



Advice & eXpertise In Sustainability

Annual Sustainability Report—2011



WE DEMYSTIFY SUSTAINABILITY

WE EDUCATE: Authors of the award-winning book, *The Business Guide to Sustainability* (Earthscan, 2006) and many other popular business [books](#) and articles. * Teach at the prestigious [Bainbridge Graduate Institute's MBA in Sustainable Business](#) and [Presidio](#).

WE CONSULT: We help organizations make sense of sustainability. Let us show you how to use sustainability to anticipate future risks and opportunities, energize employees, and improve your competitiveness. This work keeps us connected to emerging organizational needs.

WE INVENT PRACTICAL TOOLS : [S-CORE™](#) sustainability assessment) * [SPaRK™](#) (Sustainability Planning and Reporting Kit) * [Training materials](#).

WE EMPOWER: Co-founders of the [International Society of Sustainability Professionals](#) * License consultants and practitioners to use our tools * Provide [career assistance](#) for people wanting to get into the field of sustainability

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What Sustainability Means to AXIS Performance Advisors

We use The Natural Step and the Triple Bottom Line as ways of assessing our impacts and opportunities. As a two-person business with home offices, our major negative sustainability impact is associated with travel so we track our greenhouse gases carefully and have been climate neutral—offsetting what we could not eliminate ourselves—since 2000. But our biggest positive impact is the work we do, how well we inspire others to get on the ‘sustainability train.’ This report summarizes our performance in both areas.

AXIS Retrospective 21 years of service

1990—Formed as an instructional design and organizational development consulting firm.

1991—First *Symposium on Self-Direction* conference. Developed a niche in high-performance, self-directed work teams, building on Darcy's work with Cadillac, helping them to win the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

1994—Published our first book, *Why TQM Fails and What to Do About It*.

1995—Hosted a think-tank on sustainability, changing our direction to sustainability. Published *Why Teams Fail and What to Do About It*.

1998—Published our first Corporate Social Responsibility Report inspired by Ralph Estes' *Tyranny of the Bottom Line*. Hosted the GoodBUSINESS conference on socially responsible business practices.

2000—First year AXIS purchased carbon credits to be climate neutral.

2006—*The Business Guide to Sustainability* won the American Library Association's Choice Award. Formed the International Society of Sustainability Professionals.

2008—*Dragonfly's Question* (novella and discussion course) foreshadowed the economic crisis. Made into a Kindle book in 2011. *Step by Step Guide to Sustainability Planning* published.

2011—S-CORE™ assessment released as an online tool in collaboration with Sustainable Measures.

What does the world need next?

About every decade, we evolve our business to something new. (See the AXIS Retrospective to the left.) We started out as the 'self-directed work team ladies' but then caught the sustainability bug. After 15 years of helping organizations adopt sustainability, we feel the tipping point has been reached. There are so many pressures on organizations to move toward sustainability, it's inevitable. (If you doubt that, see this [UN Global Compact study](#) that estimates a majority of companies will have embedded sustainability into their operations the next 10 years.)

Ironically, while we thought we had shifted our business from teams to sustainability in the mid to late 1990's, we now realize that these are integral pieces of a whole! (See our 2011 article, [Confused about Social Sustainability?](#))

So that begs the question, what's next as we move into our third decade in business? How do we pull these pieces together into a coherent whole? We want to explore the social side of sustainability in more depth. At AXIS, we already know a lot about how teams and organizations work. Marsha has done cross-organizational, multi-stakeholder work. And Darcy is intrigued with efforts at the community level. Perhaps we need to invent new methods to create resilient and delightful social systems on these four levels (teams, organizations, cross-orgs and community.)

Insight to Action

By examining our past, we have uncovered the process we have used for innovation so perhaps this can be a trail to our future:

Research—Through reading, study tours, dialog, and client engagements, we uncover what is needed to speed adoption of sustainable practices. (For example, in the early 2000s, the success of LEED inspired our S-CORE™ assessment and *The Business Guide to Sustainability*.)

