



**The Sustainability Team  
for Action and Return (STAR) Project**  
**Delivering Business Value through Enterprise Document  
Strategies**

*STAR Partners Prospectus*

**ALL Associates Group, Inc.  
The Jensen Group  
The Natural Step**

**August 12, 2003**

## **STAR Project: The Need for a Sustainable Enterprise Document Strategy**

**2002**

*“Sustainability. In today's business world, the term can be interpreted many ways, but essentially it refers to the need for greater responsiveness on the part of businesses in regard to limited resources—human, financial, environmental—and their use<sup>1</sup>.” ~ The Conference Board 2002*

**1854**

*“Man did not weave the web of life—he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.” ~ Chief Seattle, Skokomish Puget Sound Indians in response to President Franklin Pierce, Washington 1854*



### **The STAR Project Abstract**

*The 146-year gap in these two statements may be different in a time and language context – but philosophically they meet with exquisite precision.*

*Today, businesses are struggling with the demands for economic growth, increased productivity and greater shareholder value. The rediscovered imperative of a **sustainable approach** is the vision for the planet, people and profit to endure for future generations and deliver a more sustainable business competitive edge...today and tomorrow.*

*The purpose of the STAR Project is to define a common framework to understand, create and manage a Sustainable Enterprise Document Strategy within the distributed office environment of US businesses. Why? Because the office document system within any company provides a great vehicle for ‘operationalizing’ sustainable business practices as it touches so many parts of the organization. In both electronic and paper-based formats, documents affect every process and touch every stakeholder. The burdened costs of office documents are significant, both in economic, environmental and social terms – but most companies do not have a systematic way of managing the document processes. The result is massive waste. The potential, therefore, is the opposite. Massive less waste! Less expense; less natural resources; less pollution; less time, effort and stress. Less risk. The STAR Project will pursue the concept of “less is more” to create a more sustainable business embracing improved profits, reputation and competitive edge.*

*A collaborative team from the ALL Associates Group, The Jensen Group and The Natural Step are leading the Project in response to the strong voice among the sustainable business community, such as The Conference Board, USBCSD, UNEP and DJSI members.*

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<sup>1</sup> Research report from The Conference Board entitled *The Road to Sustainability: Business' First Steps* by Charles Bennett and Meredith Armstrong Whiting. Publication Date: January 2002. Report Number: R-1309-01-RR



## The Sustainability Team for Action and Return (STAR) Project

### Delivering Business Value through Enterprise-wide Document Strategies

Did you know that the humble document is the source of some of your biggest costs, worst environmental nightmares and major productivity handicaps? However, through effective management of resources it can become a predictable competitive advantage. Last year office documents cost Fortune 1000 companies over \$220 billion. That's more than \$7,500 per employee! And waste is endemic.

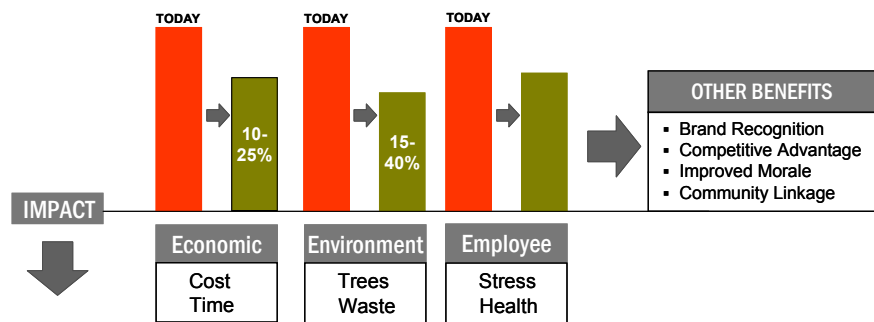
The STAR (Sustainability Team for Action and Return) Project is a partnership of three world-class firms – ALL Associates Group, The Jensen Group, and The Natural Step – seamlessly combining sustainability practices, financial modeling, document management and change management expertise. We have come together in this unique initiative to provide the tools to reverse the growing problem of uncontrolled office document sprawl and turn it into a sustainable competitive advantage. Our focus is to:

1. Improve corporate performance and economic efficiencies
2. Reduce environmental waste
3. Improve employee morale and productivity.

