

# INFOSHEET

Green Business is **Good Business**

# GREENERFUTURES

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## *Green Partnerships*

Nature provides us with a perfect example of how to get the most from every resource. Each organism in an ecosystem contributes in some way to the benefit of others. Green partnerships allow businesses to benefit from each other in the same way.

### *By-Product Synergy*

"The principle underlying by-product synergy is that one industry's waste stream can be used by another as a primary resource. It is a simple idea, but one which has enormous potential for reducing waste volumes and toxic emissions to air and water, as well as cutting operating costs. In order to facilitate an exchange of materials and resources, businesses need to work together to determine what unwanted by-products exist, and what their potential applications are. The resources can then be exchanged, sold, or passed free of charge between sites, creating a by-product synergy." From BSD Global-- By-Product Synergy.

This process is integral to rural lifestyles and is used widely in the farming community, particularly in organic farming. Recently, it has become the foundation for the development of aquaponics. Aquaponics is the combination of aquaculture and hydroponics where the waste from one becomes a resource for the other. Future Aqua Farms is one of the companies who have used this process to reduce waste and increase profit margins. Similar processes are used in other types of aquaculture such as mixed species farms and in warm water aquaculture that takes advantage of the waste heat from hydroelectric facilities. The use of organic wastes from restaurants by urban ornamental gardening businesses is another example of the application of by-product synergy.

However, by-product synergy is not limited to applications in food and plant growth. Florida Power and Light uses this principle when it donates its waste concrete and porcelain to a road construction company that uses it for fill. Happy Harry uses the principle when he collects panels cut from customized doors to create new products. The revival of strawbale construction and the development of biodiesel and biomass fuels are also forms of by-product synergy.

### *Resource Sharing*

Green partnerships can also be developed along other lines. For example, when businesses work together so that they can take advantage of round trip travel, costs are reduced. When they are able to share office space, photocopiers or other equipment, there is less capital cost and space will be less expensive to rent and heat. For small businesses, time-share agreements may be possible for the use of delivery and other business vehicles. If two companies require small quantities of the same resource, they may be able to reduce their costs by sharing bulk purchases. It is important for businesses to start assessing other operator's needs as well as their own so that they can work together to reduce costs.