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IMPACT
AWARDS

SustainableIT Impact Awards 2024

Takeaways and Lessons Learned from the 2024 Sustainable IT Global Impact Awards

The SustainableIT Impact Awards were launched in 2023 to spread knowledge and inspire action by shining a light of recognition on companies using technology to drive sustainability.

In August-September 2024, after nominations were winnowed down to finalists, IT executive judges chose 30 companies as award winners.

Selection criteria included the following:

» Ambitious targets and profound commitment aligned with the three ESG sustainability pillars: environmental, social, and governance.

» Current impact results bolstered by performance metrics such as before-and-after sustainability levels, cost savings, agility, scalability, and indirect advantages, e.g., staff engagement, loyalty, and recruitment capabilities.

» Clear evidence of best practices, key success factors, and lessons learned that have significantly influenced sustainability achievements.

» Leadership prowess manifested by IT leaders in conjunction with their business counterparts.

From analyzing the accomplishments of the 2024 SustainableIT Global Impact Award winners, several common traits and inspiring aspects emerge that have helped these organizations succeed in driving sustainability through technology.

The common threads observed among winning organizations included:

1. Integration of Sustainability into IT Operations: Many winners have embedded sustainability into their core IT processes, whether by leveraging technology to reduce carbon footprints (e.g., Gates Corporation, PepsiCo), utilizing green IT strategies (e.g., Pfizer, Egiss), or incorporating sustainability metrics into IT governance frameworks (e.g., NatWest, BNP Paribas).

2. Ambitious and Measurable Targets: Most winners demonstrated clear, measurable goals for reducing environmental impacts, such as CO_2 emissions, energy consumption, or waste reduction. Examples include Mastercard's net-zero goal by 2040 and Pfizer's emissions reduction across millions of shipments.

3. Data-Driven Decision Making: Organizations like Cisco and HSBC implemented sophisticated data platforms or dashboards to track carbon emissions in real-time, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions and optimize sustainability efforts.

4. Cross-Industry Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing: Several winners stood out for their partnerships and collaborative initiatives, such as the UK Government and Posetiv Cloud's work to create common standards for measuring digital carbon emissions, fostering transparency and accountability.

Several accomplishments stood out for their innovation or success in overcoming a particular sustainability challenge. Among these are the following:

» PopUp Mainframe's Solar-Powered Data Center: This company's use of fully solar-powered data centers for on-demand provisioning of virtual environments showcases a creative approach to reducing energy consumption and democratizing access to mainframe computing.

» Egiss's Transparency in Carbon Data: Egiss's decision to prioritize transparency by using activity-based carbon data instead of vendor-provided averages demonstrates integrity and a commitment to accurate sustainability reporting, setting a high bar for the industry.

» UCLA Health's Digital Access Initiative: UCLA's donation of refurbished technology to underserved communities—totaling over 78 truckloads—shows how IT sustainability efforts can extend beyond environmental goals to foster social equity and digital inclusion.

» Netza&Co's Educational Impact in Brazil: By transforming an educational center in a disadvantaged neighborhood, Netza&Co's efforts to promote digital literacy and bridge the digital divide exemplify what technology organizations can do on a regional or local level to elevate social sustainability and propel long-term community development.

» Pfizer's Shipping Emissions App: Pfizer's use of technology to manage and reduce emissions from over four million shipments is an exemplary application of digital tools in the logistics sector, with substantial environmental benefits at a global scale.

The Winning Organizations

Honorees were selected based on primary impact in one of three sustainability categories:

» **Environmental** – Focuses on a wide spectrum, ranging from energy consumption and emissions across technology infrastructure to sustainable sourcing, incorporating factors like green IT, e-waste management, water consumption, and sustainable procurement practices.

» **Social** – Acknowledges organizations that champion diversity, equity, and inclusion, emphasizing representation across gender, ethnicity, and leadership roles, fostering a positive diversity attitude with external partners, and making significant contributions to community relations and sustainable job creation. The focus also encompasses outstanding examples of technology accessibility and digital inclusion in IT's products and services.

» **Governance** – Celebrates those institutions that have seamlessly woven sustainability into their decision-making processes, emphasizing leadership, employee training, data privacy, and showcasing the tangible business value of sustainability.

Winners: Environmental

Dow

Materials science company Dow has a dual approach—'IT for Sustainability' and 'Sustainability for IT'—to drive significant environmental impact. They have developed an integrated digital platform that enables Dow's ambitious climate, water, and circular economy goals while also optimizing their IT carbon footprint and electronic waste recycling. With strong executive sponsorship, they have reduced data center emissions by 8%, recycled over 37 metric tons of electronic waste, and empowered 37,000 employees with tools to track sustainability progress.

