

**1.0 What would you consider as the primary reason that your company became a participant in the Green Tier process with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources? The Level you joined at?**

Public image as it relates to the environment	6
Needed assistance on a permit process	3
Better working relationship with DNR	1

The primary reason for becoming a participant in the Green Tier Program was focused on improving the public's (communities) and their employee's perception of the company's environmental performance. They were interested in getting the word out to the community of the company's efforts as it relates to the environment. Some responded to the DNR's invitation and commitment to a more cooperative and closer working relationship with the DNR as well as a single point of contact at the DNR. A couple of the companies needed assistance in developing their EMS programs and Green Tier was the solution. Some of the companies were working on new permits and looked at the program as a way to shorten the permitting cycle. All stated they were interested in going a step beyond compliance.

**2. What were some of the benefits that your company hoped to derive? What benefits have you actually derived from your involvement in the process?**

Closer relationship with the DNR	8
Benefits more perceived than real	2

Many of the companies mentioned the single point of contact at the DNR has proved to be very significant. They have seen faster DNR response times, the representative has a better idea what the company does and how they do it, and it is easier to get questions answered. The closer relationship has encouraged the company to report incidents earlier with less fear of a penalty. The DNR has been more willing to work with the company and recommend solutions, versus enforcement actions. All believe the Green Tier process has allowed improved compliance at most companies as well as helped company's identity new opportunities for improved performance. A couple responded that the benefits were more perceived than real and the benefits were not immediate, they took time to be realized.

**3. Would you consider the processes that were needed to accomplish the Green Tier recognition one that proved to further improve your company? Is your company seeing sales increases, customer growth, and/or better bottom line results? Can you give me an example of the benefits? (How did it work?)**

Helped improve company environmental performance	10
Improved company bottom line, growth, etc.	6



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Companies found new waste streams that could be improved at their company. The program involved many of the company’s employees which made a significant difference in the overall environmental performance of the company and in many cases did improve the bottom line. One of the companies did state they saved \$16,000 in HVAC costs in the first year from suggestions from their Green Tier ‘employee teams’. Variable speed drives on compressors added another \$6,000 in savings. Companies stated that their recycling efforts in all cases increased after adopting the Green Tier program. Combined air permit caps, relaxed record keeping requirements, and the cooperative DNR contact has improved the company’s performance. Employee involvement in the program and employee moral as it relates to the company’s efforts were also mentioned as benefits.

**4. At the time of application did you have an EMS and, if so, was it: ISO certified, certified by another third party, a system that was your own and not reviewed by an outside party. What regulatory benefits have you realized from exceeding the Environmental Management Systems expectations since becoming a program participant? Would an EMS system be necessary to achieve Green Tier or can it be done without the ISO 14000 registration?**

Need EMS to apply for Green Tier	6 said yes	4 said no
Regulatory benefits realized	0	
ISO 14000 needed for Green Tier	7 said no	3 said it sure helps

Half of the companies were registered to ISO 14000 when they joined the Green Tier program and found the process of applying very simple and well prepared. Companies felt that having an EMS system in place would make the process easier and a couple said they developed an EMS system with the help of the Green Tier program. The ones that already carried the ISO 14000 registration said having it made the Green Tier process a simple one to accomplish. As it relates to regulatory benefits all the companies stated that they had the same compliance requirements, and yet were able to get permits faster, some received combined air permit caps, and agreed that the community relationships were improved with the DNR assisting in perceived incidents and complaints. Green Tier is more accepted in the community (public) than ISO 14000 as people relate to the DNR better. The Tier 2 companies said the ISO 14000 is a requirement for a successful Green Tier participation.

