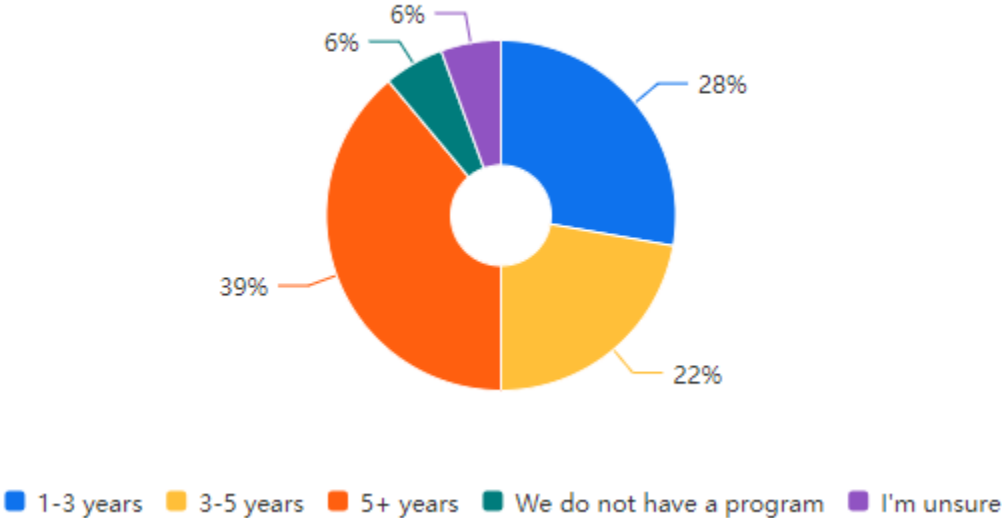


Member Meetup: Sustainability Practices & Strategies

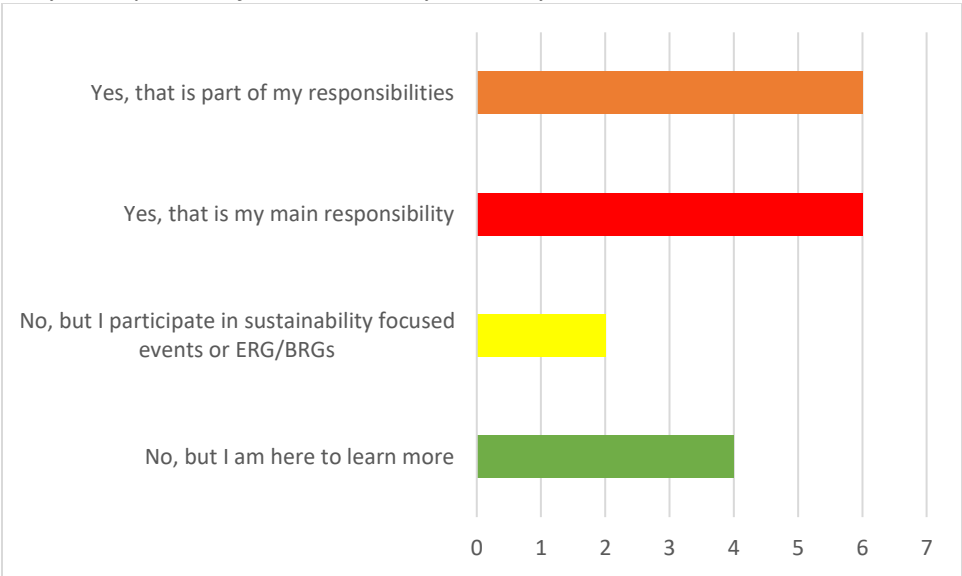
September 30, 2024

Polls:

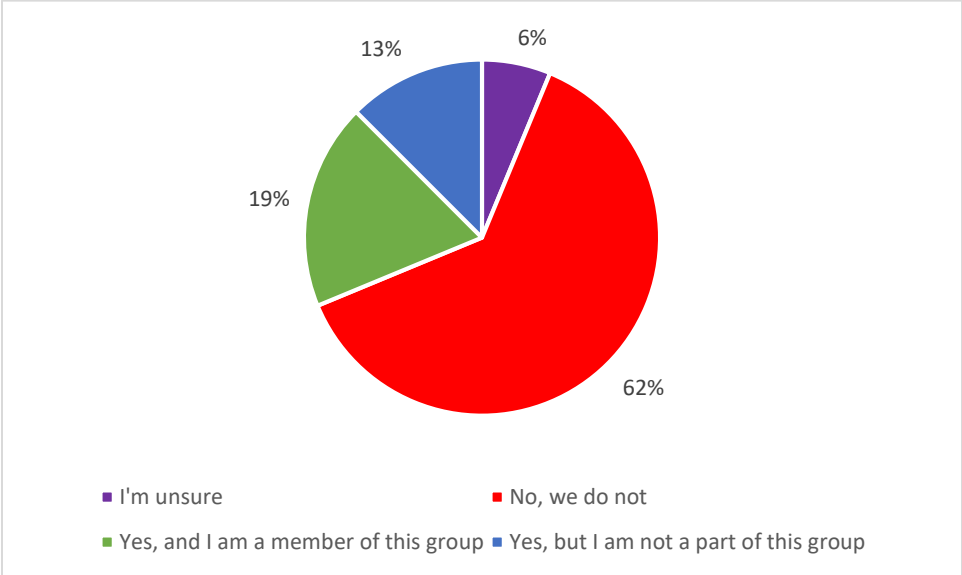
How long has your company run some form of sustainability program?