Mastercard

As payments technology company Mastercard works towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2040, it is empowering its leaders with easy access to insights on carbon emissions from both on-premises and cloud operations. By collecting data from various systems, Mastercard has created a powerful internal tool for its leaders and engineers to pinpoint areas to boost efficiency.

Gates Corporation

Industrial manufacturer Gates Corporation's Green IT movement plays a vital role in the company's Global IT strategy. Driven by the dedicated Global Green IT Team, this initiative integrates energy efficiency, e-waste reduction, and sustainable procurement into IT operations. These efforts have already eliminated 2.9 million kilograms of CO_2e in 2024. This initiative has not only reduced their environmental impact, but has also integrated IT into Gates' overall sustainability strategy, reinforcing a culture of sustainability in the company.

Winners: Environmental Cont.

PepsiCo

Food and drinks giant PepsiCo's IT initiatives are driving a reduction in IT's GHG emissions. They have made significant strides, including powering most of their global data centers with renewable energy and reducing laptop carbon footprint by 10%. Sustainability is embedded in their IT operations and includes strategic vendor partnerships and integration of carbon footprint data into the technology refresh processes.

Cisco

Global technology company Cisco has created the Sustainability Data Foundation, a single source of truth for sustainability data to allow Cisco to deliver on its environmental sustainability goals and 2040 net-zero target. Through the platform, Cisco has successfully automated the Product Carbon Footprint (PCF) for the majority of its hardware products. With the power of this data, the company has developed PCF reporting tools to ease the sharing of the data, deployed dashboards for Scope 3 Category 11 emissions, established governance using Cisco's enterprise standards, and implemented four sales-enablement tools to collect data on product energy use.

Pfizer

Global biopharmaceutical company Pfizer has launched a transformative Shipping Emissions App, which has enabled the enterprise to manage and analyze transportation emissions for more than four million shipments since 2019. Powered by Celonis and Climatiq, the app enhances the automation and accuracy of emissions tracking and scales it globally, aiding Pfizer in achieving its sustainability goals in climate-impact mitigation, conservation of resources, and minimizing operational waste. This game-changing innovation enables Pfizer to rapidly advance toward its Scope 3 targets. Pfizer's teams are committed to creating impact through digital transformation and reshaping the future of technology and environmental sustainability.

Winners: Environmental Cont.

Egiss

By leveraging activity-based carbon data from partner Rejoose (as opposed to vendor-provided averages), global IT reseller Egiss has taken a bold step to accurately calculate their emissions, prioritizing transparency over convenient metrics. This integrity sets a powerful example for the industry. Moreover, Egiss empowers its customers by providing comprehensive emissions calculations for their IT hardware purchases. This facilitates their compliance with CSRD requirements and encourages informed discussions about lifecycle management, revealing crucial insights that guide decarbonization strategies.

PopUp Mainframe

PopUp Mainframe provides a sustainable, low-cost and rapid solution to organizations looking to modernize IT. The solution enables on-demand availability of virtual mainframe environments, dramatically reducing the need for physical hardware, thereby lowering energy and emissions. By enabling mainframe test environments to run in solar-powered cloud data centers, PopUp Mainframe offers mainframe access to anyone who needs it while serving as a catalyst for sustainable transformation.

IT Organization for SDG&E

San Diego Gas & Electric® has embraced a dual approach: enhancing climate resilience across the enterprise while also reducing emissions and e-waste within their IT operations. Key accomplishments include the development of the Wildfire Next Generation System, which integrates infrastructure visuals with real-time weather and wildfire data to inform critical decision-making. Additionally, the Climate Intelligence Platform utilizes digital-twin technology to model vulnerabilities and risks over time, guiding enterprise-wide climate-informed strategies.

UK Government & Posetiv Cloud

United Kingdom GreenOps consultancy Posetiv Cloud has done groundbreaking work in digital sustainability by helping organizations measure, report, and significantly reduce their digital carbon emissions, water usage and materials consumption. A standout accomplishment has been establishment of the Cross-Government Digital Sustainability Strategy Group, a historic collaboration involving key UK government departments. This initiative aims to create common methodologies for measuring and reducing digital carbon emissions, fostering transparency and accountability across sectors. GreenOps is also driving financial savings.