Invent—Research yields insights and stories. We then invent new processes and job aids/products. (For example, working with organizations to create sustainability plans led us to create a systematic process for doing so and the associated SPaRK™ tool.

Share—We then share these tools via speaking, teaching, licensing and consulting. For example, we give the SPaRK tool away with training and license others to use S-CORE.

Publish/ Partner—And sometimes these become products that provide us with passive income. For example, we have largely turned over the S-

CORE assessment to Sustainable Measures to manage.

Sneak-peek at our plans for 2012

Darcy's semi-sabbatical—So it's time for research again, time to discover what the world needs from us next. Darcy is taking a 'semi-sabbatical,' a chance to reflect, learn, travel and discover; more emphasis on living and less on working! She also intends this to be a techno-detox, time to back off email and spend more time face to face. If you want to contact Darcy, try the phone!

As learning goals, Darcy has identified:

Living systems as an inspiration for social systems—We want to investigate how living systems principles can inspire more sustainable social systems. We plan to examine how living systems principles can be applied at different social levels to create more sustainable and resilient systems. As we evolve beyond the Industrial Revolution, we don't want to perpetuate the wrong mental models. (For example, living systems are interdependent but also modular with diversity being an adaptive strategy. We could have avoided a worldwide economic crisis had we honored these principles.) We already hosted a think-tank with Mary Hansel (Biomimicry) and Stuart Cowen (Autopoesis LLC) to begin this conversation and we see continuing that exploration.

Democratic workplaces—Since our last book about teams was published in 1995, we need to update our familiarity with organizational democracy and high-performance teams. This may involve going on a study tour to Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain in 2012 or 2013 with BGI faculty. WorldBlu and the NW Cooperative Development Center are two organizations we would like to investigate further.



Local living economies—To expand on the nascent theory of Community-Based Economic Development, Darcy wants to learn more about how to build more resilient and satisfying communities. This may involve a study tour to Findhorn and working on Civic Ecology projects with Tim Smith at SERA Architects. Darcy also plans to participate in the Portland Time Bank and stay in touch with the New Economics Institute.

If you have ideas of things we should see or do, please pass'm on!

Sustainability curriculum design services—In 2011, Darcy led an effort at Bainbridge Graduate Institute to create an integrated MBA modeled after the flipped classroom approach (where content delivery is largely outside of class and face-to-face and virtual interactions are largely experiential). *Capitalism in Context* was the result, a resounding success thanks to an amazing faculty team. In the past, we also created sustainability-related certificate programs for ISSP and Portland State University; and of course, we teach at BGI, Presidio and the University of Oregon. So it occurs to us that perhaps we could apply our instructional design background to help other organizations (community colleges, corporate training) create their own sustainability educational programs. Since the Portland Public School is an existing client, we hope we may be able to begin there. After all, teaching and instructional design are foundational skills we brought to AXIS! Our practice seems to keep looping back on itself.

ISSP—Since the International Society of Sustainability Professionals was formed in 2006, AXIS has been contracting our services to staff it, absorbing some of the overhead for the non-profit. Beginning in 2012, Marsha will become a part-time employee of ISSP as the Executive Director. Darcy is stepping down from the management team to pursue other interests but she will remain on the Board of Directors. Through AXIS, we will continue to teach classes for ISSP (Sustainability Planning, Consultants Cohort) and we will collaborate with the formal evaluation of the certificate program there.



Teaching—Much of our time will be devoted to teaching at such institutions as Presidio Graduate School, the University of Oregon and Bainbridge Graduate Institute.



Image courtesy of Bainbridge Graduate Institute.

Major Accomplishments in 2011

Teaching & Keynoting

BGI curriculum redesign—Bainbridge Graduate Institute undertook the extraordinary task of creating an integrated MBA curriculum (blending such topics as economics, social justice, business sustainability, systems thinking, etc. into a seamless design) using the flipped classroom method (moving most of the content delivery outside of class and using face-to-face and virtual meetings for interaction.) Darcy was asked to lead the team for the first quarter, Capitalism in Context. This was a ton of up-front design work because there were no existing models but it was a blast to teach in this manner. The students seemed particularly appreciative of their capacity to co-create, and teaching as a faculty team made it easy to adapt to requests.

