



BETTER BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Wild Wings Café – Final Report

Global Sustainability, Fall 2011

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ABSTRACT

Clark and I partnered with Wild Wings Café to reduce their environmental impact and increase their overall sustainable awareness through the implementation of innovative technology and a focus on reduction / re-use of resources. After our first meeting, we created an intuitive, attainable, and cost sensitive outline to address the most detrimental practices; the current lack of any form of recycling and the excessive use of non-compostable Styrofoam to-go containers. Throughout the semester, we attempted to implement the use of eco-friendly to-go containers and institute a recycling program for their glass and cardboard.

Unfortunately the use of eco-friendly (sugar cane) to-go containers was simply too expensive to implement. We tried several different manufactures, pricing multiple container options, yet nothing came close to their budget. The eco-friendly containers cost roughly double what they are currently paying and was taken off the agenda due to budgetary restrictions.

The recycling part of our plan is still coming together. We reached out to Waste Management, McIntire Road Recycling Center, Paper Sort, The Ivy Center, and the City of Charlottesville, in an attempt to find the most cost effective recycling option. Jake Brown from the City of Charlottesville Recycling and Conservation Division, said that he would be willing to make an "off-street" pick-up exception for Wild Wings Café. This was a major step, as they could not carry the recyclable waste up to West Main St. The pick-up location would have to be between the Amtrak station and Wild Wings Café. We are still waiting to hear back on permission from Amtrak, as the pick-up location is on their property easement. If Amtrak approves the pick-up location, Kiersten will then reach out to the Virginia Health Department and apply for special approval to keep waste outside the establishment.

In addition to our two main goals stated above, we tried to minimize the environmentally detrimental inputs while maintaining efficient and economic business operations. These efforts included: an attempt to reduce power usage by suggesting that lights and TV's be turned off in unoccupied areas. We provided information on installing infrared motion sensors at the top of the stairs. This would reduce power usage of the high-performance TVs upstairs. However, Kiersten exemplified the need for constant TV usage, as Wild Wings' is primarily a sports bar. The idea of dimming the unused televisions serves as a medium to reduce power usage. Kiersten was fond of this motion, and hopes to implement the idea shortly.

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the semester, our discussion group worked with Better World Betty. This is a local, non-profit organization that aims to increase sustainability and reduce the carbon footprint of local business within the Charlottesville community. Founded by Teri Kent, Betty World Better "believes big changes begin with small steps and sees the potential in all of us to do better." The Better Business Challenge is a friendly competition among businesses to incorporate sustainable practices in their day-to-day operations. The challenge is based around 'green scorecard, awarding points to the 'biggest losers.' This challenge incentivizes business to reduce their environmental footprint and make more environmentally conscious decisions. Through the use of a score card, the BBC will track the progress of local businesses and award them points based on the steps they take toward sustainable business practices. These include: water and electricity reduction, use of compostable, recyclable products, etc. Additionally, Better World Betty strives to bolster sustainability awareness and reduce the overall impact that local businesses have on the environment.

David and I consulted with Wild Wings Café in order to increase their environmental awareness and implement environmentally sustainable business practices. We meet with Kiersten Kern, the manager of Wild Wings Café, in an attempt to "empower this local business with the tools they need to incorporate sustainability into their daily operations and make it cost effective". In addition to meeting in person, we acted in a concierge roll via email in order to trouble shoot / problem solve any pertinent issues.

The stakeholders are the businesses themselves, their customers, and the greater Charlottesville community. The initiatives and practices Wild Wings Café implements affect the entire community and the local environment as a whole. This business will not only benefit from a long-term cost stand point, but will also receive recognition and good will for their dedication to improve the Charlottesville community.

BODY

As student concierges, Clark and I first discussed Wild Wings' pressing environmental issues. We then implemented various solutions to remediate the underlying problems. Again, our mission is to "empower local businesses with tools they need to incorporate sustainability into their daily operations and make it cost effective." With this in mind, Clark and I went to our first meeting with Wild Wings Café on October 4th, 2011. We had chosen a 10:30 AM meeting because the restaurant had yet to open. Later times conflicted with heavy lunch and dinner traffic, with night crowds coming to watch multiple sporting events. Our Wild Wings representative was Kiersten Kaufman. She welcomed us at the door upon our arrival. Kiersten is the manager at Wild Wings. She is a Virginia alumni, was a varsity volleyball player, and an environmentally conscious citizen. Accordingly, she was well aware of the Better Business Challenge as well as our Global Sustainability initiative. Kiersten was our primary contact throughout the semester, while Teri monitored our progression as project mentor.