Winners: Social

Cognizant Technology Solutions

Cognizant Technology Solutions is cultivating a socially responsible culture by training and digitally upskilling underserved communities, marginalized groups, individuals with limited access to traditional education, and associates. Through the Synapse initiative, the company has trained over 275,000 people in the first year. By partnering with academia, government, nonprofits, international NGOs, and the tech industry, Cognizant aims to train one million people by 2026. Additionally, through the company's volunteer program, over 40,000 associates have contributed 166,000 hours to community support. These initiatives integrate ESG into Cognizant's people-focused, socially conscious business practices.

Netza&Co

Netza&Co is a strategic marketing and consulting firm specializing in brand engagement and digital transformation. The company has made significant strides in promoting social sustainability through technology — elevating digital literacy by providing essential IT training, bridging the digital divide by ensuring access to technology, and sparking interest in STEM education through engaging programs. A key accomplishment has been the transformation of an educational center in the Santa Rita neighborhood of Osasco, Brazil, which now serves more than 150 children. Through such partnerships and community engagement, the organization is creating a lasting impact on education, community development, and environmental responsibility, fostering a brighter, more inclusive future.

City of Glendale, Arizona

The City of Glendale, Arizona, is a rapidly growing municipality located in the Phoenix metropolitan area. As a local government, it provides essential services and fosters innovation through initiatives in technology, environmental conservation, and public safety to improve the quality of life for its residents. The City's Innovation & Technology Department has implemented a Modern Data Platform and GIS Center of Excellence to support water conservation amid Arizona's drought conditions and empower fire management in high-risk zones. With over 100 real-time data dashboards, including tools for managing water use, carbon sequestration, and wildfire hotspots, Glendale has not only optimized resource management but also reduced its environmental footprint. These advancements have earned the city multiple awards, positioning it as a leader in tech-driven sustainability solutions.

Winners: Social Cont.

Arizona State University's Enterprise Technology

Arizona State University is a public research university in the Phoenix metropolitan area. It has been at the forefront of driving digital equity and sustainability through programs such as the Maricopa County Broadband Initiative. Launched in 2022 with $34.6 million in federal funding, it is the largest university-led digital equity project in the U.S., focusing on broadband expansion, digital literacy, and infrastructure development. Thus far, the Broadband Initiative has deployed over 10,000 internet-connected devices, trained thousands in digital literacy, and enhanced connectivity for underserved communities, reflecting ASU's commitment to sustainable community development and digital inclusion.

Edifecs Inc.

Edifecs provides market-leading technology to its payer and health system customers, which serve nearly 300 million people in the U.S. healthcare market. They are tackling $250 billion in excess administrative costs annually by optimizing patient data exchange and utilizing a hybrid cloud infrastructure to enhance efficiency. Their Green IT Initiative has led to significant reductions in energy consumption, including a commitment to cut CO_2 emissions by 615 metric tons per year. Edifecs is also championing digital inclusion through their Digital Community Centers in underserved communities in rural India. Since 2021, Edifecs has set up 24 Centers by the end of 2022 and an additional 21 in 2023. These centers have not only bridged the digital divide but have also transformed lives, impacting 780 children, empowering 13 local change makers, and reaching 22 villages and 2 cities.

Rackspace Technology

Cloud computing company Rackspace Technology is committed to being carbon neutral by 2045, and is also driving thought leadership to guide the industry and accelerate customers' sustainability goals. Rackspace achieved a 5% reduction in global emissions by relocating their headquarters from an 800,000 square foot facility to a more energy-efficient 80,000 square foot space in San Antonio. This move not only cut emissions but also prioritized circularity by reusing 85% of their office furnishings. In parallel, Rackspace Technology developed over 15 technical training programs to help reskill, upskill, and onboard its employees and support its business growth.

Winners: Social Cont.

Mattel, Inc.

Recognized as a top workplace in 2023 by Forbes and Newsweek, toy manufacturer and entertainment company Mattel strives for an inclusive digital environment for their global workforce of nearly 10,000 employees. Through their myMattel platform, they have transformed employee engagement, achieving 100% adoption and facilitating seamless collaboration. Features like auto-translation enhance accessibility, while user-friendly tools empower departments to manage their own content. This initiative not only promotes digital inclusion but by promoting sustainable practices and continuous learning, it aligns with Mattel's goal of being carbon neutral by 2045.

Denominator

While many IT organizations have incorporated environmental data for sustainability efforts, many have yet to engage on the social aspect. However, people plan a key factor in technology design and deployment. Denominator, the leading data provider for measuring social and diversity performance, empower forward-thinking organizations to stay ahead and make informed decisions in business strategies— from investments to procurement and internal efforts. The company has developed the world's largest database of social and diversity data, covering 5M+ companies. This empowers IT systems to integrate human factors into capital and consumer decisions, enhancing supply chain diversity. The insights have already influenced trillions of dollars in investments, shifting the conversation to prioritize people alongside the planet. As they say; people are the common denominator.