Are you responsible for sustainability work in your current role?



Does your company have a sustainability focused ERG/BRG??



Background Information:

The September 2024 Member Meetup focused on corporate strategies for sustainability, highlighting various approaches to sustainability on the corporate level, industry-specific practices, and employee engagement.

One organization discussed the complexities of sustainability due to industry-specific regulations that make sustainable practices slightly more complicated. Nonetheless, the firm recently transitioned to 100% renewable energy for its corporate headquarters and successfully integrated a composting system to better dispose of waste within a highly regulated industry. This firm is continuing to minimize the company's environmental footprint in day-to-day operations by involving employees in order to reach their long-term sustainability goals.

Another organization discussed the practices they employ to achieve greater levels of employee engagement within their sustainability initiatives. In order to achieve employee engagement, commitment, communication, providing firm-wide awareness, and employee recognition are extremely important. They also explained that it is important to get a hold of the "low-hanging fruit" to provide opportunities to employees that align with their sustainability interests.

Analysis:

The importance of these sustainability practices and strategies lies in their ability to address both immediate and long-term sustainability targets that are feasible to implement. Furthermore, it is important to allow for sustainable actions firm-wide, allowing employees to engage in sustainability initiatives that align with their interests and capabilities as well as long-term firm targets, such as carbon neutrality. Planning and allowing for immediate practices in the short run can help to achieve long term success. Sometimes firms, particularly those with extensive regulations, need to think outside of the box of traditional sustainability practices to reach their desired targets through creative and applicable actions.

Challenges, Solutions, and Strategies:

One of the main challenges addressed in this Member Meetup was how to approach long-term efforts in the short term. Given the fact that sustainability goals tend to be long-term and not amendable in the short run, one solution to this issue was to create challenging but "bite-sized goals" that can be accomplished without feeling impossible to tackle. This can take place in firm-wide training, targets, or investments.

Another challenge had to do with getting employee-led initiatives off the ground in order for them to flourish. Some solutions to these challenges were to collaborate with senior leadership, employee one-on-ones, implement firm-wide training and certifications, and utilize employee resource groups (BRGs/ERGs). Additionally, the semantics for the titles firm leaders in the space can have a profound effect on employee engagement, such as the title "sustainability influencer" instead of "sustainability ambassador."

Actionable Steps:

1. **Define Focus Areas:** Align which aspects of sustainability your organization is best equipped to address with your strategic objectives. Create actionable short-term initiatives that will lead to long-term success. Some aspects of sustainability to consider:
 - a. Biodiversity
 - b. Carbon neutrality
 - c. Waste management
 - d. Sustainable packaging
 - e. Sustainability volunteering events
 - f. Growing the Sustainability Ambassador/Influencer Team
2. **Establish Diverse Methods of Communication:** Using multiple methods of communication can allow more people to be involved and generate better response rates. Ensure you use these channels to consistently update the entire organization of different opportunities they can take advantage of.
 - a. Use communication to connect employees' day-to-day roles to environmental sustainability and the company mission. Speak with your senior leaders to get the buy-in and authority necessary to start new programs.
 - b. Celebrate employees who go above and beyond either through internal messaging, recognition awards, or features in public reports.
3. **Innovate Solutions for Firm-Specific Needs:** Each industry has specific regulations that can limit firms' sustainability practices. In order to overcome these challenges, it is important to:
 - a. Work with your legal department to ensure you adhere to all regulations.
 - b. Encourage employees to share their own ideas for new programs as this can generate new ideas and excitement, leading to increased engagement.
 - c. Offer Sustainability training courses so employees can learn how to implement better practices both in the office and in their personal lives.

Additional BCCCC Resources:

- Topic Overview: [Sustainability Reporting](#)
- Research Brief: [Long-Term Perspective on the Financial Value of Sustainability Initiatives](#)
- Research Brief: [Demographics of Top Management Regarding Environmental Strategies](#)
- Executive Education Courses:
 - [CPD Reporting: Measure and Manage Environmental Impact](#)
 - [Fundamentals of Sustainability Reporting](#)
 - [Sustainability Reporting with the GRI Standards](#)
- Certification Program: [Certificate in Corporate Citizenship & Sustainability Reporting](#)