



Penn Environmental Group (PEG)–Green Acorn Business Certification

The Green Acorn Business Certification Program is an initiative started by the Penn Environmental Group that creates a streamlined certification process for businesses that use green practices. The aim of the program is to lead Philadelphia toward becoming a center for green businesses and reaching Mayor Nutter’s sustainability goals.

Sustainability is defined by PEG as meeting the current environmental, social, and economic needs of the community without compromising the ability of future generations to meet these needs. In other words, sustainability is a desire to pass on a world that is as good as, if not better than, the world as it stands today. Directly, sustainability is a term that involves reducing the demand of natural resources and stress on ecological systems. Indirectly, it promotes healthy lifestyles, community building, higher quality of life, and efficiency. Sustainability is, thus, directly related to Philadelphia’s future prosperity.

A business that incorporates sustainability into its daily operations and its products is a ‘green business’. Hence, a green business does not necessarily have to sell green products. Businesses that become certified by the Green Acorn program will reap the benefits of market differentiation, free advertisements at Penn, and the reduced costs associated with sustainable business operations.

The Green Acorn Program is bringing the ‘green edge’ to local businesses. As more businesses integrate sustainability into their operations, Philadelphia, as a community, will benefit from lowered energy and water use, reduced waste, increased reuse and recycling of materials, improved air quality, and increased environmental awareness and volunteer work. As you, the successful business owner, obtain the perks of reduced operational costs and resource conservation, you will become an integral part of our community’s wellbeing and will move ahead of the curve against your competition.

The Business Case for Sustainability

- Reduce operating costs through efficiency
- Establish a competitive advantage with customers, clients, and prospective employees
- Insulate your business from future environmental regulations
- Improve employees’ morale
- Become members of a growing green business community

The PEG Green Acorn Business Certification Process

- 1) Business agrees to begin certification process with MGMT 100 Students and/or PEG
 - PEG will answer questions about the goals and benefits of the program, respond to concerns held by businesses, and offer information about how to complete the checklist
 - The Greening Services Directory lists sources of information and companies to help complete checklist
- 2) Business completes the appropriate checklist and contacts PEG
 - The checklist addresses four categories: waste management, pollution prevention, resource conservation, and environmental awareness
 - There is currently one level of certification (there will be a second and third level in the future)
 - Must complete the requirements, which are designed to be cost-free/cost-neutral
 - A business that excels in a particular category on the checklist, like ‘resource conservation’, will be recognized on its certificate for this extra effort
- 3) On-site assessment of checklist completion directed by PEG
 - PEG will conduct onsite assessments to verify compliance with Green Acorn checklist
 - This assessment assures that businesses have completed the checklist
- 4) Approved businesses awarded certification
 - Approved businesses are awarded a certificate, window decals, and use of PEG’s Green Acorn logo
 - Award is tied to current location and owner of business
 - A business that relocates or comes under new management must re-apply
 - Certificate valid for one year, then the PEG will conduct another on-site assessment to assure that business have continued to meet certification requirements
 - PEG re-approves businesses if latest standards are met
 - Re-certification will be denied if a business fails to meet new standards

Additional Incentives from Green Acorn

- Free space in the half-page advertisement launching the Green Acorn program in *The Daily Pennsylvanian* at least once per semester
- Promotion on the PEG Website (and potentially a future Green Acorn website)
- Mention in *The Daily Pennsylvanian* news article about the Green Acorn program
- Mention in the Penn Press Release about the Green Acorn program
- Promotion at future PEG events, such as table space at the semi-annual GreenFest on College Green
- Promotion through the Undergraduate Assembly and other partners around campus
- Inclusion in the PEG Green Acorn on-campus marketing campaign to students (like banners on Locust Walk)