Mia AI

As a public benefit corporation, Mia AI leverages AI-driven efficiency to promote sustainability and empower underserved communities. Their key goals include implementing AI-powered energy management systems, adopting sustainable technology, and providing AI literacy education through their AI Annual Membership program. This initiative is, upskilling non-technical women and low-income individuals, with more than 1,500 learners already engaged and an 80% program completion rate. Mia AI's education efforts help drive equitable access to technology and ongoing support, ultimately breaking the cycle of poverty while promoting responsible AI development and deployment.

Winners: Social Cont.

UCLA Health

One of America's top-ranked hospitals, comprising of 4 hospitals and over 280 community clinics, UCLA Health has donated over 78 truckloads of refurbished equipment, totaling more than 431,365 pounds, to enhance digital access for students, families, and nonprofits, working in partnership with Human-I-T. Human-I-T is a nonprofit and social enterprise creating equitable access to technology, providing access to high-speed, low-cost internet, digital literacy training, and ongoing technical support, in addition to donated devices. Through this partnership, UCLA Health is helping to address digital inequity and expand digital access, which is a critical social determinant of health.

Winners: Governance

NatWest Bank

The IT organization of UK-based NatWest Bank took a comprehensive approach to integrate climate considerations into technology governance. IT leadership mandated all colleagues complete climate training; published detailed climate guidance to ensure alignment with goals; and launched the NatWest Climate Dashboard to track and reduce emissions across all areas of IT. The underlying data is based on actual metrics, usage figures and locations, providing business users with confidence that the data reflects their actual usage of services and allowing them to align these metrics with their wider strategic aims for resource optimization.

HSBC

HSBC, one of the world's largest banking and financial institutions, developed a methodology and systematic approach to capturing real-time carbon impact of all the bank's IT applications, infrastructure and digital products. This enabled the IT team to develop targeted decarbonization strategies across technology and make ongoing real-time decisions. For example, engineers can identify hot spots in their applications and make targeted remediation to bring down the bank's carbon footprint. The bank has donated the system's code to the UN Digital Public Good organization and has open-sourced its green software eLearning modules and Tech Carbon Dashboard logic.

Winners: Governance Cont.

BNP Paribas

The BNP Paribas IT department's Sustainable IT initiative relies on a dedicated governance, following 10 key principles defined within the IT Charter of the Group. These principles aim at minimizing both the existing and the future information system environmental footprint. The overall IT footprint has been measured, allowing to track the levers' effectiveness used to reduce the digital impact. This governance framework also engages with suppliers on sustainability, including sourcing strategies and equipment end-of-life. Energy consumption is closely monitored through data center rationalization, renewable and circular energy use (in Sweden for CIB datacenter for example), and temperature adjustments in data centers. Training and awareness are also key within the Group, supported by dedicated paths on the Sustainability Academy platform with training programs, providing to Group employees the sustainable development skills they need.

Morgan Stanley

Morgan Stanley's technology organization created and implemented the company's first-ever set of Sustainable Technology principles as one of the pillars of their larger technology architecture and modernization program. By integrating these principles early in the tech lifecycle, Morgan Stanley maximizes their impact, enabling its IT workforce to better manage and measure sustainability efforts. Impacted areas thus far include tech procurement, software design, and emissions reduction. Overall, Morgan Stanley's sustainability-technology partnership has led to multiple patents this year for such applications as connecting climate scenarios to macroeconomic factors and impact.

NTT DATA Group Corporation

The NTT DATA Group implemented an ambitious IT sustainability governance framework that ensures its technology operations align with company sustainability objectives. This framework promotes the use of eco-friendly technologies, lifecycle management of IT assets, and continuous monitoring of carbon emissions from digital operations. For example, IT modernized Java applications to achieve up to 70% energy consumption reduction. The team has made ambitious corporate commitments to creative open-source projects such as CNCF's Kepler and the Green Software Foundation's Carbon Aware initiative.

Winners: Governance Cont.

Stanford Health Care

Prior to 2022, IT sustainability within Stanford Health Care (SHC) was mostly ad hoc, one-off efforts with no formal organizational goal or structure within IT. With the growing importance of sustainability within SHC, Technology and Digital Solutions (TDS) leadership formalized IT sustainability as an organizational goal and launched a dedicated team with specific sustainability responsibilities. To scale the sustainability initiatives across SHC, TDS and SHC's Sustainability Program Office (SPO) partnered and identified technology as a major enabler for achieving sustainability objectives. This led to the formation of an official TDS Work Group within SHC's formal sustainability governance structure to drive sustainable transformation through technology in SHC.

