

## A Conceptual Model to Understand the Impetus to Engage in and the Expected Organizational Outcomes of Green Initiatives

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Environmental sustainability is one social cause that has taken root and maintained itself from being an annual reminder or fad, such that it is now engrained into many businesses' cultures (King, 2008). Environmental sustainability, commonly referred to as "green initiatives", are concerned with the "aspirations and values that continue to inspire public and private organizations to become better stewards of the environment and that promote positive economic growth and social objectives"(Environmental Protection Agency, 2008). Organizations have increased their budgets to develop and implement green initiatives that reduce or offset their impact on the environment (Frost & Sullivan, 2008). These initiatives are not limited to a particular segment of organizations; rather, sport organizations have also begun to implement green initiatives into their business plans (King, 2008). However, these initiatives in both sport and non-sport organizations are not completely widespread. There is a lack of understanding and reasoning why organizations adapt green initiatives and why nonresponsive organizations abstain from adapting such changes. As it has been seen, professional sport organizations have begun to redefine their daily operations to become more environmentally friendly. These motives, however, tend to be more economically- rather than socially-driven (King, 2008). For instance, though there has been some initial implementation by several professional sport organizations such as the Philadelphia Eagles and the Seattle Mariners (King, 2008), such endeavors are mainly motivated through economic means. These processes of implementing such programs have faced growing pains and threats to discontinue, but have remained because of the leadership of top managers within the organization. Additionally the outcomes of such adaptations are not fully understood from a political, functional, and social perspective.

The purpose for this conceptual piece is to draw from institutional theory (Oliver, 1992) to understand the antecedents and outcomes of green initiatives within a sport organization context. Specifically, we use institutional theory as a guide to understand the influences and identify the motivations of management to breakaway from institutionalized ways of conducting business (i.e., without a concern for the environment) to implement and adapt green initiatives. Research presented by Oliver outlines antecedents of the deinstitutionalism, or "the process by which the legitimacy of an established or institutionalized organizational practices erodes or discontinues"(p 564), of organizational culture, traditions, and long-lived practices. This can be directly applied to sport organizations as a mechanism to explain and predict the antecedents to implementing green initiatives. As explained by Oliver, there are three major areas that act as antecedents to deinstitutionalism: political, functional, and social.

Political pressures can come at the macro-level from outside influences that can erode the common beliefs, traditions, and practices of an organization. These challenges can include the established practices of the business and seek change to align itself with the specific desires of the political pressures. Clemens and Douglas (2005) examined the coercion of political forces to adopt green initiatives. Traditionally held practices are challenged for new ways of conducting business or handling new problems that have been presented (Oliver, 1992). These problems and pressures can include sustainability within the businesses practices. Functional pressures refer to the shuffling and reorganization that might occur to protect programs or departments that are deemed essential or important to an organization's survival. These pressures are sustained because of their perceived value. The perceived value comes from programs that create positive separation from competing organizations and can add to their legitimacy and prestige (Oliver, 1992). Initiating green initiatives requires efficiency not only within a department but also across the entire organization. Al Gore's argument speaks to the competitive advantage gained adapting green initiatives: "making environmental improvements is often the best way to increase a company's efficiency and, therefore, profitability"(as cited in Walley and Whitehead (1994). Profitability is this motive that drives separation and competitive advantage for implementing green initiatives.

Societal or social pressures can also come from a macro-level either from laws or stakeholder pressures to modify older systems to comply with modern institutions, programs, or structures. These changes can be influenced heavily from the change of managers within the organization (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Frost & Sullivan, 2008). This change can create a new culture with the new leadership of the organization. The new leaders can reset the tone and the mission of the department or organization (Oliver, 1992). A 2008 survey by Frost and Sullivan showed that CEOs in business organizations heavily influenced the attitudes and direction towards investing in green initiatives. Upper echelon influence is critical to introduce the change needed to implement green initiatives as seen through academic (Hambrick & Mason) and practitioner research (King, 2008).

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The influence of the pressures for deinstitutionalization might be moderated by the top managers' perspective toward environmental issues. According to upper echelon theory, managers form and convey their vision and direction on to the organization, and therefore, the organization is a reflection the values of upper management (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Top managers of various organizations, such as the Philadelphia Eagles and the Seattle Mariners, have actively sought to engage in greener business operations (King, 2008). This suggests that top managers' influence is coupled with the external pressures to influence the implementation of green initiatives. Indeed, we argue that, even with considerable pressures for deinstitutionalization, a sport organization is unlikely to go green' unless the top management team pushes it to do so.

Given these pressures for implementing green initiatives, we also propose several potential outcomes. Initiation of green programs can result in reducing the carbon footprint of the organization, reducing solid waste, becoming more energy efficient, using renewable energy sources, and ultimately changing the misperceptions and negative attitudes towards environmental or sustainable programs of stakeholders, employees, and customers. Sport organizations can also benefit from increased goodwill among their fans. Fans can increase their identification with the team because of the organizational characteristics (Sutton, McDonald, Milne & Chimperman, 1997). Creating a known appreciation and care for the environment, fans could strengthen their association with the teams. Teams could also expand their fan base into new markets of environmentally friendly consumers. In short, our model present a conceptual framework for understanding why sport organizations might adopt green initiatives, as well as the expected outcomes of such endeavors. Given the importance of engaging in environmentally-friendly practices, our hope is that such an understanding will encourage more organizations to follow suit.