

CASE STUDY:

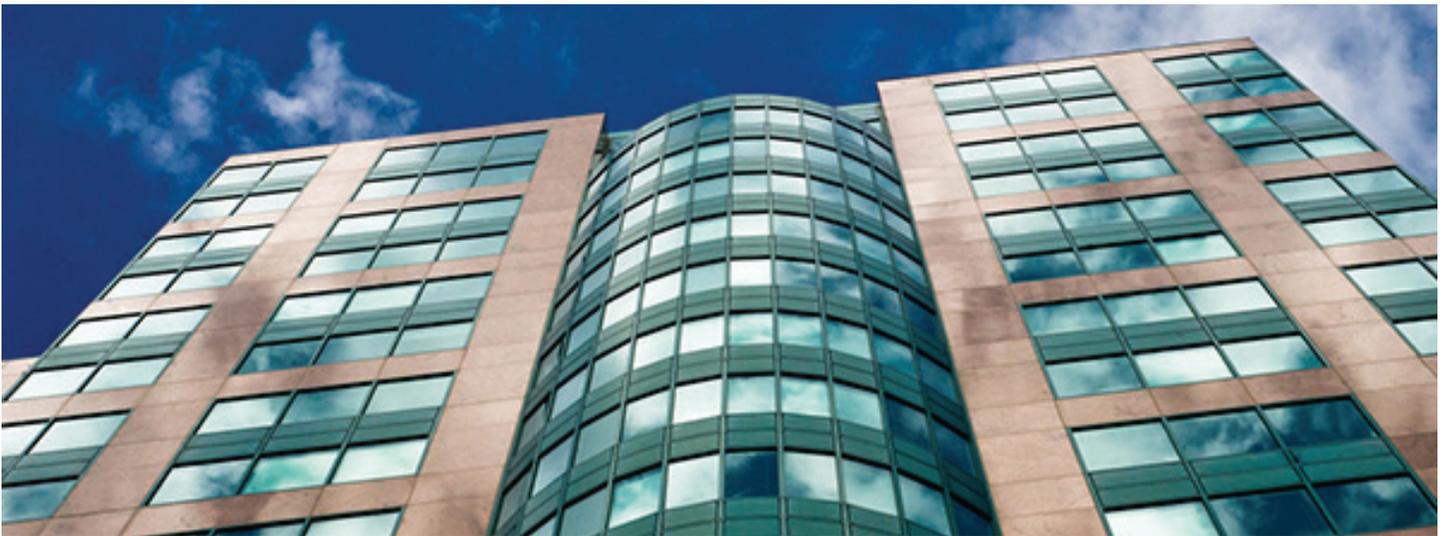
Achieving Results Through Investors Group's Green Committee



**MANITOBA
RACE TO
REDUCE**
THE SMART ENERGY BUILDING CHALLENGE

History

Established in 1926, Investors Group – whose headquarters are located at 447 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg – is home to over 1,200 employees in its 330,000 square foot commercial office space.



Investors Group is a subsidiary of IGM Financial. As such, they hold a strong commitment to advancing environmental sustainability within their business model, as outlined by IGM's Corporate Responsibility Strategy.

Investors Group's approach to environmental responsibility includes two overarching goals:

- Reducing the organization's environmental footprint
- Engaging their people to raise awareness and reduce their collective impact on the environment

The Green Committee was formed as a collaboration between the Corporate Responsibility department, and the Employees in Action committee (a committee that oversees all of Investors Group's employee-run committees).

The Green Committee provides an opportunity for employees who care deeply about the environment to engage with other like-minded individuals and promote sustainability to the broader workplace.

Possibly even more substantial is the ongoing education and motivation to those who are not yet familiar or engaged in reducing their footprint. The environmental impact of engaging employees has the potential to transcend into their everyday lives, where skills and knowledge are transferred to their household habits, their families, friends, and the broader community.

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Successes

In its first two years, the committee has enabled Investors Group to tackle a number of projects and accomplish some considerable goals. Some examples include:

- Creating a more cohesive Commuter Challenge campaign, which ultimately doubled their employee participation (Investors Group consistently achieved first place in their category before the Green Committee's involvement, and has continued to do so since).
- Replacing all of the office and cubicle garbage bins with recycling bins that come with small trash receptacles. This resulted in less garbage and more recycling for the building.
- Participation in the Jack Frost Challenge.
- "Front door campaign" – an informational campaign encouraging employees to use the non-automatic door when entering the building (reduces energy).
- Earth Day cleanup with Downtown Winnipeg Biz.
- Adding compost and updated recycling bins – with clear signage – to their bistro.

