

# PDX Lounge Survey Results

December 09, 2008



## EXHIBIT AND MEETING SPACE QUESTIONS

**In what ways can PDX Lounge most effectively tell the story of your business and the story of the Sustainable Industries cluster?**

- Position PDX Lounge as the place for leadership and innovation in the region
- To tell the story of your business:
  - Display our products - either stand-alone, integrated into exhibits or in build-out of space
  - Let companies provide a short story board, with a company description and a mountable literature rack to hold brochures
- Stories to tell of sustainable industries:
  - Diversity of industries
  - Collaborative nature
  - Vision for the future
  - Accomplishments
- Case studies of individual businesses and their path to sustainability
- Share our vision of PDX and the world
- Serve as a neutral venue for exchange and education
- Extol the virtues of going local
- Highlight the value of rural to urban connections
- Be interactive
- Incorporate individual companies' products into displays
- Allow Lounge visitors to easily find and connect with Lounge partners

**In the spirit of minimizing brand clutter, what are some creative ways we can effectively promote your company or product?**

- Web site presence:
  - Partner names and links to Partner websites
  - A way to request materials/collateral
- PDX Lounge attendee contact info available to partners
- In-person networking opportunities for partners to share services
- Computer screens with repeating slide shows of information about each partner
- Self-guiding map of the lounge/comprehensive resource list to let visitors interpret what they see
- Small, discrete labels on partner materials in lounge with same typeface and design
- A place for collateral/postcard rack
- Develop PDX Lounge brand, let partners use a "partner logo" in their marketing versus using individual business logos in PDX Lounge space

**Other exhibit and meeting space related thoughts or comments:**

- Spaces/products to integrate into PDX Lounge:
  - Common office space

- Client entertaining area
- Function and meeting space
- Oregon Wind turbine (donated) outside of front door
- Provide partner products to pick up and hold
- A large 3-D model of close-in areas of Portland for every visitor to see history and sustainability of city
- Purpose
  - Should be educational and inspirational as well as a place for commerce
  - A place for people to meet to share ideas
  - A place to find resources available to businesses, companies or neighborhoods
  - Mentorship should be the theme: a place to exchange information with collaboration, cooperation, brainstorming new sustainable business plans, economic synergy models
- Functions
  - Free or low-cost meeting space for partners
  - Visitors should be able to take away follow-up contact info for all partners
  - Be able to purchase products in space
  - A regular story-time for children and parents by Native American elders, long-term thinking, local storytellers
- To inform the space design: integrate existing data, the city's economic development goals and milestones, existing and new event opportunities, targeted sponsors who are not participating, ROI for sponsorship, etc
- Keep layout flexible and open in main PDX Lounge space
- Use, as a model, Green Building Exchange "Sustainability Center" in the Bay Area.
- All aspects of the space should be designed to incorporate sustainability practices - from furniture, to food, to building products

## PROGRAMMING QUESTIONS

**PDX Lounge Programming will emphasize business and consumer networking. What types of networking events existing or new would you like to see happen in PDX Lounge?**

- Existing Organizations/Events to include:
  - Natural Step
  - Build Local Alliance
  - Green Drinks
  - motiveSpace Coalition
- Integration of new industries (other than construction): bikes, agriculture, products
- Create a gathering spot for manufacturers and producers in rural areas while they are in Portland
- Continue to encourage cooperation between businesses, even between competitors
- Conferences to host:
  - GoGreen
  - Living Future
- Types of events:
  - Casual cocktail hour get-togethers
  - Sustainability learning events
  - Community service group events
  - Design Charrettes
  - Content-specific workshops or speakers' series
  - Networking events where partners introduce themselves and make discussion groups of partners with related products to share info, discuss challenges, share leads, etc
  - Frequent networking mixers
  - Open reception and periodic symposiums on Green Building practices
  - Professional organization meetings
  - A series of events focused on and hosted by different industries
  - Specialized (by cluster/sector) networking events

