Occupational health nurses have the skills and knowledge to provide a holistic perspective in advancing their company’s triple bottom line, healthy people, healthy planet, and healthy profits. The HS™ model provides a road map for integrating health, safety, sustainability, and stewardship, all of which directly impact every company’s triple bottom line. Occupational health nurses can use the HS™ model to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce risk and injuries, protect the natural environment, and improve resource alignment. Occupational health nurses have a unique opportunity to demonstrate the value they bring to their employers using synergistic HS™ planning that cost-effectively links work injury management, health promotion, environmental protection, safety training and surveillance, and regulatory compliance. Implementing the HS™ model requires occupational health nurses to be innovators who can change the conversation.

Sustainability is rapidly becoming a core strategy for business. Viewed holistically, sustainability focuses on the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profits. Occupational health nurses have the knowledge and skills to provide a holistic perspective, advancing their organization’s triple bottom line. Business now has a renewed interest in environmental sustainability, providing occupational health nurses with a unique opportunity to demonstrate the value they bring to employers.

The HS™ model provides a road map for integrating health, safety, sustainability, and stewardship, all of which directly impact every company’s triple bottom line. Occupational health nurses can use the HS™ model to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce risk and injuries, protect the natural environment, and improve resource alignment. The purpose of this article is to provide background on market forces compelling companies to focus on sustainability as a core business strategy and show how the HS™ model offers a holistic perspective that occupational health nurses can use to demonstrate the value they bring to their organizations.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability, defined as meeting present needs without compromising future needs (Guenther & Vittori, 2008), is rapidly becoming a core strategy for business. Human activity now exceeds the global ecosystem’s carrying capacity. Sustainability is a holistic approach to the triple bottom line of healthy people, healthy planet, and healthy profits. Businesses are investing in decreasing waste, driving down the cost across the whole value chain, offering green products, increasing margins and market share, and promoting health and safety.

Green is the catchall term for anything associated with protecting and preserving the natural environment. Green, lean, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility are sometimes used interchangeably by businesses to refer to corporate responsibility for driving out waste and decreasing environmental impact. The Green movement is not only about reducing waste and minimizing human impact on the environment, but also encompasses health, safety, and social responsibility. Green business has reached a tipping point. “It’s no longer simply a brand-building or risk-management tool—it has become a new source of business innovation, operational im-

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requires a structured approach to the development of an environmental management plan. For full certification, a company must implement 15 phases of the ISO standards: (1) an environmental policy; (2) significant environmental aspects; (3) legal and other regulatory requirements; (4) objectives and targets for environmental performance; (5) environmental management programs; (6) structure and responsibility; (7) training, awareness, and competence; (8) communication; (9) document control; (10) emergency preparedness and response; (11) monitoring and measurement; (12) nonconformance, corrective, and preventive actions; (13) records; (14) environmental audit; and (15) management review (Sitarz, 2008). Other, regional efforts, such as Wisconsin’s Green Tier designation, require a similar environmental management system (EMS): assessment, planning, and documentation. Occupational health nurses can play a pivotal role in coordinating these efforts because nurses already engage with many team members who need to be involved in developing environmental sustainability plans. Occupational health nurses also have a holistic appreciation for the interaction between the health and safety of workers and the environment in which they work. The HS\textsuperscript{3} model can help occupational health nurses lead the integration of existing health and safety initiatives, policies, and metrics with those required by EMS efforts.

THE HS\textsuperscript{3} MODEL

The HS\textsuperscript{3} model strategically leverages initiatives that focus on health and safety with those that focus on sustainability and stewardship (Figure). The HS\textsuperscript{3} model helps occupational health nurses and their organizations improve profitability and positively impact employee and customer perceptions and attachment to organizations. The model focuses marketing and communication strategies on health, safety, sustainability, and stewardship, leading to positive brand imaging and positioning, perceptions, and attachment to organizations. The HS\textsuperscript{3} model is focused on the triple bottom line: people, planet, and profits. Advantages of the model include:

- Developing a consistent philosophy and value system that breaks down departmental barriers and decreases duplication of efforts.
- Speeding innovation and culture change.
- Providing a common sense approach to increased efficiency and cost savings.
- Taking advantage of integrated and streamlined communication and marketing strategies.
- Aligning metrics, rewards, and recognition around integrated efforts. Companies that align their measurement, recognition, and rewards around employees who participate in integrated health, safety, and sustainability initiatives will be more successful in driving this integration.

