



Case Study 6: Radisson Hotel and Conference Centre ~ "Stay the Sustainable Way!"

The Organization

What is today the Canmore Radisson Hotel and Conference Centre was originally built in 1994 as the Greenwood Inn. In 1998, CHIP Real Estate Investment Trust (CHIP REIT), one of Canada's top hotel & resort management companies, purchased the Greenwood and today, through CHIP Hospitality (a CHIP REIT subsidiary) operates the hotel under the Radisson brand. As the Radisson, the hotel has expanded considerably, with the number of guest rooms growing from 90 to 236, and it has become Canmore's premier venue for large conferences and community events.

CHIP's market focus is mid-market and upscale, full-service, or extended stay hotels and resorts. It currently has 36 hotels and resorts under its management umbrella. Some of the other brands found within but not exclusive to the CHIP operation are Crowne Plaza, Delta, Best Western, and Holiday Inn.

According to the company's promotional materials, Radisson Hotels and Resorts offer "a full variety of distinct services and amenities to meet customers' needs as

they travel on business or leisure." Each Radisson has a number of trademarked guest programs, services, and facilities that range from loyalty programs to wireless internet access. The Radisson's current slogan is "Stay Your Own Way."

The Natural Step to a Sustainable Canmore

CHIP's long-standing commitment to the environment has been demonstrated through various initiatives adopted by the company and each of its Canadian hotels. According to the company, "Environmental decisions are part of the corporate culture and are fundamental to the daily operation of each hotel, from the frontline to the boardroom." As a CHIP property, the Canmore Radisson was involved in CHIP's environmental program – the Green Key ECOMmodation Rating Program – prior to becoming involved in The Natural Step to a Sustainable Canmore.

In 2002, CHIP Hospitality became the first hotel management company in Canada to have all its properties certified under the Green Leaf Eco-rating Program, an industry-wide program of the Hotel



Association of Canada. In 2004, CHIP endorsed the launch of the Association's revised Eco-rating program and again had all its properties certified.

The current Hotel Association program is the Green Key ECOMmodation Rating Program. As Green Key participants, hotels, motels and resorts undergo a comprehensive environmental audit and, based on the results, are awarded a 1 to 5 Green Key rating along with guidance on how to "unlock" opportunities to reduce operating costs and environmental impacts through reduced utility consumption, employee training, and supply chain management. The program is administered on behalf of the Hotel Association by CH2M Hill, a firm committed to protecting and enhancing the natural and constructed environment.

The Canmore Radisson Hotel and Conference Centre has a rating of 3 Green Keys, which means it is: "a hotel that has taken significant steps to protect the environment. Strong environmental programs, best management practices, training programs, and engineering solutions have been implemented that have benefited the environment and the local community."

With the Canmore Radisson's existing environmental focus, manager Bill Rheume was receptive to an invitation to become a participant in The Natural Step

to a Sustainable Canmore in the fall of 2004. His request to the CHIP REIT management was promptly granted, in part because the president, Edward Pitoniak, had been working in Whistler, B.C. when The Natural Step was introduced there. Pitoniak specifically recommended that Dave Hubman, the hotel's chief engineer, participate in the training.

The Canmore Radisson subsequently became an important partner in the program, providing both accommodation and presentation venues for guest speakers throughout the six month Natural Step to a Sustainable Canmore training period. It was also one of the hosting partners of "Sustaining Canmore," a community sustainability forum inspired by The Natural Step to a Sustainable Canmore. Held in October, 2005, the forum attracted nearly 1,000 participants from Canmore and 13 other Alberta communities.

Baseline Evaluation, Sustainable Practices

The baseline analysis helped Dave identify and evaluate the progress the hotel had made through the ECOMmodation Rating Program. It also helped him determine areas where further progress could be made, including waste management, customer service and education, human resource policies, procurement policies,



community relations, and further operational consumption audits.

Using the ECOMmodation program guidelines, the Radisson had already completed a self-audit of its environmental practices and produced an environmental mission statement and action plan. Focusing on energy efficiencies, the hotel had retrofitted its entire lighting system and installed sensors in guest rooms that lower the temperature when the rooms aren't occupied.