We are inviting companies that have already made a strong commitment on sustainability issues to become founding partners in the STAR Project, whose objectives are to:

1. Assess the current state of your document system
2. Reveal the size of your opportunity (economic, environmental, employee) in improving the system
3. Create a roadmap, with associated metrics and tools, to help you seize that opportunity
4. Share lessons learned and best practices in group workshops

The benefits of participating in the project include: predictable reductions in costs and environmental impact, and reducing employee stress and productivity blockages.





## **Project Timeline**

The STAR Project will take 6-months to complete:

- August to November 2003: Research and data collection
- November to December 2003: Finalizing Report and tools
- January to February 2004: Publication of Report and tools to STAR Partners and holding Group Workshops

## **Partnership and Investment Costs**

STAR Project Partners will be ‘by invitation only’ from the community of companies that have already made a strong commitment on sustainable issues.

The costs are \$50,000 with 50% due on signing and 50% by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2003.

## **Participation**

It’s not going to take much of your time – we will take the strain. You will, however, be able to use web-based and workshop forums with likeminded cross-industry peers that are pursuing sustainable business goals. In our research phase, we will be asking for one face-to-face meeting or telephone conference with stakeholders from each company and one survey form completion during the period September to November 2003.

## **Project Deliverables**

- Final Project Report on understanding, managing and leveraging an enterprise-wide document strategy for competitive advantage that contributes directly to your Sustainability goals.
- A personalized company assessment of your business and benchmarking against your major competitors.
- Opportunity areas for gaining short and long term incremental business benefits
- Roadmaps and predictive modeling tools to help you cut costs and improve productivity within 2004 and 2005.
- Key metrics and measurement guidelines.
- A knowledge-sharing workshop to review findings, explain the indicators, and demonstrate the tools (up to 4 people per company).

Beyond the specific deliverables, STAR Partners will be encouraged to continue an ongoing dialogue via the STAR Project web site and forums.



The Jensen  
Group

## Background

As the debate on 'sustainable development' unfolds, an increasing number of local and global corporations are adding sustainability stripes to their uniform of honor and working hard to earn the trust of their customers, shareholders, employees and partners.

In particular, an increasing number of corporations have embraced triple bottom line accounting and reporting into their mission statements and business values, taking a balanced approach to economics, environmental responsibility and social consciousness. This Sustainable Business approach is now taking form under multiple (but converging) initiatives, such as the UN's Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the ISO 14000 Series, Social Accountability 8000, Accountability 1000, ILO Conventions and the Global Sullivan Principles.

These overarching principles and standards are being matched with voluntary codes and auditable standards, such as the Dow-Jones Sustainability Index, the CERES principles and Corporate Social Reporting (CSR). These frameworks are intended to provide participating companies with operational transparency to shareholders, customers and the general public.

The leadership companies, such as Shell, BP, Dupont, Bank of America, Proctor & Gamble, BASF and Johnson & Johnson are the first to admit that the endeavors are still at the 'work in progress' stage. Sustainability may be a simple concept, but it is fraught by the elegant complexity of nature's laws and human participation. Despite the challenges, the 'first movers' are displaying a collaborative mindset where listening, learning and sharing ideas are key ingredients to long term success.

To date, the activity in this journey has primarily been focused on (i) developing the Corporate Mission and Value Statements, (ii) creating a consistent shareholder reporting system, (iii) developing 'greener' product design and manufacturing approaches and special philanthropic and environmental projects around the globe.

While not dismissing the relevance of the work to date, it must be perceived as an 'opening hand' in a new game where everyone has to be winners (and participants). Much of the activity to date has been directed by enlightened executive management and shareholder advocacy, as well as the 'unsung heroes' of the Environmental, Health & Safety (EH&S) departments.

The purpose of the STAR Project is to move from Principles to Practice, by delivering a framework for action that deeply penetrates almost every business processes of any



organization.

## Principles to Practice - Moving from Vision to Action

By any standard, the first three years on the new millennium have witnessed a critical mass in those who share the vision of Sustainable Business for a Sustainable Planet.