The HS\textsuperscript{3} model encourages connecting employees and customers to the corporate reputation (brand) through coordinated, efficient, targeted communications and marketing activities. Successful organizations understand the principles of attachment. Loyalty comes through attachment, attracting and retaining both customers and employees by giving them compelling reasons to stay with the organization. Firms that can successfully manage not only customer and employee satisfaction strategies but also social-identity strategies will be more successful in developing and maintaining loyal customers and employees. Social-identity theory posits that identification with a group can lead to increased self-esteem and self-definition (Homburg, Wiescke, & Hoyer, 2009). Why add sustainability and stewardship or health and safety to the employee attachment conversation?

Occupational health nurses, especially those experienced in the care of injured workers, understand how employee attachment and loyalty are linked to increased profitability and employee productivity, recruitment, and retention. Work patterns have changed due to the emerging knowl-
edge economy. Value-driven employees create value-driven companies (Esty & Winston, 2006). When personal and company corporate social responsibility values align (i.e., support for a community cause such as juvenile diabetes or building a community playground), employees feel more engaged in the activities of the company. Potential employees broadly define the facets of a company that they feel are important to their work lives. These factors include not only healthy and safe workplaces, but also the company’s brand image, corporate reputation, community involvement, and support track record. The higher the employee-company identification, the higher the customer-company identification. Customer-company identification has a significant influence on customer loyalty and profits (Homburg et al., 2009). Employees who identify strongly with their organization are more inclined to align their attitudes and actions with the organization, as well as to express more positive emotions about the company’s products and services (Homburg et al.). It starts with what employees value. Efforts to recruit, reward, and retain talented, skilled workers depend on the fit among the workers, culture of the organization, and work experience ecology. Companies that can provide a work experience that challenges and delights workers while at the same time validating their personal value systems will enhance employee attachment to the organization. The work experience ecology (physical, behavioral, and informational components) affects employee attachment (Tyink & Weiss, 2008). To be an employer-of-choice requires appealing to a younger generation of workers interested in securing work in an environmentally friendly company. A Green workplace can be a convincing way to establish this reputation. The HS™ model helps occupational health nurses and their organizations establish clear expectations for internal and external communication, as well as effective marketing strategies to influence employee attachment.

### Step-by-Step Plan for Integrating the HS™ Model

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### How Do Occupational Health Nurses Use the HS™ Model Effectively?

Occupational health nurses possess the skills and knowledge that companies need to integrate health, safety, sustainability, and stewardship. “Occupational and environmental health nurses have a combined knowledge of health and business that they blend with health care expertise to balance the requirements of a safe and healthful work environment with a ‘healthy’ bottom line” (American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc., 2009).

Occupational health nurses can use the HS™ model to improve resource alignment in their organizations, thereby decreasing departmentalization (Sidebar). Departmentalization, product line budgets, segregation of duties, and geography hamper efficient planning and communication. “In real life, ideas great or good do not seamlessly work their way from silo to silo. Innovation is riskier than it needs to be because of lousy social mechanisms—the gulf between silos that separate ideas and the lack or underuse of linking mechanisms that keep people from connecting these ideas” (Lafley & Charan, 2008). Occupational health nurses understand the social mechanisms needed to bridge departmental barriers—real or perceived. Departmentalizing health, safety, and Green and Lean discounts the evidence that, in all work settings, learning and communication happen most effectively through frequent human contact and social interaction. Such interaction encourages the exchange of explicit knowledge and allows team members to read each other’s needs, decipher social cues, and react in a positive manner.