That project was initiated prior to the Natural Step to a Sustainable Canmore, and the impetus for action, Dave recalls, was "not only for the sake of saving the world, but for that sake of saving some dollars!"

Baseline Evaluation, Non-Sustainable Practices

A high level mapping of the hotel's current operations (Appendix A) revealed a number of violations of The Natural Step's four sustainability system conditions, ranging from a reliance on fossil fuels to contributing to the Third World pollution associated with lax environmental standards. Dave noted the biggest challenge to mitigating the violations lies in controlling what comes in and what goes out of the hotel – both in terms of the guests and goods and services. While

it is relatively easy to exercise operational control of the Canmore Radisson, and to influence the behaviour and practices of the local hotel staff, it is difficult to influence and control factors that lie beyond the confines of the hotel itself.

Guests come with their own sets of values and practices and, as hosts, the hotel must exercise diplomacy and discretion when addressing the guests' personal choices regarding sustainability. Similarly, many of the services and products the hotel uses originate outside the hotel – many are contracted by CHIP's central office – meaning many of the decisions regarding which products and services will be used in the Canmore operation are not made by the Canmore Radisson itself.

Sustainability Vision

Besides mapping out the hotel's current reality, Dave also mapped out what the hotel would look like if it met all of The Natural Step's sustainability system conditions (Appendix B). The ultimate goal, he concluded, was for the hotel to have an environmental footprint no larger than the space it sits on. The hotel's sustainability vision statement, produced during the Natural Step Training, states: Our vision is to provide outstanding customer service while moving towards sustainability. To do this we will evaluate every strategy, policy, partnership and



procedure using the guiding principals of the Natural Step framework and its four sustainability system conditions.

The evaluation includes, but is not limited to, the following questions.

Condition 1: Contributions to systematic increase of substances taken from earth's crust

- Will the decision cause more use of fossil fuels, directly or indirectly?
- How will people and things transported to and from the hotel, and are they required to travel over long distances?
- Will packaging be made from mined non-renewable resources? Is it necessary? How is it disposed of?
- Is work or refurbishment done using recycled or mined resources?

Condition 2: Contributions to systematic increases in concentrations of substances created by society

- What synthetic, persistent substances are used in cleaning materials?
- Is packaging made from plastic, using synthetic additives like plasticizers and stabilizers?

- Does the landscaping require large amounts of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers?
- Which persistent synthetic substances are used in the refrigeration and air conditioning?

Condition 3: Contributions to degradation of nature

- Is effluent linked to a sewage system that treats the sewage properly before discharging?
- Will there be any disruptions to any wetlands as a result of the initiative (including its use of water)?
- Will wood from old growth rainforest be used?
- Will any cultivating encroach on nature reserves or other wild land?

Condition 4: Contributions to conditions that undermine people ability to meet their needs

- Goods and products are often imported, and should be screened against these questions:
- What are the living conditions of the producing farmers and workers?
- Are fair labour practices observed where these items are produced?
- Can the item be produced locally?



- Does increasing the market for this item cause the producer to put pressure on important local habitats?

Action Plan

In the wake of the Natural Step to a Sustainable Canmore, the Radisson's environmental action plan – initially developed for the ECommodation program – has been revamped to include a number of new short, mid and long term goals (Appendix C). In revising the plan, Dave specifically noted that the ECommodation program largely addressed environmental and economic efficiencies, but put little emphasis on the social aspects of sustainability. The Radisson, as one of Canmore's largest employers, has great potential for creating positive social impacts in Canmore, and Dave's revised plan incorporates a number of actions relating to system condition four, including:

- employee incentives for walking or carpooling to work;
- providing child care facilities for employees;
- encouraging management to establish an employee pension plan; and
- customer and employee education about recycling, waste reduction, and the use of sustainable transportation.