“I appreciate all of you, today for challenging me to exceed my own expectations and be an active co-creator at BGI. You have all put together one hell of a curriculum and what I've been able to learn this quarter about myself and the world around me is a testament to your excellence and your dedication to crafting a better world for all of us to share. I feel privileged and honored to work beside such a wealth of experience and wisdom.”

—Benjamin Jefferson Dow, MBA student

Presidio Graduate School— Marsha has settled into a regular faculty gig at Presidio teaching the Implementation of Sustainability in Business every term for upwards of 90 students at a time. In addition to her teaching assignment, Marsha has also been participating on the Curriculum Committee to help assure Presidio’s courses are timely, relevant and well taught.

University of Oregon—In addition to our contribution to Oregon’s Leadership in Sustainability certificate program, Marsha will be teaching a graduate level course for the Applied Information Management Master’s Degree program. This elective course offering is on sustainability in business.

ISSP — Darcy and Marsha also serve on the faculty at the International Society of Sustainability Professionals. While typically those classes are delivered all on line, this year Marsha delivered her course in a one-day workshop format at ISSP’s conference in Portland, OR.

“I personally took the [Sustainability Planning and Reporting] International Society of Sustainability Professionals (ISSP) course and wanted to get it out to the [Linked In] group that it was being offered again. It is an excellent course. If you have expertise in multiple functions and are doing sustainability auditing and/or planning this is an excellent course to help you pull the entire picture together. “

—Steve Levitsky

Walker Industries—Through Ecospeakers, Darcy was invited to keynote at a business meeting of Walker Industries in Canada. This evolved into more of a training/facilitation where she helped them kick off their sustainability program, and in the process got to see the last major waterfalls on her bucket list (after Victoria Falls, Iguazu, and Angel Falls): Niagara!

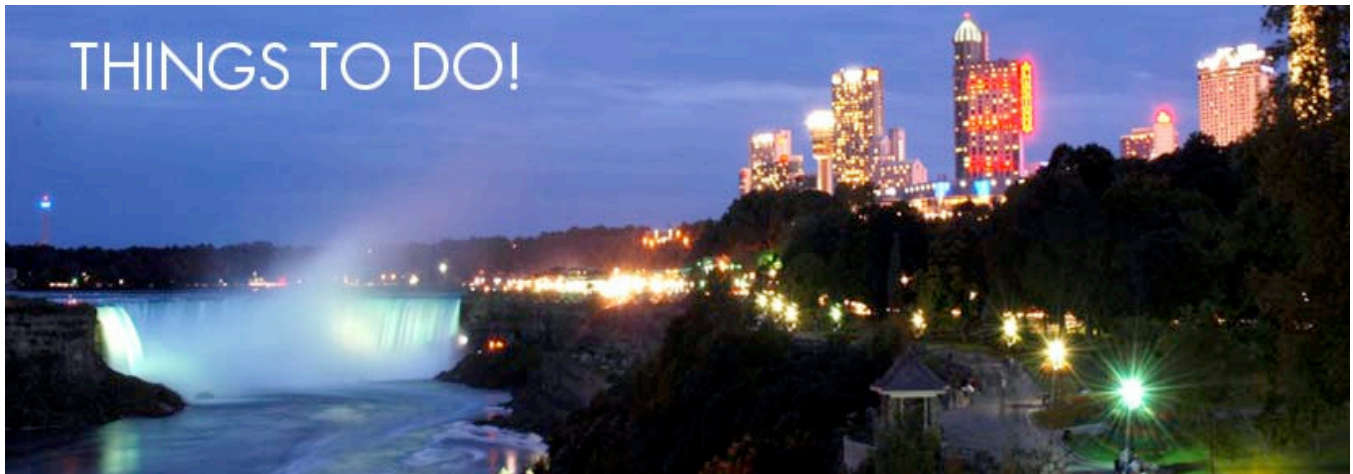


Image courtesy of <http://www.niagarafallstourism.com/thingstodo.html>

“Darcy facilitated a great session for 80 senior managers and leaders. Her sustainability message and knowledge assisted all of us in understanding what sustainability means for a resource based organization. Darcy was so much more than a “speaker”. She worked with us, in advance, to understand our businesses and our previous sustainability efforts. Darcy’s delivery style was engaging, interactive and she modified her presentation to fit the pace of conversation in the room. We are so pleased to have had Darcy work with us as we embark on our sustainability journey.”