Innovations, such as resource realignment, shared governance and budgets, integrated marketing, communication, and training, are often hampered by social mechanisms within a company that do not bridge the guls between silos, departments, or individuals. Occupational health nurses can use the HS™ model to help companies operate within a culture that promotes innovation, prioritizes synergistic approaches through its policies, values, and actions to perform critical tasks efficiently and effectively, promotes worker health and safety, and protects and preserves the natural environment.

### Realigning Organizational Resources

Occupational health nurses have the expertise and boundary-spanning capacity to provide a holistic perspective on advancing their organizations’ triple bottom line. For example, occupational health nurses function in health and wellness, return-to-work, safety, environmental surveillance, and screening spheres. By leveraging the various roles of the
occupational health nurse (i.e., injury care, surveillance, health promotion, screening, and environmental management), companies can realign resources to more efficiently maintain a healthy, productive, sustainable work force. Occupational health nurses can substantiate the value they bring to the workplace by providing their employer with a business plan that demonstrates the interconnection of the various roles and services provided by occupational health nurses. For example, occupational health nurses can work with safety managers to ensure that health promotion is linked to safety training through tool box talks (i.e., on-site safety talks) and on-site screenings (e.g., respirator fit-testing or ergonomic analysis). During compliance audits, occupational health nurses can assess for environmental safety, emergency preparedness, health promotion efforts, ergonomic considerations, and health-promoting features (e.g., proper lighting, clean air, and noise containment). Work injury management programs provide opportunities to assess health status, coach healthy lifestyles, and encourage health care consumerism. Policy development provides opportunities to promote smoke-free worksites, healthy food choices, benefit plan design, and environmental preservation. Occupational health nurses who provide on-site educational programs can use a holistic curriculum that includes physical, mental, and emotional health as well as safety and environmental sustainability.

Combining a company’s safety, health and wellness, and sustainability committees into one HS™ committee will force integrated planning and communication to occur. Safety tool box talks at the job site can become the conduit for health and wellness messages. On-site stretching programs, reusable lunch boxes, on-site recycling programs, non-smoking worksites, appropriate use of personal protective equipment, and more efficient and safe delivery of products to the worksite could originate from the HS™ committee’s work plan. The HS™ committee becomes the innovation team for evaluating legal and other requirements, assessing the company’s environment and its health and safety needs, and setting goal, objectives, and targets needed to improve the workplace. Linking office and field ergonomics, safety, health promotion efforts, environmental responsibility, and resource stewardship (Lean) efforts requires a substantial scope of knowledge and skills that occupational health nurses possess.

Occupational health nurses who embrace an ecologic approach understand that the key is shared strategic plans, performance metrics, clear communication to stakeholders, and leadership to develop shared goals. Changes in the facility, policies, and procedures require leadership support. Occupational health nurses can use the renewed interest in the interaction between environmental sustainability and human health and safety to innovate, create value, and build their image in organizations.

Realigning the Focus on the Worker

Work needs to be considered an interdependent system composed of the experience ecology, including the physical environment, work processes, and organizational culture (e.g., formal and informal values, norms, expectations, and policies), work force demographics, and information technology (Becker, 2007; Tyink & Weiss, 2008). The work experience ecology consists of the physical work environment, the behavioral components of work, and the informational components of work Occupational health nurses, and the organizations in which they work, need to consider the interdependencies and patterns of interaction between these elements rather than focusing on the individual elements alone (e.g., how health and wellness programs can support worker safety programs and back-to-work programs, or how recycling and reuse can be beneficial to employee health and wellness). It is critical to identify core systemic factors that lead to failures and then develop new solutions that address these issues within the context of culture change, innovation, and evolving models of work. Core systemic factors might include lack of management support, confusing communication, or lack of strategic planning. Work is evolving to become more cognitive-, team-, and results-oriented and monitored with more metrics. Environmental sustainability, employee attachment, and worker effectiveness and productivity cannot be improved through piecemeal approaches (e.g., safety programs that do not take into consideration the environmental impact or health and wellness components).