Our initial meeting went very well. Clark and I gave our mission statement and well-rehearsed pitch; taking a back-seat allowing Kiersten to identify Wild Wings' main environmental concerns. Kiersten was certainly up-to-date on sustainable business practices. She easily identified their top three concerns: waste reduction, energy and water. Aside from the scorecard, we specifically discussed their two current difficulties: disposal of cardboard and glass via recycling and alternative to-go containers. The black, Styrofoam containers are not eco-friendly. They are purchased solely for cost minimization. No methods for recycling glass or cardboard exists, as they are thrown away with the other waste. Thus, current efforts proved insufficient from an environmental standpoint. Clark and I had other relevant issues to discuss, but Kiersten firmly advised that we cater our initial efforts around these two issues. Accordingly, this was our approach. Our goal was to maintain cost-efficiency for the to-go containers, and find a solution to properly recycle glass and cardboard. Currently, Wild Wings is limited in environmentally friendly endeavors. They are on a very tight budget, comparable to most businesses today. However, environmental conscious efforts do not always correlate to expensive, eco-friendly products in the business world. The meeting lasted approximately an hour. Together, we identified Wild Wings' environmental issues and existing business resources. We targeted feasible goals to accomplish over the course of the semester.

After our first meeting with Kiersten at Wild Wings Café, Clark and I went to work the following week in search of long-term, sustainable solutions. We wanted to promote sustainable business practices, fostering an overall reduction in their environmental footprint. We wished to minimize the environmentally detrimental inputs while maintaining efficient business practices by implementing the ideas discussed above. Clark and I first addressed the recycling issue. The City of Charlottesville offers several drop-off locations throughout the area, according to the type of material. The McIntire Road Recycling Center is the primary location for free, glass recycling. Cardboard boxes can also be disposed of at the McIntire Center, Paper Sort and the Ivy Center; free of charge. These locations are not within brief proximity to Wild Wings Café. Kiersten stated in the meeting that she will not hire an additional employee to drive the waste to a foreign destination. Our second solution regarding waste disposal involved the purchase of Waste Management's 'Bagster.' The Bagster is the perfect cleanup solution, costing a base price of \$30.00. However, the nearest pick-up location is in Richmond; resulting in expensive transit costs. Needless to say, Kiersten did not find the recycling alternative cost-effective. Kiersten mentioned that sufficient recycling practices exist downtown. Waste Management drives down West Main Street weekly to pick up recyclables. Although you must purchase special trash stickers made available in sheets of 12, the collection fee is free. The special 32-gallon bags can be purchased in several Charlottesville area convenience and grocery stores. Also, an annual trash decal can be purchased for \$94.50. Wild Wings Café is unfortunately located roughly fifty yards from the service area. Kiersten insisted on not hiring an additional employee, nor force an employee to carry the recycling material up to the street (see image 1 attached). Instead, Clark and I contacted the City of Charlottesville Recycling and Conservation Division directly. We spoke with Jake Brown and explained Wild Wings' current situation. Mr. Brown alluded to a potential resolution. The city could drive directly to Wild Wings to aid in recycling efforts. He and Kiersten have been in contact with one another. The pick-up location would have to be between the Amtrak station and Wild Wings Café. We are still waiting to receive Amtrak's permission, as the pick-up location is on their property easement. If Amtrak

approves the pick-up location, Kiersten will then reach out to the Virginia Health Department and apply for special approval to keep waste outside the establishment.

Image 1



Recycling Solutions

Method	Initial Cost	Additional Fee	Sustainable?
Bagster	\$30.00	\$144.00/week	No
McIntire Recycling Center Drop-Off	\$0.00	Driving Costs	Potentially
Curbside Recycling	\$2.10 per bag	\$0.00	If City can make an exception

Website: <http://www.charlottesville.org/Index.aspx?page=624>

Our efforts to implement sustainable practices shifted to Wild Wings' existing to-go containers. Kiersten acknowledged that their business does not utilize eco-friendly products. Given that roughly 25% of their business operates through take-out, further progress needs to ensue. Wild Wings Café uses 250 six by six inch containers per week for small orders. They similarly use 900 nine by nine inch containers per week for larger orders. The containers are made from Styrofoam. Given Styrofoam is not biodegradable / compostable; these products quickly degrade the surrounding environment. However, being relatively inexpensive, Wild Wings' continues to purchase the product. Kiersten wished to find an alternative, a more eco-friendly material. From the project's onset, Clark and I strived to

find cost effective solutions to replace the current containers. Similar to the to-go containers used at UVA dining facilities on grounds, we looked into biodegradable, sugarcane –based containers. ‘The WEBstaurant Store’ sells take-out products at a cheaper rate relative to its competitors. They are Green Wave, biodegradable, microwavable take out containers; being an environmentally friendly way to serve food. “All Green Wave products are 100% green and are made out of all-natural, annually-renewable resources like sugarcane, grass, and reed plasma. These materials break down quickly in landfills, and allow Green Wave to remain competitive without exploiting the natural environment or disturbing Earth’s delicate ecosystem.” (Green Wave Product Information)¹ The following data compares Wild Wings Café current containers it Green Wave’s products.

