNDTABLE NOTES

Track 1: Redefining & Inspiring Climate Leadership

Session 3: Educating Corporate, Government, and Public Sector Leaders

Moderators: Richard Tauberman, Bill Becker, Melissa Gallagher-Rogers

Takeaways:

The United States needs to make 25-40% in greenhouse gas reductions. Currently, the US has a 3% goal. Often message being delivered is either wrong or poorly delivered:

- Environmentalists often frame the issue as anti-capitalism, as a liberal issue → Need to move this more in the middle.
- How do we get executives excited about the issue?
- Need to think about how to talk about climate outside of the beltway.
 - In the beltway- government
 - Outside- business, communities, etc.
- Business logic is obvious, but we get lost in the emotion of the issue (“doomsday” pitch)
- People assume “something in the middle” is right- climate change vs. hoax
- Focus on the “triple bottom line” (economics, environment, social)

Problem with implementing environmental actions is the “culture of distraction”- other things are prioritized. In several recent cases, environmental groups have called companies out on their environmental practices. Companies should know more about their climate impacts than environmental groups do. In a recent conference at the Kellogg School, someone asked a Fortune 500 sustainability officer if he could name examples where the company had saved money through sustainability actions ... he couldn't.

Climate change suffers from a lack of credibility. Possible solutions include:

- Focus on total sustainability portfolio to enhance credibility.
- Identify icons from across sectors who can deliver the message (e.g. Pope, Stephen Hawking, and Bill Gates all understand importance of climate change)

Next Steps:

Establish a working group to develop a suite of education programs for executives:

- Keep education interactive ... management has small attention span
- Leverage internal delivery whenever possible
- Identify professional development topics (e.g. social science on behavioral considerations, economics of climate change, etc.)
- Put things in context- different people and organizations relate/react to different things
- Facilitate local/regional events

Produce white paper linking GHG emissions and climate implications to bottom line and operations

Establish a working group that works with FMYI on developing an “eharmony” type of site for climate leaders across sectors, which would include:

- Match companies with more mature climate programs with younger programs
- Input “traits” of organization
- Collaborate with FMYI
- Create a quarterly list of top partners

Establish a working group focused on:

- Distributing case studies
- Authoring a series of white papers on a variety of topics for all sectors
- Establish speakers bureau
- Develop and distribute talking points making the case for climate response strategies
- Publishing benefits of carbon-conscious procurement paradigms
- Providing information on the competitive advantage of disclosure and management
- Keeping organizations updated on climate-related risks (legal, technological, competitive, optical, policy, financial, physical, etc.)
- Understanding waste management implications
- Develop guidelines for companies and agencies to conduct internal climate risk audits of products, processes and supply chains, and provide climate officers guidance on how to quantify the financial/profit benefits of carbon management and sustainability in general