The workplace has been identified as an important area for concentrated efforts at improving self-efficacy related to healthy lifestyle behaviors. Self-efficacy is a means of defining and measuring an individual’s capabilities to become involved in successful adoption of new behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Building a healthy, sustainable culture involves the informational, behavioral, and social aspects of work, as well as the work environment and policy interventions. Policy interventions might include smoke-free workplaces, zero waste on construction sites, or changes in vending machine and vendor-supplied meals. Lowering health risks and maintaining a no-risk status (e.g., keeping those employees who score in the low or no-risk categories on health risk appraisals in those categories) over time are associated with lower health insurance costs (Haynes & Dunnagan, 2000). Decreasing the economic burden of chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension can be addressed by changes in activity, exercise, and nutritional behaviors (Fishman, Von-Koroff, Lozano, & Hecht, 1997). Occupational health nurses understand that the employer and coworkers can be two of the most important influences in producing sustained changes in healthy, safe lifestyles. Occupational health nurses also understand that increasing worker self-efficacy can eliminate obvious dangers (i.e., ergonomic, safety, and exposures), as well as promote healthy, sustainable lifestyles.

Employees want change and will seek out information, connections,
and opportunities. Smart companies are addressing these needs with the development of company-specific “schools,” “universities,” and personal coaching. From developing informational videos and podcasts, to writing articles for company newsletters, to hosting seminars, employees are working to educate peers about sustainability (Fresh Marketing, 2008). These efforts need to intensify. Occupational health nurses can provide leadership in integrating health, safety, sustainability, and stewardship training in their company’s schools, universities, and personal coaching programs.

Occupational health nurses can improve companies’ bottom lines by improving workers’ self-efficacy related to health, safety, and environmental sustainability. Research has shown that self-efficacy can be used as a gauge for predicting increases in physical activity and sustained behavioral change (Boudreaux et al., 2003). Occupational health nurses can use screening and surveillance activities as opportunities to educate workers about environmental concerns, exposure-related health concerns, and overall risk reduction and health promotion.

Occupational health nurses must reach beyond employees’ homes and families with healthy lifestyle initiatives, screenings, safety training, emergency preparedness, health risk appraisals, and health care consumerism programs. Educated workers and their families can influence the cost of health care borne by organizations by becoming wise health care consumers. Health care consumerism is growing due to plan selections available to organizations, higher deductibles, health savings accounts, and shifted premium costs to employees due to the increased costs of health insurance. The lifestyle of health and sustainability market is filled with baby boomers eager to become more skilled in self-care and sustainability. This market segment supports vitality and healthy lifestyles and is in tune with the reduce-reuse-recycle philosophy (Esty & Winston, 2006). The role of community-based initiatives to promote physical activity has emerged as a critical piece of the overall strategy to increase physical activity behaviors in the United States (Kahn et al., 2002). Occupational health nurses can use this information to develop more effective educational and outreach programs that integrate health, safety, and sustainability messages.

Realigning the Focus on the Workplace

Workers are exposed to occupational hazards daily. Air quality (i.e., airborne infections, particulate matter, or noxious fumes), water quality, physical work (i.e., lifting and turning patients in bed, pouring concrete, or using lifting equipment), interruptions to natural circadian rhythms, sleep deprivation, vehicular accidents, exposure to toxins and chemicals, and exposure to weather elements all impact worker health and safety. Mental stresses, such as tight deadlines, noise levels, inadequate lighting, and poorly designed work spaces, impact worker productivity. Health care research has demonstrated that supportive physical work environments, along with high autonomy, low work pressure, and supervisor support, positively impact job satisfaction and lessen burnout among nurses (Constable & Russell, 1986; Mroczek, Mikitarian, Vieira, & Rotarius, 2005). This may be true of other workplaces, too. Work environment redesign should be linked to organizational changes (Guenther & Vittori, 2008). A well-designed environment alone is unlikely to achieve its intent without a supportive work culture and the correct technology (Joseph, 2006). It is important to identify core systemic and facility design factors that lead to failures, errors, and waste and then develop new solutions that address these problems within an altered culture through evolving work models.

