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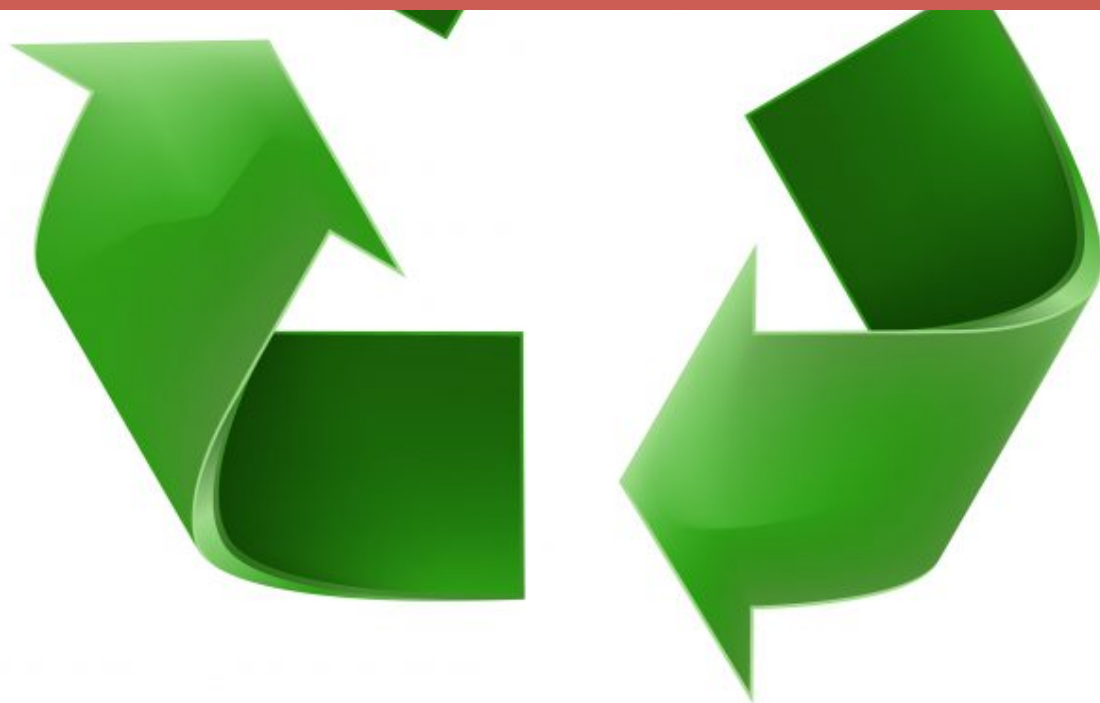
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and a strong interest in implementing sustainable business practices, but noted that in their current roles, they lacked the influence needed to effect change.

Nov. 03, 2015

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Millennials will lead the way for small and medium businesses in future conversations and efforts around conservation, energy efficiency and environmental stewardship, according to a new survey from Cox Enterprises

The Cox Conserves Sustainability Survey is a national study that examines sustainability opportunities and challenges for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs).

The top finding from the 2015 survey is that Millennials have a huge appetite for sustainability and will drive adoption of these practices. Millennials showed greater knowledge about sustainability than other age cohorts and a strong interest in

implementing sustainable business practices, but noted that in their current roles,

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Millennials Driving Sustainability

Millennials are more knowledgeable about sustainability. Millennials have the most knowledge of sustainability than other generations, with 80 percent of those surveyed indicating that they have at least a fair amount of knowledge. Millennials are more committed to increasing sustainability. Nearly 60 percent of Millennials are committed to increasing sustainable activities in their businesses, which is significantly higher than the 49 percent of Boomers, who are more likely to be the top decision makers.

Millennials believe they lack enough influence to effect change now. Only 27 percent of Millennials in management roles believe that they have a great deal of influence on their organization's sustainability practices, and more than half (53 percent) of Millennials say that their leadership is impeding their company's sustainability initiatives. The top decision makers in SMBs, such as owners and partners, are more likely to be Boomers.

As for year-over-year findings, the 2015 survey showed that there has been little change in the number of SMBs that have implemented sustainable business practices. Only 62 percent have implemented some type of company or employee-based program to reduce energy, encourage recycling, etc. That number is nearly identical to the findings in the 2014 survey.

"There are measureable benefits of sustainability, and one of the best things we can do as owners and leaders of businesses is to listen to younger generations and give them an opportunity to make a positive difference to our bottom lines and to the world around us," said Taylor. "Our survey showed that some SMBs often find it difficult to make or justify the investment in sustainability programs or prioritize them over other demands and initiatives. From our own experience with the Cox

Conserves program, I can confirm that sustainability is as good for our business as it

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percent).

- **Investments:** SMBs believe that buying or leasing refurbished goods is the most critical activity today (47 percent), and they identified buying alternative energy as the top item to look at over the next five years (47 percent).
- **Employees:** Encouraging employees to power down equipment is critical today (55 percent), while offering employees incentives to purchase eco-friendly vehicles (31 percent) is noted as the top activity to look at in the next five years.

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