

CSR and the green facility push

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Aim of paper and research questions

For years CSR consigned itself to a decision making process that guided companies regarding their promotion of human rights, legal manifestations and labour issues. Recently, more companies are including the environmental component in their relationships with stakeholders and other related communities. Now, not only do these enlightened organizations use CSR to look at the economic and social aspects of these communities but how sustainability is impacted the organization's activities (Steering Group, 2003).

Literature review

Similarly, for almost 40 years the conservation of natural resources, the proper disposal of waste and the reduction of carbon emissions have gradually become worldwide concerns (Ambec & Lanoie, 2008). As a result, social responsibility pertaining to environmental matters is paramount for today's facility managers. Sustainability is a comprehensive philosophy where a variety of environmentally-friendly materials and procedures are utilized by sport facilities to help reduce energy expenditures (Van Marrewijk, 2003). As a result of the focus on sustainability one trend in facility and event management now involves "green" facilities. Unfortunately the variations of what is considered "sustainability" have plagued those sport facilities that have begun concentrating on social issues. In order to combat this conundrum standards have been established by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) that measure and certify buildings that have met some or all of the council's criteria to be classified as a "green facility". This certification will promote the facility and will enable the environmental strategies adopted by these facilities to become publically recognized.

Aluminium beer cans, plastic beverage cups, popcorn containers, food wrappers, peanut shells, partially eaten food, and discarded game programs all add to the tons of waste produced at sporting events. In addition, sport facilities produce millions of gallons of waste water emanating from concessions, playing field irrigation and sewage disposal. The extensive kilowatt hours required for lighting, heating, ventilating and air conditioning facilities also impacts the environment and natural resources. Although an organization's or facility's failure to devise methods to conserve energy, water and other natural resources can clearly be viewed as irresponsible behaviour, it may also potentially be seen as semi-negligent conduct since such conservation methods, while initially expensive to implement, typically save an organization or franchise money over time. Understanding the effect that sustainability has on the proverbial "bottom line", architects, and facility planners are aware that "the focus on energy depletion, energy costs, the costs of operation and the impact on the environment that buildings bring is going to shape building design for quite awhile" (Henricks, 2007: 37).

Research design and proposed data analysis

Sustainability is a comprehensive philosophy where a variety of environmentally-friendly materials and procedures are utilized to help reduce energy expenditures. Utilizing a variety of energy sources, remediating current problems, conserving natural resources and reducing the

“carbon footprint” are all components related to sustainability. Since sport venues are involved with most of these components sustainability needs to become a goal for sport venue owners and managers. Unfortunately the variations of what is considered ‘sustainability’ have plagued those sport facilities that have begun concentrating on social issues. How to assess the effect these principles have on the environment, the relationship of consumption, corporate social equity and industry practices that encourage sustainable development are vital components to identify the current status of sport venue sustainability. Therefore an analysis of current practices as well as the need to apply the principles of sustainable development in the context of professional sport venues is fertile grounds for research. A survey tool has been developed to measure both qualitatively as well as quantitatively the current practices utilized by professional sport facilities.

Discussion of progress

Conventional wisdom concerning environmental politics has previously advocated that it imposes an additional cost on organizations, which may erode their global competitiveness. However, this paradigm has been challenged by some analysts (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995) who argue that improving a company’s environmental performance can lead to better economic or financial performance, and not necessarily to an increase in cost (see also Reinhardt, 2000). The goal of this presentation is to introduce the audience to an informative perspective regarding the social responsibilities of sport organizations and the venues they maintain. This point of view while considered to be a paradigm shift to some is actually a logical transition for practitioners in today’s corporate world of sport. Upon examination, this line of thinking can alter the strategic thinking as well as planning of those decision makers in these sport organizations and establish benchmarks for the future.

References

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