
Sustainability for General Motors

A Proposal to General Motors Corporation



General Motors Corporation has been an emblem of American culture since 1908. In one hundred years the company has grown to include manufacturing in many countries around the globe. However, the current economic climate has sent GM into a tailspin of astronomical proportions. Car sales are declining rapidly and fewer new vehicles are being leased and purchased. General Motors is at a cross roads and needs to decide whether they are going to let the market sweep them away or if they are going to change in order to survive.

I, a representative from Save Our Environment, propose that General Motors make extensive efforts to become a sustainable company. A sustainable company meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In making GM environmentally friendly, the company would have a better chance of getting through these economic struggles. If GM succeeds in this initiative, then sales would likely increase and their image would represent a greener and healthier planet for all.

In the past decade consumers have become increasingly aware of the staggering statistics about the amount of harmful pollutants and wastes that are being transmitted through our air or put into our land. Since manufacturing is one of the biggest contributors to the problem, it is important that companies take action to change their practices to enhance the earth instead of add to the issue at hand.

In the following pages, Save Our Environment propose that General Motors make a lasting change to be a more environmentally friendly company and discuss the steps that need to be taken to get there. Also, we will weigh the cost and benefits for GM to take on this project and the budget that is required.

The Current Situation

There is a problem in the auto industry that not only affects General Motors, but every car company in the world. The problem is that manufacturing is hazardous and puts waste and pollutants into the landfills and atmosphere. For a long time, this problem has gone unrecognized, or at least has appeared unimportant. However, as more consumers become aware of the growing problem of global warming, the way they shop also changes.

Presently, General Motors does not have the greenest image in the industry. While they make hybrid or fuel efficient cars, most consumers do not associate General Motors with an environmentally friendly stance. Companies like Toyota, Honda, and even Ford are easier to recognize as green companies over General Motors. General Motors is not keeping up with the efforts by other companies to promote a green image and green vehicles.

For example, Subaru has a manufacturing plant in Indiana that in the last two years has not put any waste into landfills. They have either recycled or reused everything in the plant, including all the scrap metal. Incredibly enough, every person in the United States puts more waste into landfills every day than an entire manufacturing plant does in a year. As stated by the Subaru website, even the grounds are environmentally friendly. There are grassy areas and trees and flowers around the plant. Instead of looking like a normal factory, Subaru has turned their business into something of an attraction. This is where General Motors needs to be, and the plan is to make GM a green company.

With car sales falling drastically, General Motors is losing money quickly. As shown in the graph below, stock prices have also fallen severely within the last year. General Motors is an American car company that has played a large role in the formation of this country and the economy, so every action that can be done to save the company from bankruptcy needs to be taken. If General Motors does not 'go green' in the near future, then the company is definitely at risk of bankruptcy or even going out of business altogether.



The following steps can help make General Motors a more sustainable company in the world as well as keep the company from losing money, and in that sense General Motors can 'go green' in more than one way.

The Plan

The plan for GM should be to become a more sustainable company and promote a more environmentally friendly image for their consumers. The goal of the proposal is to keep General Motors from going bankrupt and to keep all General Motors manufacturing in the United States from adding waste to landfills within the next three years.

The organization of Save Our Environment would send a representative to each participating plant in the United States to help GM follow through on the proposal. The following steps will help accomplish these goals.

Phase One: Reusing Scrap Metal in the Plant

For every manufacturing plant in the United States, which is about seventy plants, General Motors should invest in creating a sustainable factory. With the investment, GM would implement recycling into the industrial units. The money would also be spent on either outsourcing or investing in a machine to combine the scrap metal or make it more useable for manufacturing. If General Motors finds a company near the plant that can make the scrap metal useable, then they should do so, but only if the outsourcing saves GM money and it is an American based enterprise.

Phase Two: Recycling for all Employees

Recycling would also be integrated into the employees' everyday lives. There would be recycling facilities available to them, especially when taking breaks and eating. Also, there would be initiatives to make employees more aware of the importance of recycling. This would be done by hanging posters and supplying information about recycling in that area. In creating a work environment that promotes a green image, employees will be happier and will also be educated about something that everyone should know. General Motors would not only be affecting the waste the company contributes to landfills, but also how other citizens treat the planet.

Phase Three: Redesigning the Plants

This would not have to be a major undertaking, but by making the grounds of a manufacturing plant more appealing consumers would see that there are changes being made by the company to promote a greener environment. Often, industrial plants are unattractive to consumers, but by incorporating plant life and green areas into the grounds they would feel like the plant was a

more inviting place and the company would seem more inviting as well. When consumers think of GM, they may begin to think of a greener company. This image could promote a lot of growth and sales in the company. In spending a small portion of money to create a greener facility by reusing scrap metal, implanting recycling initiatives and redesigning the plants, GM could begin to promote a green image that would impact sales drastically over the next several years.

