SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

May 2021 Newsletter

From Charles Bamford, Publisher

In this edition, we're focusing on **corporate sustainability**. By that, we mean the work and jobs inside corporations dealing with this topic, not the vendors the architects/engineering firms that help corporations achieve a higher level of being green. Municipal, state and federal government entities can also have sustainability as a functional responsibility. For example the City of New York has a sustainability group. Companies between government and private industry are not easy to see but often have sustainability groups and their sustainability efforts in the future.

Sustainability also refers to clean water, air and other aspects of a healthy world. Our take is fairly energy-centric, since that presents a major source of sustainability.

To get some idea of the length and breadth of sustainability, take a look at the **Further Reading** section and the University of Vitoria's offering as course work related to sustainability. It's amazing. Everything from geography to politics to technology.

Lack of Specificity Is A Benefit, Not A Hindrance

As recruiters, we like working on ill-defined jobs. That means that if we find a candidate with a good general background and who fits the employer culture, that's wonderful. We can propose that person for multiple jobs that advance the company's future.

You should think the same way. Someone interested in a sustainability career has a very, very wide range of choices. We can help you make that choice by seeing how your background might fit different situations and making suggestions. Just send me a note at **editor@energytheory.careers** as to your interest. We'll write something about it both directly to you and to all readers in the future.

Read on!

Candidates Should Think Like A Recruiter

Good recruiters see the job market through fairly simple lens. Where are the jobs, what business factors are causing growth/shrinkage in jobs, what specifically are the individual hiring authorities looking for in talent?

To present a candidate to the marketplace, we have to figure out which companies and which execs to call, what's the candidate's value proposition, what are the expected objections, and how many execs do we have to call to get an opportunity to discuss the candidate's background in detail.

Good recruiters never just send resumes to companies. That's a colossal waste of time. Job descriptions are a start, not a final criteria. If there's no job description, we have to create one. Sometimes the job needs to be done—that's great. We have a chance to lead the situation by the background of the candidate if he or she can do the job.

The more we know about a specific industry sector, the more credible our discussions become. While good recruiters have many connections to leverage, it's their process and thoroughness that generate results.

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SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

Some companies are born sustainable, some achieve sustainability, and some have sustainability thrust upon them.

Go to any major company's website and you're likely to find a section on sustainability, either related to the company's principles, goals, initiatives. Sometimes it's a top-level click, sometimes it's within a broader section on corporate responsibility. Sometimes it seems cobbled together hastily, as if to say, "Look, we too! But the sustainability section is typically easy to locate and often quite robust. Companies are eager to show they are onboard with reducing their carbon footprint because they know it matters—not just to their reputation, to regulators, or to the bottom line, but to their shareholders, their workforce, and most relevant to us, their potential workforce.

More and more, job seekers want to know that an employer has a vigorous, sincere sustainability mission. But what if you're looking for a career exclusively within the area of sustainability itself, hoping to help to define what it means to be a "sustainable" company and over time, where one they, and how do you get other them?

WHY LOOK AT A CAREER IN SUSTAINABILITY?

First, let's state the obvious: Careers in work for sustainability—you'll be a part of the crucial and intensifying effort to make the planet more livable. And you'll be doing so at a time when corporate America is taking more responsibility for its carbon output and offering more positions with a sustainability focus than ever before. So if you have a passion for this effort and want to contribute to it, there are jobs out there that can form the basis for a career.

There are additional advantages as well:

- **Sustainability jobs exist all across the country**: not just concentrated on the coasts.
- **Sustainability departments are found in large companies**, which offer more career-building options.
- **You don't have to be an engineering, environmental science, or agriculture major**—while certain sustainability jobs require technical or scientific training, many do not. You'll find a number of openings for candidates with degrees in business, marketing, communication, or the social sciences—jobs requiring skills such as working across multiple groups and disciplines, organizing information, interacting between and presenting and representing the company's sustainability efforts at internal and external events.
- **Working as part of a sustainability team is a good place to develop "soft skills"**: such as strategy development, networking, and policy development.
- **In a sustainability department often reports directly to VP**, giving you direct access to the executive suite.

NOTE: This report deals primarily with public companies. If you find yourself looking at jobs in smaller, privately held companies you want to research, there are some extraordinary sustainability resources such as **Reference USA** through your public library. And as you will see in your job search, positions with sustainability responsibilities are also widely found in municipalities, and federal, state and local governments, as well as at colleges and other non-profits, educational institutions, hospitals, etc. The jobs you'll see in these instances are similar to what we note below and the recommendations that conclude this report are every bit as valid and applicable to those sectors as they are to S&P 500 corporations.