— Lisa Benger Walker Industries Holdings Limited

Case Western Reserve’s sustainability certificate—Darcy was invited to conduct two sustainability workshops in her old home town, Cleveland, at Case Western Reserve: *Sustainability Planning* and also *Launching a New Sustainability Initiative*.



"Your class is the first course that has kept my attention, remained relevant, validated what I've already expressed to my firm, and offered real solutions for integrated sustainability in a business model."

—Natalie Valenti

Consulting

GSA Greening the Government Roundtable—Darcy finished her one-year commitment on a roundtable to help the General Services Administration improve their use of procurement as a way to drive sustainability. GSA called us together once to vet their plans.



Portland Public Schools—Darcy began working with the Portland Public Schools to support their efforts to integrate sustainability. Initially this included a speakers series and will likely involve conducting our S-CORE assessment and supporting the creation of a sustainability plan. We would also love to become involved in curriculum development as well.

ISSP Consultants Cohort—Darcy created and led a 12-month [Sustainability Consultants Cohort](#) for ISSP. This is intended for experienced consultants who want to take their practice to the next level or people wanting to start a consulting practice. Eighteen people from around the world are participating. Each month we have guest speakers on best consulting practices and sustainability specialities. Through this cohort, Darcy has shared a variety of our AXIS tools including the Business Case Facilitation Guide and Business Trends Database, Personal Sustainability Plan, and our S-CORE assessment.

Vancouver Metro— Vancouver Metro is a government agency in BC that is adopting sustainability. Marsha was chosen to be part of a year-long Leadership in Sustainability program offered each year to 20 chosen participants. The focus of our contribution is on sustainability related tools and their application to the work place. Some of the tools we cover include tools for educating, for measuring and for managing sustainability effort.

SAGE— Marsha has been helping a new non-profit hone their message and strategic plan. The Senior Alliance for Generational Equity seeks to marshal the energies and resources of the over 50 population to assure that following generations have access to the same opportunities and resource full planet that we have enjoyed.

City of Hillsboro— Marsha continues to support the City of Hillsboro implement sustainability within the city's operations. This year the focus has been on thinking through the contents and format of a sustainability report, creating and maintaining a sustainability management system and helping to keep working teams on task.

Products & Publications

Increasingly, AXIS is becoming a product as well as consulting company. This is an intentional strategy to spread capacity to do sustainability to others, to systematize what we have created so that others can use the same tools and processes.

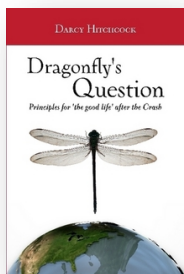
S-CORE™—S-CORE is now an online tool thanks to the heroic efforts of Maureen Hart of Sustainable Measures and her team. Maureen has the brilliant idea of doing S-CORE for groups and some of her utility clients have paid to have S-CORE done for their customers. We are also approaching certain trade and professional associations about building a custom portal for them so that they can not only deliver S-CORE (a new revenue stream) but also mine the data for information about member needs and best practices. Maureen will also be conducting the distance learning training in January. For more information about S-CORE, go to www.sustainability-core.com or http://www.axisperformance.com/SCORE_overview.html. Register for the January class here: <http://www.axisperformance.com/Products.html#SCOREtraining>. The course is also available as a self-study/correspondence course if you want to do it at a different time.



"I loved this course. You are a really wonderful instructor. You have such an amazing command of the subject matter, yet you are always open to new ideas and are so encouraging to all of your students. You created the perfect learning environment for us and I thank you very much.