In a 2002 PricewaterhouseCoopers study<sup>2</sup> of US-based companies was carried out to determine attitudes and approaches towards sustainability. The first key finding was:

- 75% of respondents say they have adopted some sustainable business practices. The top three reasons for doing so were:
  - Enhanced reputation (90%)
  - Competitive advantage (75%)
  - Cost Savings (73%)

This **consensus point** has been reached by innumerable routes. Starting with visionaries in the early 1970's<sup>3</sup>, the multiple paths have included public debate, shareholder pressure, changing consumer attitudes, enlightened leadership, regulation and compliance, scientific evidence and competitive pressure.

Over the last 30 years that have embraced stages of denial, dialogue and doing, the task of establishing the need for sustainable business is over – step 1 is done. That does not mean 'everyone' is on board. According to UNEP's series of industry reports produced for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development<sup>4</sup>, there is "a growing gap between the efforts of business and industry to reduce their impact on the environment and worsening state of the planet". While applauding the efforts of companies that had clearly risen to the challenge, the UNEP expressed concern that "only a small number of companies were actively striving for sustainability, i.e. actively integrating social and environmental factors into business decisions".

Now the question is **how** we actively integrate sustainable practices, not **if**. Step 2 begins. If the majority of people get the vision and understand the importance and principles of sustainability, then step 2 must be about active participation. The words of an old Japanese proverb resonate:

***"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare".***

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<sup>2</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers 2002 Sustainability Survey. August 2002 Report.

<sup>3</sup> Such as Donna and Dennis Meadows and The Club of Rome (*The Limits to Growth*), 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, Sweden, (creating the first body of 'soft law' on international environmental affairs and establishing the United Nations Environment Programme UNEP), Jay W. Forrester (*World Dynamics*).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Environment Programme 22 Industry Reports (*Industry Partner for Sustainable Development Series*) Press Release 15 May 2002.



**Consensus** was required to get to step 1. It has created the **catalyst** to share the vision and shape new corporate mission statements. It has provided the **collaboration** to develop **common frameworks** for corporate reporting initiatives, such as the Global Reporting Initiative and Global Compact.

Consensus, catalysts, collaboration and common frameworks (the four “C”s) are going to be just as important for step 2. This is where we all need to work on the “how to’s” that take business sustainability practices deep within the organization. This will involve getting buy-in, participation and action by every stakeholder, whether that means employees, customers, suppliers and partners. Every business process can be aligned and every decision can be enhanced. The opportunities are enormous and bounded only by the apparent complexity of working in new ways.

The STAR project is focused on Step 2 – the sustainability “how to’s”. We are using the learned lessons of the four “C”s act as our guide. Systems Thinking will be our illumination.

- **Consensus**

There is always a spectrum of opinion. Some companies see the survival of nature as the biggest priority, which will lead them to conduct successful businesses. Others may focus on business as the priority, while sharing some responsibility to operate ‘cleanly’ and ‘fairly’, even if that only means meeting environmental, health and safety regulatory requirements. The STAR Project will address both viewpoints by focusing on a common economic advantage.

The STAR Project will also identify the ‘consensus drivers’ on (i) both the ‘buyer’ and ‘vendor’ side of a business relationship, (ii) across internal organizational boundaries, (iii) amongst shareholders and (iv) amongst customers.

- **Catalysts**

The enablement of a strategic direction such as sustainability requires wide participation and integrated actions that are deeply rooted in an organization’s processes, decision-making methods and cultural makeup. For this reason, the **office document environment** acts as a significant catalyst for sustainable practices. Paper-based and electronic documents touch every business process, involve every knowledge worker and are common to any industry, from automobile manufacturing to banking.

Involving significant financial and natural capital and being inherently people-centric, the office document system is a perfect “sustainable business” learning vehicle. Companies can benefit directly from a more competitive and sustainable document system and simultaneously develop the ‘thinking skills’ and ‘participation’ required for other sustainable business initiatives.

- **Collaboration**

The STAR Project is a collaborative endeavor by (i) ALL Associates Group, who have significant experience in financial and statistical modeling and corporate document management, (ii) The Jensen Group who focus change management through simplifying work and communication within major corporations and (iii) The Natural Step who have an international reputation on matters of sustainability, environmental and social impact.