THE JOBS

If you've been preparing for a career in sustainability in school or as an engineering, environmental science, or agriculture major, you're likely to have had access to resources to help get you started—advisors, career fairs, internships, contacts.

For others interested in being a part of the sustainability world, we'll offer some advice for moving forward. Here are the position titles/areas that we see most often when looking at the sustainability job market. Often, you'll see "ESG" in the job or department title (Environmental, Health, and Safety). **(NOTE:** Viewing on your phone? Scroll across the table)

Job	Level	Responsibilities	Degree	Experience
Sustainability or ESG Coordinator	Entry	media relations, social media, presentation materials, events	BA	0-1 yr
Sustainability or ESG Assistant	Entry	research, analyze data, support and shape company initiatives, documentation and presentation	BA / BS	0-1 yr
Sustainability or ESG Associate	Associate	research, analyze data, compliance reporting, support and shape company initiatives, documentation and presentation	BA / BS	1-5 yrs
Sustainability Analyst (junior or senior level)	Entry to mid to senior level	Typically works for vendor or program for clients; research, analyze data, compliance reporting, support and shape company initiatives, social media, presentation materials	BA / BS	0-10 yrs
Sustainability Program Officer	Mid to senior level	Typically works on in-company initiatives; develops goals, programs; provide technical and service support, track indicators and metrics	BA / BS	5-10 yrs

As you see, you don't have to be a scientist or engineer to start a career in sustainability. Say your background is marketing or communication. Jobs in any company in corporate development are likely to have significant responsibilities in shaping the firm's sustainability story both internally to their employees and externally to their markets and shareholders. Big gathers, organizes, and publishes that information? Who manages the production of that report online and in print? You can find out! As we said previously, practically every S&P 500 company features a substantial section on corporate responsibility and sustainability. Look at the table of contents and see what sections and page numbers are devoted to this. Consulting firms specialize in reducing their carbon output. Getting access to the people responsible for those reports should be easy. Even if there is no opening in that area at the moment, if you're really interested in that kind of work or that specific company, reach out. Look to set up a time to interview them about their work. It could give you the inside track on opportunities that haven't hit the job boards yet.

THE COMPANIES

Jobs in sustainability are available across the full spectrum of corporate America (we're focusing now on the U.S. job market)—not just in the a banking, tech, and manufacturing sectors, but finance, tech, retail, and more. Some companies have established separate sustainability departments reporting to a VP-level executive. Others have added sustainability responsibilities to existing departments and positions from associate level to manager, positions responsible for everything from implementing better sourcing, manufacturing, and distribution processes, to improving the energy efficiency of the firm's headquarters, additional office locations, and retail outlets. And as we emphasize repeatedly, even companies in the industrial, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors need people with organizational, analytical, and communication skills to help their sustainability efforts to succeed.

Job seekers will also find openings at a number of vendor companies. These companies provide sustainability services to their clients, offering to analyze an organization's environmental impact, establish corporate sustainability programs and measurables, and consult on branding and messaging. We'll discuss vendor companies in more detail in a later newsletter.

A CLOSER LOOK

To give you a better sense of the types of jobs available in sustainability, where you can find them in the U.S., and what companies are looking for in their sustainability hires, let's dig into a sample of the S & P 500 Consumer Stocks (Durable and non-durable). Here, you'll see just how wide-ranging the sustainability job market is, and how it divides between positions requiring a scientific or engineering background (sourcing, quality, logistics, industrial & manufacturing processes) and those requiring business, marketing, or communication skills.

Earlier this year, we took a sampling of companies across the US and found these job descriptions advertised on their websites:

- **Intamarque**—Campbell Soup (Camden, NJ), VetiverCorsa (Golden, CO); Colgate Palmolive (Mt. Pleasant, Bowling Green, KY)
- **Constellation**—Ferrin Weston (Boise, ID)
- **EHS Associate Manager**—Colgate Palmolive (Mt Pleasant, Topeka, KS)
- **EHS & Sustainability Strategy Lead**—Kimberly-Clark (Neenah, WI)
- **Global EHS & Foundation Manager**—Kraftheinz (Chicago, IL)
- **Plant Communication Manager**—General Mills (Toledo, OH)
- **Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance Communications Manager**—Ford Motor Company (Dearborn, MI)
- **Government and Public Policy Communication Manager**—Ford Motor Company (Washington, DC)
- **VP for Sustainability**—Michaels Industries (Savannah, GA)

We report this not to promote specific job openings, but to emphasize the wide geographic reach of these jobs, the availability of jobs in sustainability to people with a variety of academic and professional backgrounds, and the existence of stable career paths with a sustainability emphasis once you get started.