Current Take-Out Containers

Container Size	Containers per Case	Cost per Case	Case per Week	Price per Container
9" x 9"	150	\$18.63	5 to 6	\$0.124
6" x 6"	500	\$27.67	1/2	\$.055

Green Wave Take-Out Containers

Container Size	Containers per Case	Cost per Case	Case per Week	Price per Container
9" x 9"	300	\$59.99	2 to 3	\$0.199
6" x 6"	400	\$49.99	3/5	\$0.124

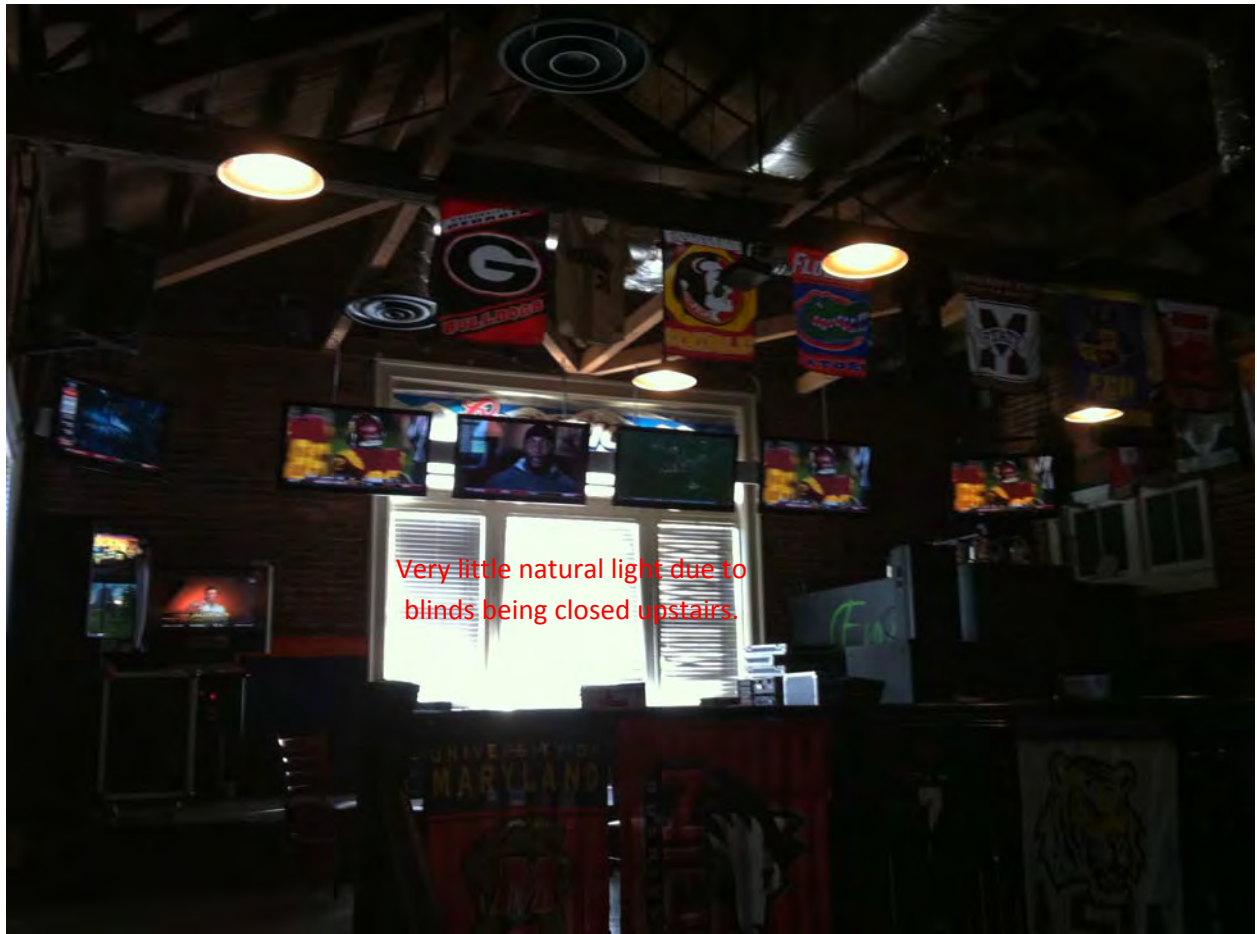
Website: <http://www.webstaurantstore.com/green-wave-tw-boo-004-6-x-6-x-2-microwavable-biodegradable-take-out-container-400-cs/395TWBOO004.html>

Accordingly, the Green Wave take-out containers are more expensive for both the 9" x 9" and 6" x 6" product. Clark and I realized that this exceeded Kiersten’s original budget. Green initiatives tend to be more expensive than an environmentally degrading alternative. However, we displayed our findings; if she wished to explore the option as their budget increases in the future.