The committee also built upon the commitment of Investors Group powering its head office with green natural gas by educating employees about Bullfrog Power and how they can also become a customer.

By being involved in events such as Earth Day, Commuter Challenge, and the upcoming *Manitoba Race to Reduce*, the Green Committee helps to motivate not only their own employees, but other businesses and individuals in the community. The power of numbers can be a catalyst to make sustainable actions go mainstream. It is also important to highlight that employee participation and resource allocation towards the green team are supported by executives. This enables participants to work on several projects throughout the year and is a key factor to the successful implementation of these initiatives.

Each year, IGM Financial reports on Investors Group's environmental accomplishments through the CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project), which is part of the IGM Financial companies' shared commitment to reducing their carbon footprint. The CDP has recognized Investors Group for their environmental leadership, culminating in an A- rating for its environmental performance in 2015.

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The ABC's of Investors Group's Green Committee

There are currently two members chairing the ten-member Green Committee. These members are broken into four sub-committees covering the areas of:

- Active Transportation;
- Waste Reduction;
- Energy Conservation; and,
- Paper Reduction.

The Energy Conservation sub-committee will be tasked largely with ensuring the organization achieves its goals as a participant in *Manitoba Race to Reduce*.



Their main role will be to introduce the challenge to the company, and encourage employees to reduce their individual energy use.

Below are some key features of Investors Group's Green Committee that help with the successful implementation of their initiatives.

Meetings

Green Committee meetings generally occur once per month, while sub-committees meet more frequently, depending on upcoming events.

Meetings are scheduled for one hour and typically start with co-chair announcements, followed by updates, discussion and brainstorming from the heads of each sub-committee, and conclude with general updates from all members. A secretary is assigned to take notes.

Sub-committee heads discuss upcoming projects or initiatives. Typically, members of the sub-committee undertake the associated tasks willingly. In some cases, sub-committee heads assign tasks to sub-committee members.

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Tools

Generally uptake of initiatives is positive. However, some initiatives will draw more interest from employees than others, depending on a number of factors such as levels of participation, incentives and communication strategies. Communication should be consistent and effective. The Green Committee has a communications professional who is tasked with communicating initiatives throughout the building. Messages are delivered via internal newsletter, published twice a week, posters and internal TV slides, which appear in elevators and in the bistro.

Depending on the event or objective, tools used to measure success will vary. Ideally, success is apparent by the small changes within daily work habits. Successes associated with increases in employees that compost or recycle are measured through audits by the University of Winnipeg. Other efforts, such as the commuter challenge, or *Manitoba Race to Reduce* are measured using existing organizations tasked with implementing the overall programs to the broader community.

Keys to Success

Success starts with committee members. Whether it's a Race Team tasked with implementing *Manitoba Race to Reduce* within a building, or a Green Team tasked with implementing broader notions of sustainability, each committee requires employees who are committed to the cause, and who are willing to put in the time to help.

When recruiting members, diversifying with employees from different backgrounds and with a variety of skill-sets are advantages. It's also important to highlight that employees who are active in sustainable initiatives outside of work can bring great ideas to the table.

Commitment from the company itself is important. Encouraging leadership members to participate in initiatives, and profile their achievements in certain communications (like a V.P. who cycles to work) conveys an encouraging message to the rest of the company.

Finally, if employees are engaged and having fun, chances of success increase substantially, and make any event worthwhile to do again the next year.

Check out the following websites for information on Green Teams:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?a=110278&c=49793>

http://www.greenteamproject.org/participate_on_a_green_team.htm

http://www.energystar.gov/ia/business/challenge/bygtw/Creating_a_Green_Team.pdf

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.gmicglobal.org/resource/resmgr/docs/gmic_green_team_02.pdf

Outreach materials:

If you're looking for outreach materials to get your building tenants and staff interested in starting a Race Team, check out our *Manitoba Race to Reduce* Race Kits resources for a series of communications templates and informational materials to get you started.

Don't have a Green Team in your organization?

Find out where to begin with [Five Rules to Establishing a Successful Green Team](#) (PDF)