National Grid

National Grid IT successfully built a strong governance, risk, and controls framework to enhance its sustainability program, ensuring activity-based data and metrics combined with integration into ServiceNow's sustainability data management platform. In June of this year, the framework underwent its first independent audit, which found zero deficiencies, confirming it meets industry best practices.

CalOptima Health

As a County Organized public Health System, CalOptima offers health insurance programs for people of low income and those with disabilities. As part of their Digital Evolution project, the CalOptima IT team implemented sustainability data governance measures to virtualize and privatize more than 174 terabytes of data across 200+ databases and 50 enterprise applications. These measures effectively reduced the organization's Scope 2 Carbon emissions by more than half a megaton.

Winners: Governance Cont.

ERI

In 2023, ERI launched its enhanced Optech CAPTURE system, designed to provide full chain-of-custody tracking throughout the IT asset disposal process. Accessible via mobile devices, it allows ERI technicians to log and photograph items at customer sites, providing detailed records and a signed receipt. This system enhances data security and transparency, offering real-time tracking through a customer portal, ensuring full accountability and protection of customer data from collection to final disposition.

Nordstrom

Nordstrom successfully repurposed significant tonnages of electronic waste and implemented innovative chain-of-custody solutions to ensure data governance policy adherence and to maximize elements that can be recycled into the circular economy. Accessible via mobile devices, it allows technicians at Nordstrom locations to document items with detailed lists and photos, enabling responsible recycling of all end-of-life devices.

Five Key Lessons Learned

In considering the winning initiatives, there were five essential takeaways that organizations should embrace and factor into their own sustainability endeavors to boost likelihood of success and high impact:

1. Sustainability Must Be Integrated into Core IT Strategy: Sustainability is not an add-on but should be woven into the fabric of IT operations, as demonstrated by leaders like Cisco and PepsiCo.

2. Data Is Key to Driving Actionable Insights: Real-time data platforms and dashboards allow organizations to track emissions and optimize resource use, enabling precise, impactful sustainability actions.

3. Collaboration Magnifies Impact: Cross-industry collaborations highlight the importance of shared knowledge and collective action in addressing sustainability challenges.

4. Ambition Coupled with Accountability Drives Success: Organizations with bold sustainability targets, backed by transparent and measurable metrics (e.g., Mastercard), are more likely to drive significant, lasting impact.

5. Technology as a Catalyst for Social Good: Sustainability through IT is not limited to environmental gains—initiatives like UCLA Health's and Edifecs' Digital Community Centers showcase how technology can address social inequities while fostering sustainable development.

These key traits and lessons offer a blueprint for other organizations looking to leverage technology for sustainability, while the inspiring accomplishments demonstrate how innovative thinking can transform both environmental and social landscapes while driving business value.

About SustainableIT.org

Vision

Advancing global sustainability through technology leadership.

Mission

For too long, sustainability has been someone else's problem to solve. As technology leaders, we drive digital transformation programs that unlock the art of the possible. Together, we can define sustainable transformation programs, author best practices and frameworks, set standards and certifications for governance, provide education and training, and raise awareness for environmental and societal programs that make our organizations and the world sustainable for generations to come.

It's time technology leaders take a stand for sustainability, as one.

Mandates

Best Practices, Research and Standards

Identify sustainable digital transformation programs by industry. Research and define best practices, frameworks, and standards for all three pillars of sustainability (environmental, societal, and governance) for IT departments and organizations.

Global Awareness and Recognition

Promote sustainable digital transformation programs and advances in sustainability. Raise awareness through local, regional, and global awards, as well as through social media, publications, and public relations.

Community, Education and Training

Build local and regional communities for technology leaders to advance sustainability. Develop education and training programs for IT leadership and professionals for all three pillars of sustainability.

Transparency and Accountability

Set standards for metrics and reporting to enable transparency and accountability. Create certification programs for individuals and organizations with rights to use our sustainability emblem.

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About SustainableIT.org

SustainableIT.org is a Delaware 501(c)(6) nonprofit, non-stock legal entity led by technology executives who will advance global sustainability through technology leadership. Our mission is to define sustainable transformation programs, author best practices and frameworks, set standards and certifications, provide education and training, and raise awareness for environmental and societal programs that make our organizations and the world sustainable for generations to come.