Clark and I continued to serves as concierges, providing further assistance regarding these two environmental issues. We then directed our attention towards the constant television usage and lack of natural lighting. Wild Wings Café is restricted by what they can implement. Their building is a historical landmark constructed in 1885. Therefore, very little structural support can be implemented. This drastically limited our ability to apply eco-friendly solutions in regards to heating and cooling. The restaurant is a sports bar, outfitted with high definition televisions on every wall. Natural lighting causes severe glare on each television. Thus, constant lighting is necessary to enhance viewing quality by the customer (see images 2 & 3 attached). We recommended that during lunch hours, they could keep the crowd restricted to the downstairs area. Although often unfeasible due to numbers, this would keep fifteen upstairs televisions turned off for an additional three hours. There are a total of thirty high definition televisions and one projector. During our visit during lunch hours, we noted twelve total customers inside the restaurant. Unfortunately, they were split equally, being both downstairs and upstairs. It is nice for each customer to have two, personal televisions to view sporting events. However, this increases utility costs. To remediate the issue, Clark and I recommended that they reduce the televisions’ brightness. We also formulated research regarding instillation of infrared motion sensors at the top of each set of stairs (see images 4 and 5 below). This way, the televisions would remain off until a customer was seated upstairs. Motion Sensors can foster immediate reductions in power usage. Product information can be seen below.

¹ <http://www.webstaurantstore.com/green-wave-tw-boo-011-9-x-9-x-3-microwavable-biodegradable-take-out-container-300-cs/395TWBOO011.html>