- **Common Frameworks**

Common frameworks have greatly assisted the sustainability debate through multiple (but converging) initiatives, such as the UN's Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the ISO 14000 Series, Social Accountability 8000, Accountability 1000, ILO Conventions and the Global Sullivan Principles. The STAR Project will also deliver a set of common frameworks for a Sustainable Enterprise Document Strategy to provide a systematic approach that will (i) identify the resources used (ii) quantify business improvement opportunities and (iii) provide the performance measurements methods for continual improvements.

## Russian Dolls and Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking is a process, philosophy and learning approach that enables us to deal with complex interactions that make up an entire system. It requires a holistic view that can see the parts of the whole system through a study of individual pieces, but then uses a process of synthesis to understand the relationship between the parts to reach new conclusions on the whole.

Like the Russian Nesting Dolls, a System Thinking approach will also provide the understanding of relationships and synergies between 'touching' systems, providing insight to the 'bigger picture'.

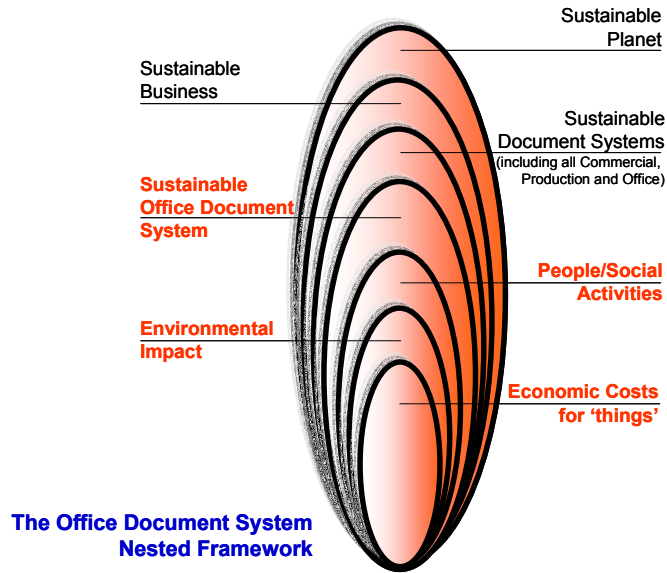


In the office document space, the fundamental synergistic elements are:

1. economic 'things', like technologies and supplies
2. environmental impacts
3. people activities involved in document use, management and consumption.

The office document system, in turn, is only part of the overall enterprise document system that additionally includes areas of production and commercial print. The overall document system is a crucial component of sustainable business and needs to support it positively. Finally, all businesses depend on a sustainable planet for their ultimate survival. Systemically, these components and their interdependent dynamics have to work in harmony.

Today, most companies only focus on 10% to 20% of the economic costs for 'things'. In essence, meaning only a part of the smallest Russian doll is being considered. The Systems Thinking approach will help us to develop the 'bigger picture'.



## Making the Case and Sizing the Prize

It is hardly surprising that as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century unfolds, the activities of the US knowledge-workers in a service-based economy are dominated by **document-centric office work**.

Across the Fortune 1000 companies, the average burdened cost of document systems is equal to 6.61% of revenues, taking into account commercial, production and office document-related activities. The office document environment now accounts for over 50% of the total and represents the fastest growing segment. For these major US companies the office document expenditure exceeded a staggering \$217 billion in 2002 or \$7,425 annually for each of the 29 million employees that make up the Fortune 1000 companies. In paper consumption terms, this equals 272 billion sheets of paper with an equivalent number of electronic counterparts.<sup>5</sup>

By any historic comparison or researched factual evidence, the intensity of information flow in the form of electronic and paper-based documents in the US business world is like trying to take a sip of water from a fire hydrant at full bore.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics for this paragraph based on All Associates 2002 EDAM US industry metrics.



What is surprising is that very few organizations systemically understand their office document environment and even less have:

- a clear **framework of resource utilization** that articulates
  - the dollars involved
  - the ecological footprint
  - the human impact.
  