Qualifications

As a member of the Save Our Environment initiative, I have worked with top environmental advocacy organizations to create a safer planet for all the citizens of the world. Over the past few years the organization has learned vast amounts about what needs to be done to help our environment thrive. Since there is no way to get rid of all the pollution in the world, companies like GM can take steps to make a more friendly environment and improve their image as well.

Company History and Experience

Save Our Environment has helped other, smaller companies become more aware of the pollutants and waste they are contributing to the world. We have reorganized companies to make them more energy efficient as well as reduce the amount of contamination they are adding to the atmosphere. While General Motors would be the biggest company our organization has worked with, we would be able to take everything we've done with smaller companies and produce that on a larger scale.

The Workforce

At Save Our Environment, there are many organizations that combine together to make the environment more safe. In dealing with several organizations, the workforce to implement such an undertaking for General Motors would be exceptional. The people that work at Save Our Environment desperately want to see General Motors and other companies succeed in the changes they are making to help keep global warming at bay. Our employees are some of the most knowledgeable experts in the field of environmental safety and change, and so General Motors would be working directly with people that know the best and the most efficient way to change the company to be more environmentally friendly.

Our Pledge

For General Motors, Save Our Environment intends to send a knowledgeable employee to every plant. This way General Motors can be working one on one with experts about the transition and there will be someone available to answer questions if they arise. An employee

will work in the plant for one year to implement all the changes. After this point, Save Our Environment will be available for follow up questions or any changes that need to be made to the existing plan, but GM will be responsible for following through on the changes in the long term.

The Benefits and Cost

The Benefits

General Motors would benefit from a greener image and in turn would see an increase in sales for their efforts. Consumers want to buy from a green company, so General Motors needs to become one. Customers that would normally choose a company like Subaru because of their green image would instead choose General Motors because it is an American based company and also sells affordable vehicles in a wide array of models.

Also, in keeping scrap metal for use, the cost of materials for vehicles would go down as well and profitability would increase. In this way, for every car sold General Motors would make more money right at the start. On average, 11,000 tons of scrap metal are discarded from a manufacturing plant every year. At the current cost of steel at five to six hundred dollars per ton, General Motors could save 5.5 million dollars per manufacturing plant. If implemented at every plant within the United States borders, General Motors could save 400 to 500 million dollars a year. Again, that is just the plants within the United States and does not take into account any facilities located in Canada, Mexico etcetera.

With these staggering numbers, GM could save 1.5 billion dollars within the three year timeline proposed. That money could be used to pay off debts incurred by the company, keep plants open, or keep employees on staff that are at risk for being let go. It makes dollars and cents.

The Cost

There would have to be an initial investment of about one million dollars for every plant that implements the changes. The million dollars would cover the initiatives to recycle as well as redesign and promote a better environment for employees. However, there would also be a cost of about one hundred thousand dollars to have an official work with management at each plant from our organization, Save Our Environment. In total, the proposal would cost GM approximately 79.2 million dollars if implanted in every plant in the United States. However, with the possible savings of around 1.5 billion dollars, the benefits far outweigh this initial cost.

The Budget

The budget would appear as follows, though shifts could be made to help cover unexpected costs or unexpected savings in the following areas.

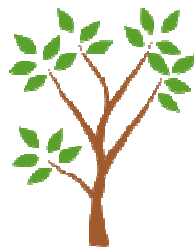
Save Our Environment Representative at Each Plant:	\$100,000 per plant
Initiative to Promote Recycling for Employees:	\$100,000 per plant
Redesigning the Grounds:	\$100,000 per plant
Reusing Scrap Metal:	\$800,000 per plant

In Conclusion

In conclusion, as a representative from Save Our Environment, I propose that General Motors creates a more sustainable company by implanting recycling and reusing in their manufacturing plants, with the goal to keep from adding any waste to the landfills within the next three years. GM would then have a greener image and would see an increase in sales. Considering the economic climate, GM needs to find a way to stand out among some of the leading car companies and becoming more environmentally friendly is the way to achieve such a goal.

Thank you for taking the time to read the proposal and consider our plan to help General Motors become environmentally friendly. The next step is to contact Save Our Environment at, 616-457-2561, or send a letter to:

Save Our Environment
Janelle Wing
863 40th St.
Grand Rapids, MI 49507



If there are any questions or suggestions for the proposal, please contact Save Our Environment as well. We hope to hear from you soon.