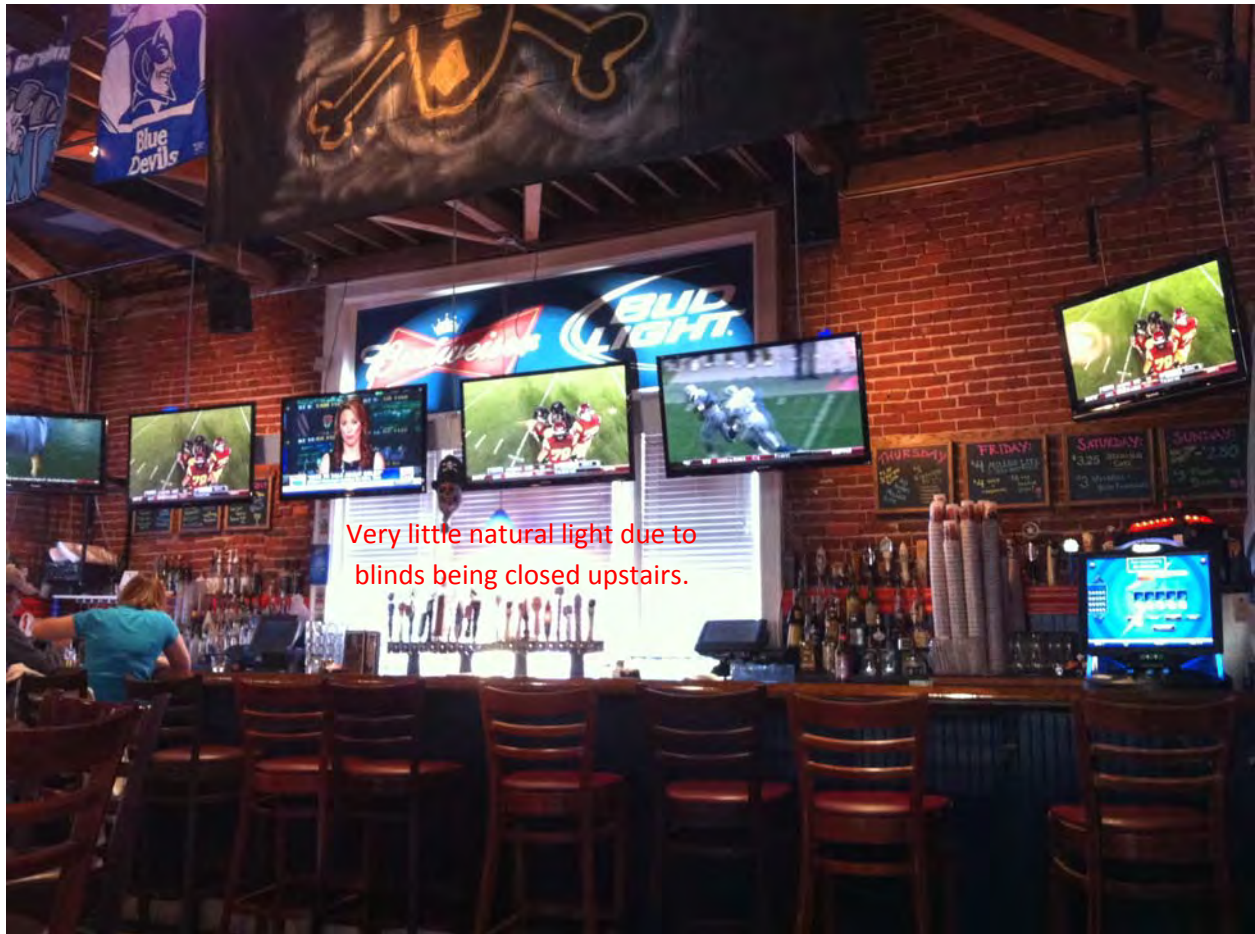
Image 2



Very little natural light due to blinds being closed upstairs.

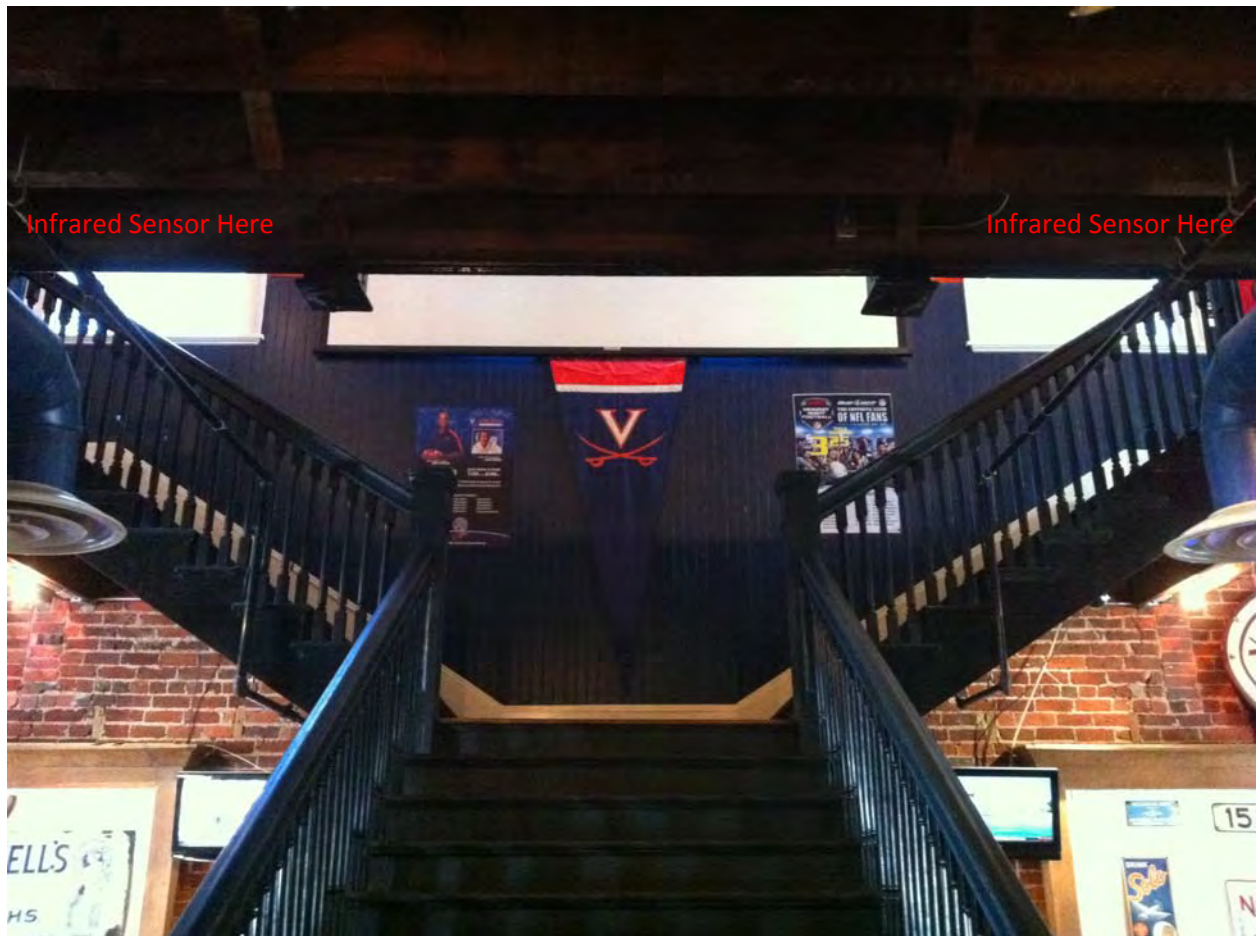
Note: Very little natural lighting. Blinds closed both upstairs and downstairs.