Implementation

While much of the Radisson's resources for environmental investments have been devoted to completing the hotel's lighting retrofit and occupancy sensors, Dave has been able to move ahead with several other actions. Short-term actions that are being implemented or are slated to be implemented in the summer of 2006 include:

- a water audit to determine ways to reduce water consumption;
- the construction of a new recycling centre that will permit the collection and recycling of a broader range of materials than the paper, returnable bottles, and cardboard that is currently being collected;
- work to increase the market for – and revenue generated from – biodiesel made from recycled kitchen grease.

Other short range actions have been harder to implement, partially because the hotel is part of a large chain and many of its products and supplies are purchased in volume by the head office and distributed to its various properties. Dave has been encouraging management to review its purchasing policies and, for some products, give more purchasing control to individual hotels. As Dave reports, one of the insights he gained through the Natural Step to a Sustainable Canmore training



was how evaluating purchases against the four system conditions makes it much easier to rationalize choices not only economically and environmentally, but socially as well.

Another of the Radisson's short range goals - the implementation of staff training in The Natural step - has proven problematic. In addition to being the chief engineer for the hotel and thus responsible for the overall operation of the hotel's facilities, Dave is the only staff member trained in The Natural Step Framework. As he notes, "My expertise is in operations and engineering, and finding the time and a way to pass what I've learned on to a staff of over 100 is a huge challenge." Although he did take an afternoon to introduce The Natural Step to the hotel staff at one of its full day meetings, he questions the effectiveness of the results. "It's one thing to incorporate the framework into my own thinking after being part of a highly interactive six-month training, but it's something else entirely to become a trainer and expect the staff to learn what I learned in a solo, half-day presentation." As with several other Early Adopters, Dave would like outside help in his efforts to train other staff.