**PDX Lounge programming will include educational components. There are a number of existing organizations and events that provide education. What could be added to improve the current array of business growth and sustainability education tools that PDX Lounge could accommodate for your organization?**

- Partner with the Natural Step to offer no-cost/lower-cost workshops to partners or ALL businesses in the area
- Host marketing sessions to help businesses position in a very green-washed marketplace
- Provide rotating case studies featuring a business/owner with lessons learned in greening their business
- House a registry of community-wide educational events
- Host a luncheon series
- Provide technical assistance: grant writing, working with local government & NGOs, accessing capital, writing business plans including sustainability, etc

- Inform state universities & high schools about goods and services offered by partners
- Make it a place where Portlanders can learn about healthy, sustainable economies. Invite Portlanders to come and learn.
- Expand to “21<sup>st</sup> century economy” not just the “collective story about sustainable industries in Portland and Oregon”. Keep it general, inspiring and educational
- Host wood product seminars that contrast branding, “green washing”, and export vs. domestic and local.
- Do not make educational efforts too bounded or specific: focus on how cities can be livable and the public realm can be delightful for ALL citizens, not just the wealthy that create their comfortable enclaves.
- Take advantage of the location of PDX Lounge: not as elitist as most other education venues. Invite the disenchanting, the controversial, the non-eco-religion convert, the skeptical, the disenchanting, the discouraged; get a REAL conversation going, stir up the stew, engage the other 90%.
- Showcase the history of energy use in buildings, history of current practice in building systems
- Focus on helping businesses do business: market development for out of state and foreign markets

**PDX Lounge wants to provide an opportunity for Partners to have exclusive use of the Lounge. What types of exclusive uses make sense for your organization?**

- Use of a large meeting space/conference room
- Host events for clients/prospects
- Host seminars and product open-houses
- Present a seminar about product to target audience
- Hold large charrettes
- Host events associated with local conferences
- Host corporate retreats

**Which of the following support services would you like PDX Lounge to facilitate?**

1. Events & Workshops (*16 votes*)
2. Marketing (*14 votes*)
3. Advocacy & Lobbying (*11 votes*)
4. Research (*9 votes*)
5. Tradeshow Management (*5 votes*)
6. General Services: Legal, Accounting, etc (*3 votes*)
7. Other (*3 votes*)
  - In general, public education as to the goods, services, or products that are being offered by the sustainable partners in Portland/Oregon
  - Specific Green Building Industry demographic data about Portland
  - Research or events that help us understand consumer and consumer product companies' attitudes and values around sustainable and local.

Please share other programming related thoughts or comments here.

- It is important to find a way to keep companies with more resources from dominating the message of the group
- Offering unique marketing and technical support services to partners will attract more businesses to our organization and cause.
- Portlanders have no vision of where they want the city to be in 10-20-30-40 years. That is the most important conversation to encourage. Building the vision, refining it, getting specific about it, and then communicating it to as many interested citizens to create an action plan to get there: that is the most important task for Portland and for Oregon.
- Need a better vision of what PDX Lounge offers design firms. There is a lot of value for product manufacturers but no clear vision for A & E

## PARTNER INDUSTRIES & BENEFITS QUESTIONS

Do you agree that the following sectors represent sustainable industries in Portland and Oregon? If not, what sectors are missing?

Green Development

Smart Growth & Land Use Management

Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency

Ecosystem Services: Air Quality, Water Quality, Waste Management, Carbon Management

Farm to Table: Sustainable Food Systems

Alternative Transportation

Sustainable Business Practices: Supply Chain, Processes, Operations

The majority of respondents agreed with this classification. The following comments were added:

- The following sectors are missing:
  - Forestry: done properly for land retention, habitat improvement, climate change mitigation, community development, and regional economic growth
  - Include industries that end poverty: create SROs, transitional housing, green job creation, jobs for physically and mentally challenged; taking responsibility to help those in need who want help.
  - Retail: sustainable products (beyond building materials) including household goods, clothing, etc. This represents many small businesses and boutiques in Portland.
  - How about a sector on reducing consumption and moving from a growth economy to an "equilibrium" economy
  - Manufacturing, Services, Retail, etc...
- Green/Sustainable Product and Service Design On Green Development:
  - Sustainable and eco-friendly building materials: are they their own sector or part of Green Development?
  - Is Green Development the same as Green Building? Perhaps Green Construction?
  - "Smart Growth and Land Use Management" and "Green Development" should go together
- "Sustainable Business Practices" is a set of tools, not a sector

**Provide examples of PDX Lounge activities that would provide the best ROI for your company.**

- Increase access to target audience and client base
  - Audiences include architects, small businesses, community, etc...
  - Host events that bring in target audience, connect through events
  - Get contact information of potential clients
  - Increase awareness of partners' brands and generate qualified business leads
- Partner Brands
  - Promotion of partners at trade events and online
  - Have staff trained on the story of partners' products
  - Help increase sales of partners' products and brand recognition on a statewide, national and international level
  - Increase visibility in our community
  - Press coverage of individual business projects
- PDX Lounge Brand
  - Gain benefit by association based on PDX lounge brand
  - Create a showcase illustrating Portland's leadership in Sustainability for representatives from visiting brands.
- Provide networking opportunities
  - Network with major brands in the Portland area
  - Intentional networking
  - Network with partners
  - Network with potential customers
- Share marketing opportunities
  - Align my products with a group of other progressive products to communicate my company's message to a wider audience and gain more market traction.
  - Cost-share for off-site events that are of mutual benefit to multiple lounge partners
- Employee engagement:
  - Get employees engaged and motivated by the exchange at PDX Lounge
  - ROI is not just money, it's building a better society and community, a better future. Break boundaries in business thinking to bring the concept of "meaningful work" back into business. The best ROI for businesses are happy employees who feel what they are doing is important work. Sometimes that means activities outside the workplace that inspire, provide emotional sense of well being. Activities at PDX Lounge can provide that

## ORGANIZATION QUESTIONS

**Rank the following partner benefits in order of value to your organization:**

1. A vehicle to push the region to innovate - educate and inspire
2. A platform to collaborate and advocate
3. Cost-effective branding and marketing
4. A center for learning - programming and events

Other comments:

- As we build awareness of our goods and services, together we can cross-pollinate and build our businesses, which will create customer awareness.
- While marketing potential is great, we see our partnership primarily as a commitment and investment in the sustainable community in Portland

**PDX Lounge aims to support the health and growth of sustainable industries in Portland and Oregon. What metrics regarding sustainable industries and PDX Lounge activities would track the success of the Lounge?**

- # of new PDX Lounge Partners
- # of new people who come into the lounge
- Repeat engagements/attendance by companies or individuals
- # of new partnerships created through PDX Lounge
- # of actions implemented from collaboration at Lounge
- attendance/participation data for events and daily space use
- # of press mentions
- # of visits by architects per month
- # of online click-throughs from PDX Lounge to partner sites, other web metrics
- Track member demographics
- Increase in sales of goods/services of sustainable businesses
- Increase of Oregon population who sees sustainable values as important
- % of companies in Oregon that define themselves as sustainable
- # of sustainable businesses incubated/launched
- % reduction of overall carbon emissions in metro area and state
- Economic growth locally and statewide
- Metric for economic resilience of Portland and Oregon as a result of being leaders in the industry
- Increase in number/percent of "green collar jobs" in the state
- Increase in % of local manufacturing, with decrease of industrial waste and pollution
- Data on community investment: who's contributing?
- Energy efficiencies from workshop attendees

**PDX Lounge represents a wide variety of businesses, whose input will help direct event planning, services, budget, etc. What would you recommend as a governance structure?**