Image 3



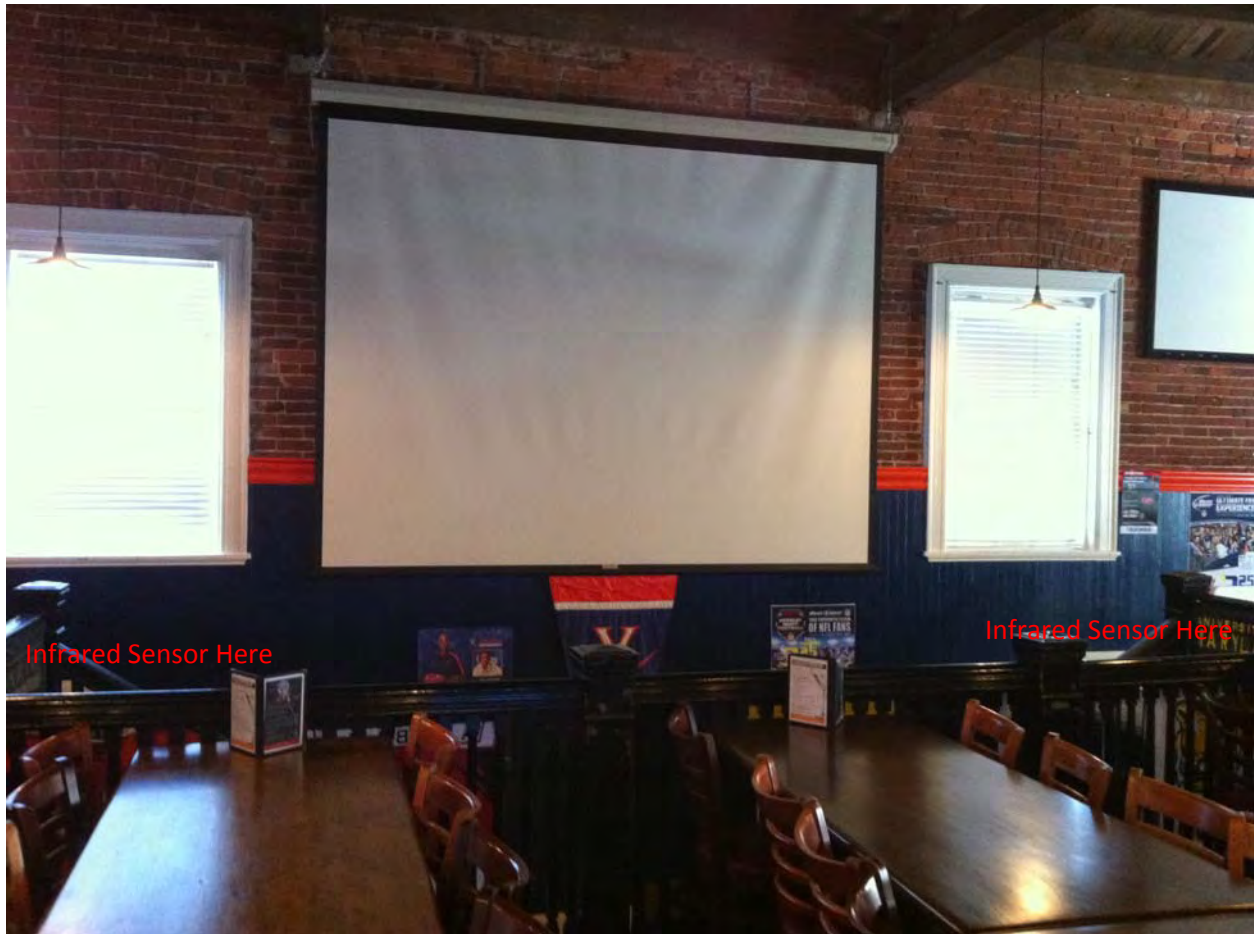
Note: High-performance televisions. Two people seated at bar with six TVs operational.

Image 4



Note: Two Infrared Motion Sensors installed on each beam facing the splitting staircase.

Image 5



Note: No one seated at any of the upstairs tables at 12 PM for lunch.