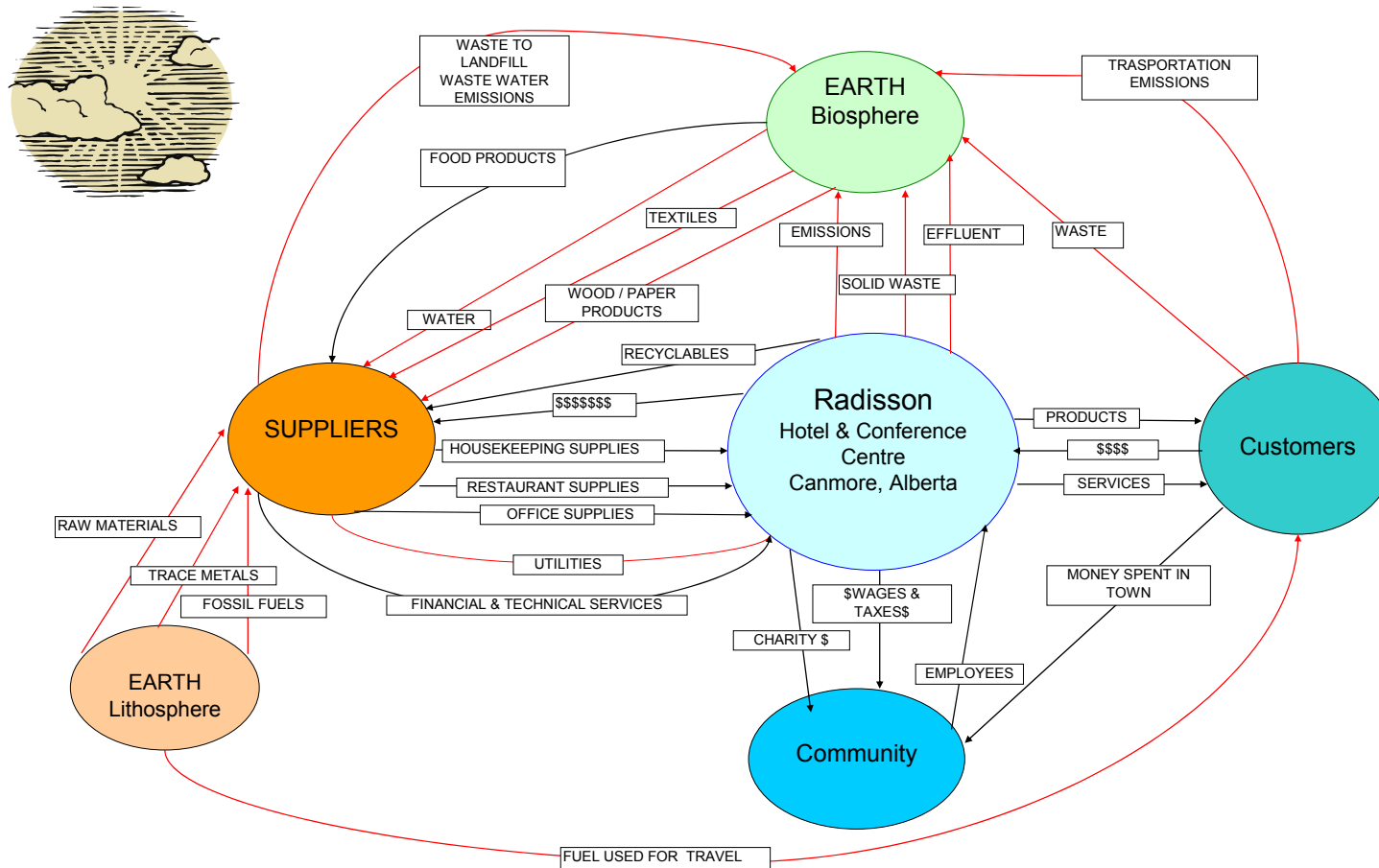
Last Words

After several months of working with The Natural Step Framework, Dave reports

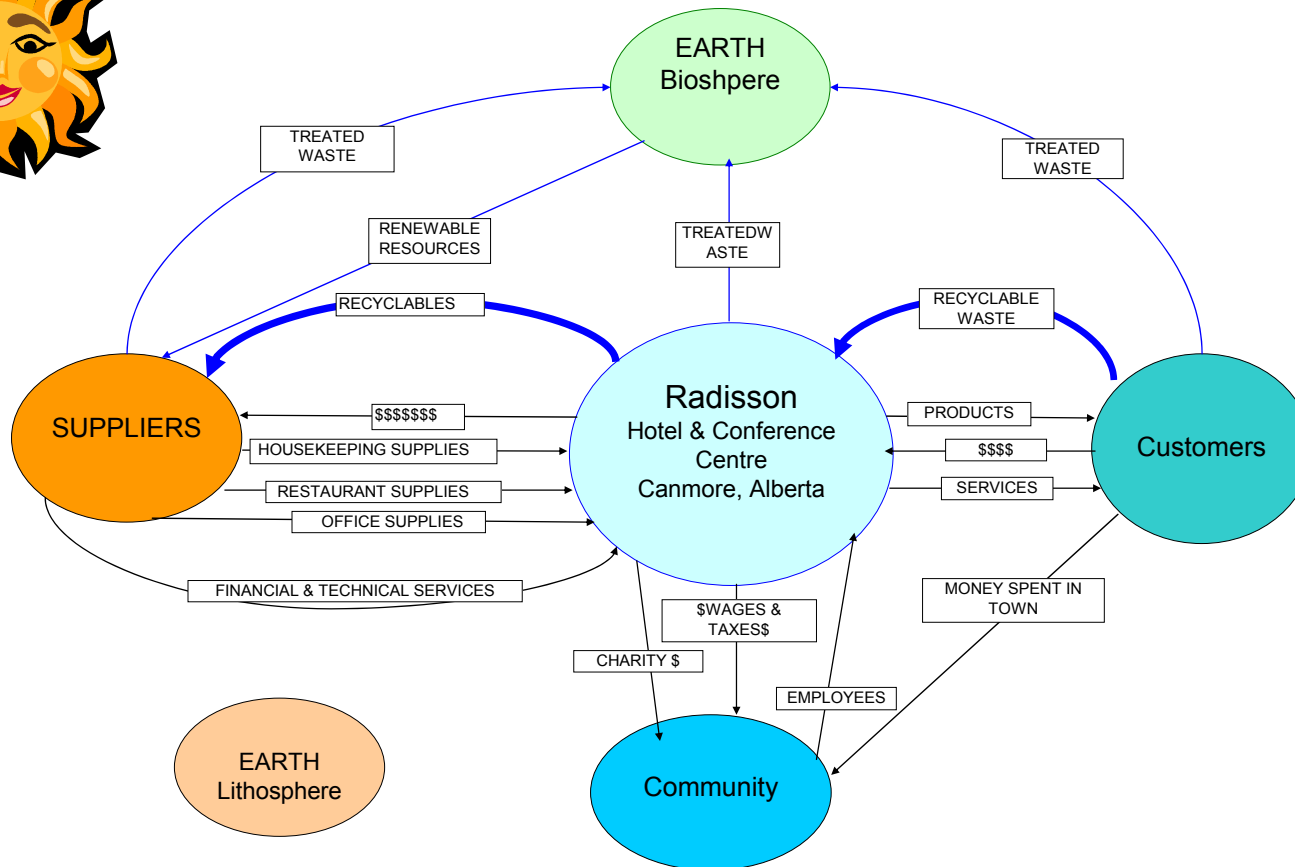
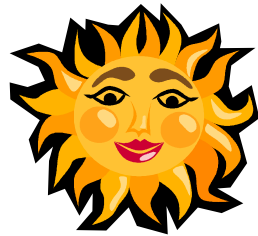
that one of its great strengths has been the context the system conditions provides for thinking through operational and purchasing decisions - one that complements and augments the effectiveness of the ECOMmodation program used by CHIP REIT.

