



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE MANAGEMENT GROUP

...SIMPLE, GREEN, COST EFFECTIVE

By Jan Wilson

Ask Michael Buono, Founder of Environmental Service Management Group, what is required to make companies invest in sustainability efforts, and he will give you three factors. "It has to be simple, because if it's not, you're never going to get employee follow-through," he says. "It has to be something that actually does some good for the environment, and, especially in these times, it has to make sound economic sense."

Environmental Service Management Group (ESMG), based in Wall Township, has become a successful business built upon these three core concepts. Specializing in waste materials management, green building management and corporate sustainability, the 17-year-old environmental consulting firm has made its mark in the industry by demonstrating the economic benefits of environmental stewardship. "Waste management is one of the only green initiatives that reduces 'first costs' in new construction," Buono says. "Reducing the costs of waste management through recycling and reuse can offset some of the other higher cost elements required to create a 'green' project."

A SUSTAINABILITY ADVOCATE

Buono has spent his entire career working on sustainability issues and is a leading practitioner of waste reduction consulting; ESGM was one of the first in the waste services industry to embrace sustainable practices. "Prior to being one of the co-founders of the United States Green Building Council's New Jersey chapter in 2002, we were the first waste management consultant in the national organization," Buono says proudly. ESGM's project list includes construction waste management programs for 75 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) registered projects, including the first LEED Gold Certified Building in the state, The Willow School. ESGM created a program for the school in which over 90 percent of waste was recycled, creating a significant net cost savings for the project.

The firm consults with its clients in five key areas:

- Waste management
- Building maintenance
- Green construction
- Energy management
- Corporate sustainability

About 60 percent of the firm's work comes from consulting with existing buildings and 40 percent comes from new construction projects. Buono points to the firm's depth of experience and proven 'real world' solutions as the key to cost effectiveness. "So many corporations, landlords, developers and institutions are seeking ways to incorporate green initiatives into their projects and buildings but don't know where to start, and often retain firms that must start at 'square one'. We are a lower cost provider because we begin with a very high experience level—we are not passing along the cost of a learning curve in the form of higher fees," he says. "Our services are very affordable and that makes it possible for companies to be green and realize immediate savings."

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SUCCESS AT INTERPARK

ESMG acted as LEED consultant on Commercial Realty Group's



(LEFT, RIGHT, FRONT LEFT) Academics & Sustainability: the sprawling Wil-
low School campus in Gladstone,
NJ boasts Gold and Platinum
LEED certifications; (FRONT RIGHT)
Best Defense: ESGM targets a
95% landfill diversion rate at the
Manhattan office of The Natural
Resources Defense Council.

InterPark office development in Parsippany. The project is located immediately adjacent to the intersection of I-80 and I-287 and its steel structure had been in place there for almost 20 years before Commercial Realty took over the project. "InterPark is a perfect example of LEED in the real world," says Buono. "This is a project that was not designed with sustainability in mind since it was begun 20 years ago. What Commercial Realty did was that they took the project and fit 'green' into it. Like every other project, the developer had parameters that they need to work within. The question always is: 'How can you build that building, stay within budget, and still make it green?'"

Buono notes that 40 percent of the LEED points available are related to the construction process, therefore ESGM is on site weekly, performing the tasks necessary to achieve LEED certification. These include:

- Procuring the appropriate materials that are manufactured locally, made with recycled content, and have low VOCs (volatile organic compounds).
- Anticipating waste generation so that potential reuse and recycling vendors scheduled on site, and,
- Training sub-contractors on current sustainability requirements and practices

ESGM also collects necessary project data required for green certifications including the composition and cost of materials used in the building process. Many LEED category credits needed for building certifications are based on actual cost of material purchased the many contractors working green project. This is not information that sub-contractors al-

"The ESGM program practically and effectively channeled our desire to incorporate the green concepts of sustainability, efficient use of resources and occupant comfort into our InterPark project."

Andrew Billing, General Manager, Commercial Realty Group

ways want to give directly to the general contractor. As a third party, ESGM can collect this data and verify its authenticity without compromising what many sub-contractor feel is proprietary information.

A PROJECT FOR A GREEN LEADER

At the National Resources Defense Council, ESGM was able to recycle virtually all of the materials taken out of their offices on an interior renovation project. "We have been able to recycle just over 95 percent of materials from a high rise office setting in the heart of Manhattan," says ESGM's logistics manager, Jon Snyder. "That's something that has never been done before." The project employed selective deconstruction of the interior as opposed to traditional interior demolition, and required of all waste to be source-separated on site.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

"We want to offer our brand of sustainability—simple, green, cost effective—to building owners in every major city within the next five years," Buono says, and adds that the company will partner with other environmentally minded companies as necessary. The firm has already worked on the first green building in Dallas, Texas, and is working on projects from Maine to Florida.

He adds that the legislative environment is very friendly to his brand of sustainability, as more municipalities and states require that waste be recycled. "Increasing sustainability efforts has recycling of waste at its core," he says. "Everyone understands and is connected to the fact that cutting down on waste and recycling waste is better for the environment. This is something that they do in their homes and their offices. It really is the common thread." ■