Infrared Sensor Information

Brand	Model	Color	Controls	Price per
Taiyito	TDXE6436	Grey	TV, DVD, AC	\$ 45.00
Niles	WS120	White	All A/V Products	\$114.99

Website: http://www.alibaba.com/product-gs/319482235/TDXE6436_IR_sensor_control_switch_for.html

We understand that a sports bar needs high-performance televisions. However, when no one is upstairs in the morning hours, they do not have to be on. Either of these products would effectively track motion among the upstairs area, greatly reducing power usage in the long run.

Our conversations with Wild Wings Café have primarily been e-mail based. Kiersten is unable to meet on the weekends, and she does not work on Wednesday. Part of this is due to the current sports world. The MLB postseason, NFL regular season, NCAA football and the start of NHL season fosters large crowds at the sports bar. Kiersten was aware of our progress and potential remediation's to Wild Wings environmental concerns. We went to Wild Wings on 11/2 for an informal meeting with the staff. We took pictures seen in the report, further explored their environmental concerns, and analyzed crowding on the second floor. Kiertsen was not present at the meeting. Clark and I merely wished to get an inside perspective regarding sustainable business methods from the employees, as well as promote their business by purchasing some hot-wings ourselves.

Our final, formal meeting with Kiersten occurred on 11/29 at 10 AM. We summarized our goals for the semester, answered any outstanding questions, finalized the plan for the implementation for the new recycling program, and thanked Kiersten for participating in the Better Business Challenge.

Image 6



Note: Signage in windows at front entrance, spreading awareness of BBC to Charlottesville community.

CONCLUSION

We attempted to create a plan that would not only serve to reduce environmental degradation in the short run, but would also foster an ongoing foundation for long-term environmental sustainability at Wild Wings Café.

Unfortunately the use of eco-friendly (sugar cane) to-go containers was simply too expensive to implement. We tried several different manufactures, pricing multiple container options, and nothing came close to their budget. The eco-friendly containers cost roughly double what they were currently paying, so this was taken off the agenda due to budgetary restrictions.

The recycling part of our plan is still coming together. We reached out to Waste Management, McIntire Road Recycling Center, Paper Sort, The Ivy Center, and the City of Charlottesville, in an attempt to find the most cost effective recycling option. Jake Brown from the City of Charlottesville Recycling and Conservation Division, said that he would be willing to make an "off-street" pick-up exception for Wild Wings Café. This was a major step, as they could not carry the recyclable waste up to West Main St. The pick-up location would have to be between the Amtrak station and Wild Wings Café. We are still waiting to receive permission from Amtrak, as the pick-up location is on their property easement. If Amtrak approves the pick-up location, Kiersten will then reach out to the Virginia Health Department and apply for special approval to keep waste outside the establishment.

The plan to place infrared motion sensors in the upstairs bar to turn the TV's off when the space was unoccupied was unattainable. This was primarily due to the logistics and high costs involved with installation. Each TV is set to its own individual output (cable box) and every TV is not on the same breaker, so this would mandate a mass amount of re-wiring. Also, employees are frequently passing through the upstairs space so the savings to cost ratio would be minimal at best. However, we did get Kiersten to agree to turn down the brightness of each television (30 in total) during the evening hours. This will save a lot of electricity in the long run, especially during the winter season when it gets dark very early in the afternoon.

In addition to our two main goals stated above, we tried minimize the environmentally detrimental inputs while maintaining efficient and economic business operations. These efforts included: an attempt to reduce power usage by suggesting that lights and TV's be turned off in unoccupied areas, replace old bathroom infrastructure with low-flow, high-efficiency toilets, and replace incandescent bulbs with new LED lighting. While a medium has been established to remediate the first, the latter two are prevented by budgetary issues. Kiersten highlighted their policy, stating, "We will replace if it breaks." Wild Wings' understands the importance of eco-friendly practices, yet cannot incorporate our ideas all at once.

Overall, I feel that David and I accomplished a lot over the semester, though it may not appear that way on paper. Our work with Kiersten led to a reduction in water and electrical usage, a reduction / re-use of waste, the encouragement of employees to carpool, and several other small steps toward sustainable business practices provided above.

FUTURE WORK

Moving forward, Wild Wings Café certainly must continue to brainstorm. Methods to achieve cost effective, environmentally friendly business practices are readily available. They are limited by the nature of their business (being a sports bar) and their location (1885 historic building). However, Wild Wings' can take small steps capitalizing on technological advancements which aid green practices.