I also liked the fact that we were scattered all over the globe and able to meet live on Mondays and to share our thoughts and conversations in the forums during the week (at any hour!) I would not have been able to travel to take this course and having it available as a web based course worked out so perfectly for me. It was really a lot of fun and you did an excellent job of keeping the conversation active and engaging by reading the chat box and responding to the group. I know you couldn't hear us, but I was laughing and talking out loud to the computer :). It was great to have the sessions recorded too, in case you missed one or want to go back to review something."

—Mary Emerson, Northeastern Utilities



Dragonfly's Question, the sustainability-focused novella, is now available on [Kindle](#). It includes a discussion guide for book groups and a detailed, chapter-by-chapter facilitation guide for people wanting to use the book as the basis of a discussion course.

Because Darcy published an article each month for ISSP and these are now most made available to the public, we have used the AXIS Advisory list as a way to direct you to those articles that Darcy or Marsha write. Articles released through ISSP this year were:

- January 2011 —ISSP [Annual Report 2009/10](#)
- February 2011 —[Confused about Social Sustainability?](#) by Darcy Hitchcock and Marsha Willard

- March 2011—[Managing Carbon: Taking an integrated approach](#) by Paul Horton
- April 2011—[Social Entrepreneurship](#) (interview with Tyler Spalding, ASHOKA)
- May 2011—See Directory of Life Cycle Assessment Tools under Special Reports. > *Members* [Free Download](#) > *Non-members* [Purchase on Lulu.com](#)
- June 2011—[Not Feeling So Smart about the Smart Grid?](#) (by a BGI MBA team)
- July 2011—[Voices from the World—Asia](#) (video journal)
- August 2011—[Voices from the World—Europe](#) (video journal)
- September 2011—[Voices from the World—India](#) (video journal)
- October 2011—[Economic Rx](#) (by David Korten)
- November 2011 - [Technology and Sustainable Development](#) (by Michelle Rogers-Estable)
- December 2011 - [High-Performance Building Benefits](#) (by Texas A&M Mays Business School Co-op)

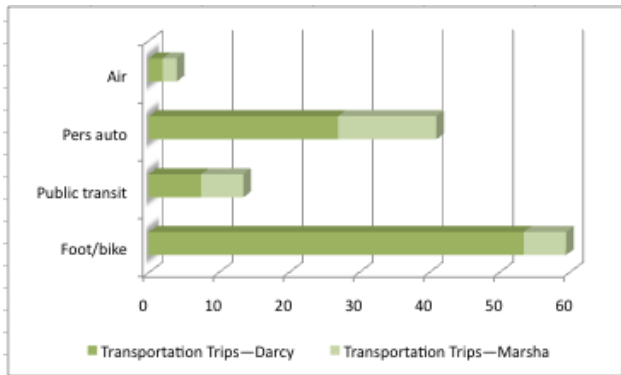
On occasion, we may also publish additional articles through AXIS. To sign up for the AXIS Advisory emails, send an email to AXIS-Advisory-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

AXIS newsflashes are book reviews and in 2011, Darcy and Marsha **published over 18 book reviews**. You can sign up to receive these by sending an email to AXIS-newsflash-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Even if you are not subscribed to this list, you can now search past reviews on [Yahoogroups](#).

Sustainability Performance Data

Greenhouse gases are our single biggest impact so we manage that closely. In a previous year, Darcy installed solar panels on her home office and they generate more than half the electricity for her household. We also each buy green power and are each signed up for the NW Natural green natural gas program. We try to limit transportation by using electronic conferencing tools and have a goal of making at least half our trips via alternative transportation.

NOTE: This year, the statistics may be somewhat misleading because Marsha's work with Presidio was done largely outside of AXIS to accommodate the university's accounting requirements. So 12 trips to San Francisco are omitted from these figures.



For any unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions, we purchase carbon offsets. This year, we purchased them through Clear Sky Climate Solutions. It only cost \$12 per metric ton for the Panama reforestation project we chose. If we can do it, can you? We have been 'climate neutral' since 2000. That said, this doesn't leave us blameless; we still use oil and the Gulf Oil Spill was a harsh reminder of our impacts. (See [Responsible Party](#) for our reflections on that.)