- Executive Director to carry out overarching mission and strategic plan

- Current model is working: continue to funnel all decisions through one office, letting partners 'vote' on decisions that affect the group
- Democratic model: decisions through partner voting
- Board of Directors
  - Elected by partners - one vote per partner
  - Include representation of each business sector
  - Engage more people with focused committees organized by the board
- Centralized leadership with diverse advisory council
- PDX Lounge performance review comes from partners
- Core leadership to oversee operations, and committee/project meetings open to general attendance
- An ever-changing advisory committee with little power; final decisions should be directed by the paying partners. Keep it simple majority rule.
- Working "collectives" with a leader who then meets with other collective leaders to report/advise the Executive Director/Staff. Opportunities for non-working members to vote on certain issues.
- Identify areas in which a small decision making group will be required, and areas in which participation by many would be helpful.

**With limited staff to date, PDX Lounge updates you primarily via email. What type of communication platform would you expect when the Lounge is up and running?**

1. Regular communication by email *(10 votes)*
2. Develop a quarterly *(7 votes)*
3. Develop a social networking page or group *(6 votes)*
4. Tie:
  - Send email only when necessary *(4 votes)*
  - Post information to a blog *(4 votes)*
  - Develop a wiki where Partners can find and contribute updates *(4 votes)*
5. Create an RSS Feed *(2 votes)*
6. Post a regular YouTube address from staff *(1 vote)*

Comments:

- LinkedIn groups are very popular and offer a way to receive a summary email with info that happened in the group
- A wiki would cover a lot of the functionality of a blog or social networking site for internal use. A public website(s) would be good for marketing
- Keep it short and sweet/possibly publish an annual calendar of events

**PDX Lounge can perform more than one function, but we want to hear what your highest priorities will be for first year of operation. Please rank the following functions by first year priority.**

1. A gallery and showcase space for sustainable products and services
2. A place for you to network, learn and host clients and events
3. A trusted source for learning about sustainable industry activities
4. The place where sustainability tours of Portland begin and end
5. A resource center for you to learn about products and services

Comments:

- If the PDX Lounge space is visually striking and interactive, visitors will want to return and become involved
- A place to learn, teach, share, network and invigorate the local and statewide sustainability movement. This is about changing people!

**PDX Lounge needs to be self-sufficient in a year. Revenue could come from fee-based services, annual partnership dues, grants, event space rentals, and/or other fundraising strategies. Please share your thoughts on revenue models.**

- Event space rentals
- Learning events, particularly web-based, can be a very lucrative revenue source
- Ad space on the web site
- A portion of local and state business licensing fees go to POSI
- Partnership dues
  - Partner dues should be sliding scale, and scholarships should be offered to businesses with limited cash flow, negative profitability, etc.
- Apply for grants (perhaps program specific collaborations)
- Minor retail: books, studies, hard to find references, photocopies from the reference library, food, tea lounge, CSA drop-off, elaborate bake sales, fun auctions of free professional services, vacation home use, lunches/dinners with partner members, conference registrations, regional tours of green buildings
- Once self-sufficient, figure out how to export the PDX Lounge model to other cities/countries
- Have a marketplace that sells products from participants, with a portion of all sales supporting the Lounge.
- Have a "guest" cooking space/restaurant where local, sustainably-minded restaurants are "chef for the evening". Restaurants get exposure, Lounge gets proceeds
- Offer micro-loan opportunities for people to support getting new ideas off the ground, with the Lounge keeping a portion of the profits generated from the project
- If it is providing a public service then one year self sufficiency seems an onerous goal

**Please share other thoughts or comments about organizational development here**

- To be sustainable, the organization model must feel democratic and inclusive. Make sure smaller partners do not feel disenfranchised by the bigger, more powerful players and agendas that may not serve the entire base well.
- Open the discussion to all participants as to what their organizational views are and those interested in serving as organizational leaders can participate
- Don't worry too much about structure: just start and be open minded to opportunities that come along