Wild Wings Café needs to implement the proposed recycling program as soon as possible. The completion of the new recycling program will improve their sustainability and reduce their waste output. As far as implementing eco-friendly to-go containers, Wild Wings Café will or will not use them in the future depending on budgetary restrictions. The use of the new eco-friendly containers, given their high volume of use, would greatly reduce their environmental footprint and boost sustainability. The use of infrared motion sensors for the high-performance televisions would be a great addition in the future, budget permitting. The sensors would drastically reduce energy usage and increase the life-expectancy of the televisions, reducing waste and slowing the trend of overall consumption. All of these ideas have measureable effects, but there is also an immeasurable emotional boost of pride and self-worth, knowing that you are making efforts to run a sustainable business in minimizing the damage your individual company has on the entire community.

Clark and I hope that Wild Wings Café will post their sustainability metrics and other signage promoting simple ways to reduce: water consumption, electricity usage, waste, and other key concepts to improve sustainability (see image 6 in body). This signage will heighten awareness among the community as to Wild Wings' eco-friendly endeavors, allow employees and the community to track internal progression, and really provide a way for the employees and the community as whole to get excited, involved, and on-board. Global sustainability can occur if everyone makes a conscious effort to reduce individual impacts, which plays a surprisingly large role in lessening the communities environmentally damaging output. This is the mind-set that a culture must have in order to truly achieve sustainability. We feel this signage will help to promote the corresponding ideals.

LESSONS LEARNED

The major barrier to the success of our project was undoubtedly Wild Wings Café's limited budget.

The budget prevented the business from adopting the much needed eco-friendly containers, which was a major disappointment. Also, they refused to install any new fixtures (LED lighting), plumbing (low flow toilets & sinks), etc. unless the existing infrastructure broke. Hopefully as time passes, Wild Wings will allocate additional funds towards achieving heightened levels of sustainable business practices.

This project gave David and I further insight as to the costs involved in curbing environmentally degrading practices and implementing more sustainable business models. Implementing this technology would save Wild Wings Cafe money in the long run, but they are unwilling to make the large upfront capital expenditure required. In speaking to others, we have found that upfront expenses are often very difficult for small businesses to swallow. One certainly cannot make them follow sustainable guidelines, yet an overall, heightened level of accountability must be incorporated into business practices in the upcoming decades.

Clark and I learned the importance of fostering a close relationship with business partners. Coming into our first meeting, we were entirely unaware as to who Kiersten was, and if she truly advocated for global sustainability. We soon understood that she was more than willing to help us in our project. First impressions mean a lot, as both Clark and I understand the importance of allowing the business to identify their primary concerns, first; instead of implementing top-down approaches to sustainability. She readily responded to our e-mails, and was able to accommodate our academic schedules to find an appropriate meeting time. She told us the feasibility of incorporating new practices, yet did not shy away from giving us the blunt truth. It was a truthful partnership without skepticism on either side. This was essential to fully utilize our role as student concierges.

Being an economics and foreign affairs major, respectively, both Clark and I were unfamiliar as to the importance of sustainable business practices moving forward. We were unaware as to the severity our every-day decisions can have on the environment. This project allowed us to integrate sustainable practices into our daily lives. Whether it is submitting a paper online via Collab instead of printing it off, or buying local instead of commercial foods, we now understand the importance of preserving our surrounding environment. Especially as the world's population has surpassed seven billion, each decision will have heightened impacts on our planet.

Overall, it was enjoyable for Clark and I to engage in a project outside the close-knit UVa bubble. We often get caught up with matters on grounds, rarely taking part in initiatives within the greater Charlottesville community. The Better Business Challenge allowed us to meet local residents and foster relationships with those living beyond the university community. I speak for both the both of us in saying that this project has been extremely worthwhile. Actively engaging with the local community this semester has opened our eyes to another side of the city. It gave us a greater appreciation for small business owners, while highlighting the importance each individual has in he greater-Charlottesville community.

APPENDIX

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cost and budget

All potential costs to address the Styrofoam to-go containers and infrared motion sensors are included in the charts above. Wild Wings Café appreciated the data, but did not wish to invest in this technology at this time.

acknowledgements

In regards to the recycling, both Clark and I owe special thanks to Jake Brown from the City of Charlottesville Recycling and Conservation Division. He is willing to make an "off-street" pick-up exception for Wild Wings Café, pending Amtrak's approval. This solves Wild Wings' recycling dilemma with no additional expense. We would also like to thank Teri Kent, founder of Better World Betty, and our program director throughout the semester. She has been by our side through thick-and-thin, answering any outstanding questions, remarks, or doubts we've had along the way. Finally, we would like to thank our Teaching Assistant Harriett Jameson. Both Clark and I have greatly enjoyed getting to know her over the course of the semester. She did a great job tying important ideas and concepts into our group discussion and was all around very helpful and courteous. As we both plan to graduate in the next year, we wish Teri the best of luck in all future Better Business Challenge endeavors.