- A clear **business value definition** that prescribes
  - the alignment with company vision, mission and goals
  - levels of process efficiencies and effectiveness
  - returns of investment
  
- A clear **performance measurement protocol** that facilitates
  - a balanced scorecard of overall system performance
  - a review and adjustment mechanism
  - a competitive comparison

There is a pressing need for answers. The STAR Project will seek to address all three of the above questions. The prize would be to (i) reduce waste and consumption of natural resources, (ii) simplify work and reduce stress and (iii) increase business value and profit.

The **primary objectives** of the STAR Project are, therefore, two-fold:

1. To develop a common framework for a sustainable enterprise-wide office document strategy to deliver currently untapped business performance benefits;
  
2. To help shape new ways of thinking and new decision-making processes that drive organizational behavior and cultural dynamics necessary in any ‘sustainable business’ context.

Both objectives are focused on clarifying and simplifying the complex nature of both enterprise office document systems and sustainable business practices – in a significant way in human, financial and environmental terms.

### **Six reasons for Urgency**

The **office document environment** is a compelling vehicle to democratize sustainability thinking and practices. The following reasons make the case why there is great urgency for all Project Partners to tackle this particular area of untapped business value:



**1. 90% of traditional costs ignored:**

In traditional economic terms the holistic expenditure is substantial, but fragmented decision making, resources, technologies and budget responsibilities means that only 10% of the actual costs are visible and manageable;

**2. The problem is growing:**

The importance, scale and costs of office documents are increasing annually because of the move to a knowledge-centric workplace. The increased uses of information and communication technologies have, thus far, fueled this growth rather than diminish it;

**3. Waste is the norm:**

In the absence of a holistic map and triple bottom line understanding of the office document system, waste is endemic. This waste is present in economic terms, ecological damage or undue pressures and stresses that affect people, ultimately impacting organizations;

**4. All inclusive involvement:**

The office document system touches every business process, every employee, each organizational unit as well as your customers and suppliers. This provides an excellent opportunity to gain widespread buy-in. This catalyst drives understanding, innovation and participation in *all* business sustainability practices, not just in the office documents arena;

**5. Connecting to Corporate Missions, Goals and Values**

Developing and deploying a Sustainable Enterprise Document Strategy will tangibly demonstrate a company-wide connection and involvements with a Corporation's Business Sustainability Objectives and build brand equity and trust;

**6. Broaden the Business Value dimension**

Combined, the business value generated from 1 through 5 above provides an exceptional tapestry of benefits – far beyond anything experienced in traditional management (or mismanagement) of the office document environment.

Whether you are a major corporation with a sustainable business vision or like-minded manufacturer, vendor or system integrator in the office document products marketplace, the STAR Project is tailor made for you. It will deliver a unique set of methodologies and frameworks to implement currently untapped levels of value through a healthier planet, happier people and greater profit...and help future generations to have the same options and choices.



The Jensen  
Group

## Contact Information:

For more information, visit the Project web site [www.allassociates.com/starproject](http://www.allassociates.com/starproject) or call any of our project leaders below...

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For additional information regarding the STAR collaboration:

### All Associates Group

The ALL Associates Group has been synthesizing corporate document systems since the mid 1990's. With the aid of a sophisticated expert system, known as EDAM® (Enterprise Document Methodology), ALL Associates Group provides commercial businesses, public sector organizations, manufacturers and vendors with holistic advice on document-centric activities – producing benefits that transcend the norm and exceed the exceptional.

[www.allassociates.com](http://www.allassociates.com)

### The Jensen Group

The Jensen Group is a change and communication consulting firm that has over 20 years experience applying the principles of simplicity in business management and organizational design. Through its services, workshops and best-selling books, the Jensen Group unleashes the existing talent and creativity that companies already have to create simpler workdays and simpler companies.

[www.simplerwork.com](http://www.simplerwork.com)

### The Natural Step

Since 1989, The Natural Step has been guiding companies and local governments onto an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable path. An international advisory and research organization, The Natural Step works together with some of the largest resource users on the planet to create new models and tools designed to accelerate global sustainability.

[www.naturalstep.org](http://www.naturalstep.org)

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