

# What Do Our Customers Expect?

- From us as a company...
- From our sustainability programs...

# They expect us to be engaged.

- Being actively engaged in sustainability is now expected as a cost of entry. It is becoming assumed like quality and competitive prices.
- They expect us to be able to show tangible actions.
- They expect our actions to be available in such a way that they can use and incorporate into their story.

They expect us to know about sustainability in our larger industry.

- They expect us to know the sustainability strengths and weaknesses of our product.
- They expect us to know how we compare to the alternatives both internal and external.
- They expect to hear the same story from other members of the same industry.
- Be honest and don't exaggerate.

They expect us to communicate what we do at the local or plant level.

- Every facility is different. What is sustainable about your facility?
- What are you doing not just at the environmental level but at the economic and social levels as well?
- Is your plant doing more or less than your corporation and the competition?

# They expect us to educate them.

- We are supposed to be the experts involving our product. Prove it.
- We need to have a reasonable knowledge of the Wal Mart scorecard – they do!
- We need to educate them on sustainability improvements with *every* project. Alternatives are mandatory now.
- We need to have a basic understanding of the LCA.

# They expect us to be their program.

- The quickest way to become sustainable is to deal with somebody who already is.
- Create things that can become third-party passthroughs.

# They expect us to save them money.

- Sustainability is equated to saving money by customers.
- Decreasing costs or lowering future increases saves money.
- Sustainability initiatives must be quantified for the customer.

They expect us to make them look good internally and externally.

- Internally, the buyers are human and want to look good to their bosses.
- Externally, the CEO wants a good story.
- Give them both a win and you win with them.

# The ties that bind.

- Our ability to survive as corporations is tied to our customer's success. Use sustainability to help them succeed.
- The customer's ability to survive is based on the ability to sell product. Retailers are now demanding sustainability efforts as a cost of being on their floor.

# Be the customer!

- They expect from us what we expect from our vendors:
  1. Be the expert.
  2. Be proactive.
  3. Provide value through sustainability.
  4. Be a consultant throughout the chain.