

A SOCIAL VENTURE CASE STUDY: ENVIRO-STEWARDS INC.



ENVIRONMENTAL MISSION

Enviro-Stewards is an international environmental consulting firm dedicated to helping its clients conserve resources and effectively address their environmental liabilities. We build sustainability leaders.

ENVIRO-STEWARDS INC.

President:

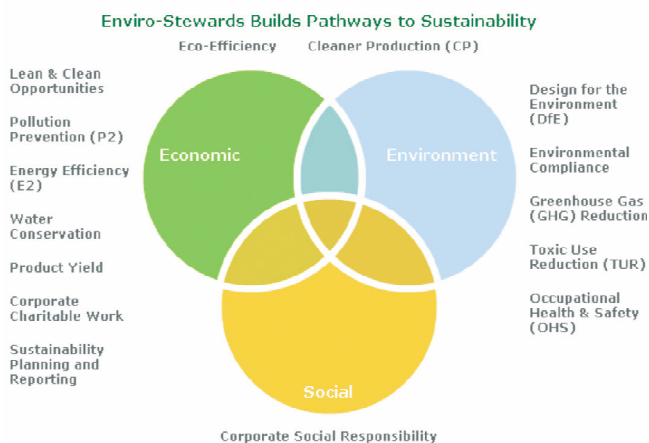
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Figure 1

Services provided by enviro-Stewards



Introduction

Bruce Taylor was seeking a career where he could apply his technical skills as a chemical engineer and make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. At first he pursued his passions through separate avenues—working as an environmental consultant in conventional engineering firms and as a volunteer, helping the socially marginalized and economically disadvantaged at home and abroad.

Through this journey it became apparent to Bruce that he needed to combine his passions in a way that would enable him to pursue both at the same time. “I was seeking to combine my interests in social work and engineering,” Bruce explains. At the time, no organization existed that captured his two passions. This led Bruce to begin his entrepreneurial journey. He wanted to demonstrate that a business could serve a dual purpose: make money and create social change. In 2000, Bruce founded Enviro-Stewards, a social venture.

Social and Environmental Value Integration

A steward is an individual who manages another individual’s property, finances or other affairs on their behalf. The name Enviro-Stewards reflects the firm’s mandate to help its clients conserve their resources and effectively address their environmental liabilities.

As an environmental consultant, Enviro-Stewards helps facilities save money by taking an innovative pollution prevention approach rather than a traditional end-of-pipe approach. This is done by examining opportunities for source reduction within facilities and asking key questions such as: What are your primary wastes? Why are your wastes generated? Where can they be reduced? When applied, a pollution prevention approach reduces the level of contamination of air and water streams at the source. This reduces the size, complexity, and cost of any necessary downstream water or air treatment facilities.

Enviro-Stewards provides a broad range of services to assist facilities and organizations on their path toward sustainability. The assistance it provides spans a variety of industrial sectors including: aerospace, automotive, beverage, food, manufacturing, mining, nuclear, pharmaceutical, specialty chemical and textile industries. Enviro-Stewards also provides assistance to the health care sector as well as federal, provincial and local governments.

The scope of Enviro-Stewards’ services include those outlined in figure 1. They are delivered in an integrated way, often resulting in multiple social, environmental and economic benefits. As the initiatives of sustainable development, ecological footprint and corporate social responsibility mature, Enviro-Stewards is well positioned to deliver integrated solutions. This is demonstrated in the recent launch of a



B Impact Report » view detail »		
Summary: Certified: September 2011		
	Points Earned	% Points Available
Accountability	13.6	91%
Employees	41.4	69%
Consumers	34.3	97%
Community	40.8	65%
Environment	14.3	72%
Composite B Score	144.4	

>80 out of 200 is eligible for certification
>60% points available = **Area of excellence**

B CORPORATION

Enviro-Stewards was recently certified as a B Corporation, which recognizes corporations that use the power of business to solve social and environmental problems.

sustainability credit program to fund sustainable water projects in Sudan. In 2004, Enviro-Stewards helped establish a water project and micro-enterprise with the donation of a biosand filter (see figure 2) in southern Sudan. As part of the project, locals in Sudan were taught how to build their own biosand filters and test water quality. All of the wells in the area were tested and half were found to be contaminated. Fortunately, the locally-made biosand filters now provide safe drinking water which is also being bottled in reusable glass bottles and sold to help finance the biofilter project.

In 2009, Enviro-Stewards started a sustainability credit program. How it works is simple. Enviro-Stewards offers sustainability credits to North American facilities that reduce their ecological footprint. The facilities purchase the credits which help fund the construction of residential drinking water treatment systems in southern Sudan. Each biofilter provides safe drinking water, improved health, reduces poverty through job creation, and reduces the deforestation associated with boiling of water. Enviro-Stewards then verifies that these filters have been constructed and installed correctly and provide certificates to the North American facility.

Challenges

As Bruce readily admits, like any new business, the first few years were tough and fraught with the challenge of establishing a client base that would generate sufficient income. But now, ten years later, the firm is a thriving social venture with five engineers and one support staff.

Despite the fact that Bruce and his staff could make more money working in a well-established, conventional engineering firm, staff turnover has been minimal. This leads Bruce to believe that staff are seeking the same things he is seeking: a rewarding and meaningful career. In addition to helping industrial clients achieve significant economic and environmental benefits, staff participate in local and international volunteer work (e.g. Habitat for Humanity, Out of the Cold, earthquake relief in El Salvador, orphanage construction in southern Sudan). This orientation toward volunteerism has enabled Enviro-Stewards to secure a talented pool of scientists and engineers. "We attract and retain staff with outstanding technical competence, integrity, judgement, interpersonal skills and a strong desire to serve others through projects that achieve environmental and social improvement," Bruce explains.

Conclusion

Whether it's helping facilities save hundreds of thousands of dollars by finding integrated solutions that reduce the use of toxics, water and energy, or helping people abroad secure a prosperous livelihood through a sustainable water business, Enviro-Stewards has demonstrated itself as an innovative social venture.

Bruce offers this straightforward advice to others starting their own social venture: "Many people want jobs with more purpose and greater meaning. Figure out who you are, what you are good at and what your passions are—the combine all three. And lastly, don't be afraid to try different things."

Figure 2

Biosand filter: How does it work?



- step 1: Water is poured into the top of the filter.
- step 2: The diffusion plate slows the force of the water.
- step 3: Water then travels slowly into the biological layer at the top of the sand.
- step 4: After passing through both levels of gravel, the water is propelled up and out.

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