However, the greatest benefit of participating in the training, he says, was the chance to network with the other participants - the rest of the Early Adopters, the TNS staff, the guest presenters, and the resource experts. "Those contacts were very valuable," he says, "and I'd like to see the network kept intact by scheduling regular meetings and creating further training opportunities, including assistance with staff training."

Radisson Hotel Appendix A: Baseline Mapping



Radisson Hotel Appendix B: Vision Mapping





Radisson Hotel Appendix C: Action Plan

Radisson Hotel Action Plan							
short term mid range long range							
	Sourcing Our Product Recyclable Biodegradable	Our Suppliers (System Conditions)	Our 'Footprint' Minimal Socially Responsible Operations	Employee Relations	Our Customers Knowledgeable Satisfied	Our Public Relations Role Modelling	
Radisson Hotel - Actions	Research & Development	Do a waste stream study to identify products we should avoid buying.	Research local suppliers.	Investigate options for ideal working conditions (physical), that minimize consumption and maximize "productivity" through physical and mental well being.	Encourage Managing company to research and implement an employee pension plan. Encourage managing company to research and implement child care programs.	Broaden customer base to include like-minded organizations	Network with other environmentally sustainable Companies
	Education		Educate our suppliers as to our new goals to get their buy-in and find out what they can do to help us.	Educate all staff managers and investors of TNS 4 system conditions.	Teach proper health & safety to ensure employee well being.	Educate our customers as to our new environmental objectives through website and in room advertising.	Add links to "The Natural Step" and "ECComodation to hotel website. Use this hotel as an example for other hotels to follow.
	Waste Reduction	Work with The Radisson corporation to eliminate single serve amenities.	Work with suppliers to find 99% waste free products.	Adapt recycling program to include plastics, metals & glass. Eliminate the use of plastic garbage bags. Compost all food waste.	Teach best practices to ensure maximum production and minimum waste.	Encourage customers to recycle all waste.	Participate in community waste reduction programs.
	Redefine Product	Start introducing better choice products. Review present products and determine qualifying criteria for new products		Research and switch to "green" energy suppliers. Ensure traditional product line meets new standards for recycled content/biodegradability		Continue to meet customer's needs in a sustainable line of products and services.	
	Policies - Greening of		Initiate relationships with like-minded suppliers. Define minimal standards manufacturing, working conditions, "fair trade policies"		Encourage or reward employees who walk, bike or carpool to work.	Encourage group customers to use mass transit to arrive & depart our hotel.	Educate Community of our environmental commitment and the successes we have had.