**5. Would you recommend the WI DNR Green Tier program to your suppliers and customers, including small and medium-sized enterprises (less than 500 employees)? What would you assign as a good reason to seek the Green Tier program?**

In all cases the current participants said they would recommend the Green Tier program to others. The primary reason given was a closer working relationship with the DNR. The cooperative relationship makes the difference. The single point of contact was another reason they would recommend the Green Tier program. One company has recommended it and now has two suppliers in the Green Tier program, in fact, processes their waste water for them. Softer enforcement, quicker responses, and fewer surprise visits from the DNR. They call us before they visit.



**6. You have been a Green Tier company for “x” years at this point. Are you considering moving to Tier 2, exploring a Charter or what is the next step for your company?**

In most cases the companies were very pleased to be at the Tier 1 level and had no plans to move to the next level. The Tier 2 companies did so as they had ISO 14000 in place and ISO 14000 meets the requirements of Tier 2. Two were considering Tier 2 but were waiting for DNR permit streamlining changes before they took the next step. One company was considering moving using the ISO 26000 program in the social responsibility arena. They are being requested by customers to participate in social responsibility reporting. ISO 26000 is only a guideline so you do not register to this program. The benefits of going to Tier 2 were not well understood by most participants and they are achieving their goals by being Tier 1.

Other questions that were used:

**Do you have fewer inspections from the DNR?**

‘No’ was the prominent answer. The inspections are more relaxed, a notice is usually received before they come in to inspect, and there is a clear attitude of cooperation during the inspections. A finding (citation) still needs to be corrected quickly but they tend not to lead to layers and layers of citations. They expect us to clear it up and report back. Only one company admitted to fewer inspections over the year.

**Do you have a closer relationship with the DNR?**

In most cases, yes was the answer. A single point of contact is a great part of the process. We are more willing to call when we have an incident, a question, or just a concern. Some saw no real change but said it felt less threatening. They had confidence that they could call and get help.

**I see you publish an environmental report, is this done yearly?**

Yes was the most frequent answer. An annual report is sent to the DNR which includes updates on the key improvement measures we are tracking at the company. When our customers request an audit and ask for environmental data we have directed them to the Green Tier web site to gain access to the annual report we have filed (2 companies stated this). We publish water usage, energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, therms per unit of production (beer), and KWHr of electricity utilized.

**Do you publish a Social Responsibility Report?**

Only three of the 10 companies are working towards a social responsibility report for 2013. The remainder did not have any idea or said they do not publish one. One company is looking at the ISO26000 guidelines, one company publishes social responsibility information in their annual reports, and the other is investigating the SEDEX process.

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### **Do you calculate a carbon footprint for your company?**

Only three companies interviewed report a carbon footprint each year and it is a corporate carbon footprint. Each company reports it in the annual reports and looks for improvements. The remaining companies do not report it. A comment was made that “there is not a standardized method for calculating a carbon footprint” so they do not report one.

### **Do you track energy usage, water use, or transportation impacts for your company?**

All companies report some level of energy usage, some water usage, transportation impacts for others. Natural gas use and greenhouse gas reductions are also calculated and reported. Most companies said they track recycling efforts and many other environmental measures and do not report all of them.

### **Do you utilize Greenhouse gas or energy reduction tools/audits?**

Two companies reported that they do not track greenhouse gases. The remainder of the companies track their energy consumption, some replace inefficient equipment, one is working with Focus on Energy, one had an on-site digester, and most have tracked and reduced their energy bills over the past couple of years. In all cases, they were taking steps to reduce energy consumption.

### **Do you consider your company an industry leader in sustainability?**

Eight out of ten considered their companies industry leaders in sustainability. The other two said there was not sufficient data to compare to their competitors but felt proud of their company’s efforts in sustainability. All were looking for ways to improve their performance in the environmental and safety areas of their businesses.

### **Any suggestions for the DNR?**

Comments that were made; ‘the agency is understaffed’; ‘my single point of contact has changed a few times’, ‘concerned if the level of support will continue, it has been great’; ‘OSHA needs to take some lessons from the DNR’. There was not one complaint. All the Green Tier participants we interviewed were pleased with the direction the DNR has taken and the responses they were getting.



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