

## Going Green?

Don't Hire a Sustainability Chief Until You  
Read this Study!

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By Roger Thorne, Managing Partner, Hudson Gain Corporation

At the event: **How a Sustainability Leader Can Help Your Organization Thrive in Tough Times** in collaboration with the **Institute for Sustainable Enterprise at Fairleigh Dickinson University**, January 8, 2009

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# Wanted

- Senior Level Executive who:
  - Has the ability to understand complex technologies but keep it simple
  - Can move the entire organization to where it might not know it needs to go or be willing to go
  - Will identify the organization's carbon footprint and reduce that to zero while saving money
  - Has passion for sustainability but not too evangelical while making sure that everyone hears the message
  - Can make the organization profitable while doing no harm to people or planet



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# Hudson Gain Corporation & Sustainability

- Boutique leadership solutions firm since 2003 with clients across industries, sectors and sizes
- “Build or Buy” Solutions for Leadership Talent
  - Leadership Development & Change
  - Executive Search & On-Boarding
- Why study Chief Sustainability Officers (CSOs)?
  - Demand is growing yet collected wisdom is scarce
  - Time is running out – senior leadership is needed
  - Identify benchmarks, role models, talent pool
  - Provide guidance to companies as they consider their build or buy options for a CSO



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# Scope and Methodology of CSO Study

- This study focuses on the “voice” of the executives who are leading sustainability efforts in their companies today to provide a roadmap to those who need to do the same
  - 1241 large private companies
  - Less than 1/2 had execs with partial responsibility
  - 191 had sustainability/environment in job title
  - 214 executive backgrounds reviewed
  - 61 structured interviews in summer 2008
  - Some mid-sized, universities, others included



# The Hudson Gain CSO Study

- ***Going Green? Don't Hire a Sustainability Chief Until You Read This Study!***

[http://echem.goiwx.com/downloads/HudsonGain\\_ChiefSustainabilityOfficerStudy08.pdf](http://echem.goiwx.com/downloads/HudsonGain_ChiefSustainabilityOfficerStudy08.pdf)

- “Universal” Chief Sustainability Officer requirements
- Key CSO responsibilities and challenges
- Filling the role internally or externally
- Examples of Top People/Companies
- Sustainability 1.0 vs. 2.0
- Quotes



# “Universal” CSO Skills/Knowledge/Experience

- Communication
- Technology
- Financial/ROI
- Measurement
- Innovation
- Ethics
- Supply Chain
- Operations/Structure
- Culture

***Leadership***

*Clear Vision*

*Passion*

*Organizational  
Respect*

*Persistence*

*Tenacity*

*Emotional  
Intelligence*



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# The Challenge

- Herculean combination of high-level technical and leadership capabilities required
- Every company needs to ramp up fast due to competition and climate change, if not regulation

## And The Talent Pool???

- Few with past corporate experience
- Internal AND external candidates have gaps
  - Need **leader/builders**—not “managers”



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# What does YOUR company need in a CSO?

- Industry/competitive expertise?
- Company/political knowledge?
- Influence/change management skills?
- Culture/Style fit?
- Manage resources or do it yourself?
- Technical skill/knowledge?
- Level?

**And what is the organizational structure for decision-making and implementation?**



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# Tips for Hiring or Appointing a CSO

- Get senior management aligned
  - Focus role, responsibilities, requirements
  - Set objectives based on strategic priorities
- Use a rigorous selection process
  - Internal and/or external candidates
  - Do it right and/or get outside help
- On-board ***even*** internal appointments
  - Align for collective success, know WIIFMs
  - Use Stakeholders to make CSO an “insider” fast
- Expect continuous learning



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# Take Aways

- Sustainability is now a given ... resistance is futile
- Good CSOs are rare, multi-talented leaders
- The external market will get tighter for CSOs
- If you don't have a CSO, what needs to happen?
  - Start planning
  - Identify your internal CSO pipeline and potential candidates early
  - Look for the right opportunity to push for CSO



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# Jan 8<sup>th</sup> CSO Panel at FDU

**Maureen Adams**, Regional Vice President of National Casino Marketing and Sales, Harrah's Entertainment

**Michael Deane**, Vice President, Chief Sustainability Officer, Turner Construction

**Paul King**, Vice President, Sustainability Executive, Bovis Lend Lease

**William Lashbrook**, Senior Vice President, PNC Real Estate Finance, PNC

**Dawn Rittenhouse**, Director of Sustainability Development, DuPont (Nominated by peers in the CSO Study as one of the Top Sustainability Professionals, and profiled in the CSO Study)

**Andrew Van Der Laan**, Director, Publishing Operations Projects Group, Random House

*Panel Moderator: Jeana Wirtenberg*, Ph.D., Director, External Relations & Services, ISE, FDU; Lead Editor, *The Sustainable Enterprise Fieldbook* (Greenleaf Publishing & AMACOM, 2008)



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# Table Discussions

- Tables:

- ❑ 1 & 2: **CSO Challenges in this economy:** Michael, Bill
- ❑ 3 & 4: **How CSO helps org thrive in tough times:** Maureen, Pat
- ❑ 5 & 6: **Is it a good time to hire/appoint a CSO?** Paul, Jonathan
- ❑ 7 & 8: **CSO role in green-washing?** Dawn, Joel
- ❑ 9&10: **CSO role, requirements, org structure:** Roger, Scott
- ❑ 11&12: **Promote within or recruit outside:** Andrew, Victoria
- ❑ 13: **Post-Grad Program for Sustainability:** Dan & Jeana
- ❑ 14+: **Open discussion or pick a topic**

- Pick a table and share:

- ❑ Name/Org/Role. Interest? Question? (15 seconds each)
- ❑ Discuss hottest topics



Since 2003, Hudson Gain Corporation has been helping companies “build or buy” their leadership talent. As a leadership solutions firm, we serve the talent acquisition, leadership development and change management needs of client companies of varying size and industry, as illustrated by selected clients shown here.

Hudson Gain works with organizations to hire Chief Sustainability Officers or to select and develop them from within, and to help them manage change as they move toward Sustainability.

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