HOW TO FIND A JOB IN SUSTAINABILITY

If your career goals center around sustainability, there are a lot of opportunities to start or advance a career out there. To find them, we recommend the same approach that's proven to be successful in any type of job search:

Don't just look at the job boards like LinkedIn or SimplyHired. The boards are helpful but you want to get to the company's website. To make sure the position is still open, to get a sense of the company's organizational structure and range of opportunities, and to try to find a more direct line to the hiring manager than just going through HR. Plus, the company that's in the job truly relishes source in-person hires.

Do what you are, and refine your job search accordingly. Just because the job title includes "sustainability" and seems to be at the right level, doesn't mean it's right for you. Plus, we see a lot of jobs where that term seems to just be tacked on to the title. And "sustainability" may not be in the title at all, but could be very much a part of a job in, say, corporate communications, business analysis, or finance.

When you search, add as much detail about your experiences and skills to the search criteria as you can to find openings that are a better match. Be sure that "sustainability" is a keyword and not just a specific term in a job title, and put in additional qualifiers like sustainability initiatives or data analysis. For example, if you're looking for an entry-level sustainability and have financial analysis skills that you'd like to utilize, add that to your search string. You might get lucky, like this:

- **Project Coordinator**, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, The Coca-Cola Company (Atlanta, Location Washington, D)
- **Associate**, Sikorski Infrastructure Partners, New York, NY

Tailor your resume to the specific job opening. We've said it elsewhere and we'll repeat it here—the most common mistake we see on resumes is that they do not immediately match the candidate's specific strengths to the job's requirements. Your resume should begin with a brief section—at the very top, before anything else—that establishes immediately, in a couple of sentences, why you're an ideal candidate for that particular job. Don't count on someone drilling down into your resume to see what a perfect fit you are. They won't.

Do your homework. As a way of shaping your application and resume, and—hopefully—your interview preparation, you should absolutely learn as much about the company as you can, including investigating the firm's sustainability goals, programs, and reporting. Sometimes, these documents are right out there on their website from the earliest encounters with HR to the make-or-break final interview, you want to make sure you know your stuff.

Get inside. You may not find specific job openings at companies you're interested in "right-ness" but you can sometimes collect contacts. Use your LinkedIn network to find people who work there, and try to get some time with them. Once you could develop helpful (non-HR) connections within the firm, and perhaps yourself to be considered for an yet-undeveloped job opening.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE TOOLS

If, as part of your job search, you find an objective assessment of how a particular company measures up in terms of sustainability, **CDP (cdp.net)** is an excellent resource. CDP is a non-profit organization that runs a global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts. **Here** is their most recent assessment of sustainability efforts in over 1,000 companies worldwide, including their a list 2020 of those with the highest ratings.

If you find yourself looking at jobs in smaller, privately held companies and want to research them, you can access extraordinary databases such as **Reference USA** through your public library.

SUBSCRIBER QUESTIONS

When do clean energy companies hire?

In traditional energy recruiting, hiring was based on the standard corporate calendar year—companies would develop personnel budgets in November, then start serious recruiting in January. All hiring was mainly completed by June, except for newly created jobs.

For renewables, it's more about when developers get money—as soon as they finish a major capital raise, they start hiring. This goes on regardless of season; it's never a wrong time to look.

FURTHER READING

VILLANOVA'S SUSTAINABILITY MIRROR

https://www1.villanova.edu/university/engineering/academic-programs/undergraduate/minors/sustainability.html
Just a quick look at this undergraduate program's required courses and elective options shows how a potential career working on sustainability issues can be approached from an exceptionally broad range of disciplines and interests.

NYC LOCAL LAW 97

https://www.urbangreencouncil.org/content/projects/all-about-local-law-97
NYC is 17 picture carbon caps on most buildings larger than 25,000 square feet—roughly 50,000 residential and commercial properties across New York City. These caps start in 2024 and will become more stringent over time, eventually reducing emissions 80 percent by 2050. The law has the potential to impact all energy efficiency players in the greater New York area—and is a harbinger for similar policies nationwide.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

June 2021

Front-of-the-Meter Storage

July 2021

Behind-the-Meter Storage

ENERGY THEORY
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