The physical design of work spaces in the office or field, behavioral expectations, and access to information technology, along with a work culture that prioritizes integrated HS³™ through strategic planning, policies, and values, can reinforce healthy lifestyles, reduce the risk of illness and injury, and provide the support needed to enhance productivity while at the same time protecting the natural environment and community resources (Sidebar).

Realigning Communication and Marketing

Occupational health nurses need to look beyond the traditional communication strategies and marketing methods used to educate workers about health, safety, and environmental protection. Effective workplace communication involves selecting the right message, at the right time, in the right way, for the right audience for maximum impact. VALS, an audience segmentation tool, research has provided in-depth profiling for various market segments. This information can be used to tailor messages and select communication strategies or methods that can effectively deliver HS³™ messages to workers and their families (Della, DeJoy, & Lance, 2008). Communication must engage not only the worker, but also the worker’s spouse and family. Increasing HS³™ self-efficacy requires exploration and use of new communication methods tailored to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce (e.g., blogs, podcasts, and online and telephone coaching).
IN SUMMARY

Changing the Conversation
The Occupational Health Nurse’s Role in Integrated HS3™
Weiss, M. D.
AAOHN Journal 2009; 57(7), 293-299.

1 Sustainability is rapidly becoming a core strategy for business, focusing on the triple bottom line: people, planet, and profits. Occupational health nurses have a unique opportunity to demonstrate the value they bring to employers by focusing their attention on the triple bottom line.

2 The HS3™ model provides a road map for integrating health, safety, sustainability, and stewardship, all of which directly impact companies’ bottom lines. Occupational health nurses can strategically leverage initiatives focusing on health and safety with those focusing on sustainability and stewardship.

3 Occupational health nurses can use the HS3™ model to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce risk and injuries, protect the natural environment, and improve resource alignment.

4 Occupational health nurses are boundary spanners who now have an opportunity to demonstrate the added value they provide to companies by cost-effectively linking work injury management, health promotion, environmental efforts, safety training and surveillance, and regulatory compliance.

Realigning Metrics
Data drive decisions. What is measured is managed and can be improved. Organizations that leverage data and knowledge are better able to generate marketplace advantage. Incentives drive behavior. The HS3™ model provides opportunities for cross-fertilization and ownership of initiatives. Many companies are faced with new regulatory challenges such as universal waste laws, managing pharmaceutical waste, and eco-friendly customer care. Organizations are looking for ways to measure their environmental footprint, focusing on product life cycle assessment and looking both upstream and downstream at the value chain and vendor and supplier relationships.

Occupational health nurses have the ability to link traditional health and safety metrics (i.e., Occupational Safety and Health Administration logs, work injury reports, exposure reports, health risk appraisal data, Employee Assistance Program aggregate data, and health care use reports) with sustainability metrics. The new metrics take into account redesign and re-engineering, which connect well with stewardship philosophies and activities such as Lean and continuous quality improvement.

SUMMARY
Occupational health nurses are boundary spanners and now have an opportunity to demonstrate the added value they provide to their companies. In an environment of increasing regulatory constraints, diminishing profit margins, streamlined work forces, and resource realignment, occupational health nurses have a responsibility to decrease the fragmented approach that leads to injuries, errors, and waste. Each area of the HS3™ model has an interrelated impact on the delivery of products and services. Occupational health nurses can use the HS3™ model to improve the work environment, improve worker health and safety, protect and preserve the natural environment, increase worker productivity, and increase worker job satisfaction, leading to increased employee and customer attachment. Occupational health nurses can use the renewed interest in interaction between environmental sustainability and human health and safety to innovate, create value, and build their image in organizations.

REFERENCES


