



A New Model to Meet Demand for Green Building Certification: The US Green Building Council

In the past several years, as energy prices soared and concerns about climate change grew increasingly urgent, more and more companies began to seek green building certification for their facilities from the US Green Building Council (USGBC). In response, the non-profit organization, based in Washington, DC, took steps to provide timely approvals and take advantage of the opportunity to collaborate with companies that had signaled their support for the program. As part of this initiative, USGBC asked Booz Allen Hamilton to evaluate the organization's strategic direction and suggest the best ways to meet skyrocketing demand for certification.

Green Buildings

To encourage sustainable development, USGBC created the LEED Green Building Rating System in 2000. LEED is a voluntary, third-party national rating system for high-performance, sustainable buildings. Developers that use the LEED program can generate energy savings of up to 40 percent.

To date, over 5 billion square feet of commercial building space are involved with the LEED program. As LEED grew increasingly popular, many corporations, including retailers such as Walgreens, Starbucks, and

The Home Depot, lined up for certification. USGBC wanted to ensure that the queue for LEED certification did not become so long that the quality of its reviews were compromised. The organization also sought to protect the image of its LEED brand. And with a staff of only 170, USGBC needed additional resources to oversee LEED certification for thousands of buildings.

New Strategies for Certification of Sustainable Buildings

USGBC turned to Booz Allen to find a way to meet demand for LEED certification and support its broader mission of encouraging sustainable building practices. Drawing upon its extensive experience helping leading non-profits optimize efficiency and increase employee productivity, Booz Allen first conducted a detailed assessment of the organization's overall structure and processes. From this review, the list of USGBC's primary strengths emerged: monitoring research and innovation in sustainable construction techniques; crafting workable building standards; and promoting environmental education. Handling the booming demand for certification itself had the potential to drain USGBC's resources and create distractions from its larger mission.

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In collaboration with USGBC decision makers, Booz Allen proposed that the organization outsource LEED certification to a network of trusted, highly skilled contractors. The solution evolved out of earlier work we had done to create similar networks for the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a non-governmental Swiss organization that develops commercial and industrial standards for everything from toys to lipstick to sophisticated electronics.

USGBC endorsed the outsourcing idea, then asked Booz Allen to develop a business model that would encourage contractors to participate in the program and to act as liaisons with potential certification bodies (CBs). With careful attention to which firms would not only perform the work well, but would also share the cultural values or ethos of USGBC—an important consideration for non-profit organizations—we identified the top global CBs and began negotiations to build a network of outside reviewers. With a solution formed from Booz Allen's expertise across the range of energy efficiency and green building challenges, USGBC established the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) in 2008 to oversee the credentialing program.

Helping USGBC Be Ready for What's Next

After solving its problem with demand for LEED certification, USGBC asked Booz Allen to take a deeper look into its organization to help it continue to scale up and improve operations. Most recently, Booz Allen has been working with USGBC to develop market entry

strategies to expand the organization's ability to carry out its goals internationally. Booz Allen is examining the use of potential partner organizations in numerous countries, including India, China, and Brazil, to work with USGBC to develop new business and governance models in expanding LEED certification programs.

USGBC will likely play a leading role in the \$40 billion green building market. By helping USGBC forecast demand for services in the future and map potential new strategies to meet the growing need, we helped the organization become increasingly proactive. Now USGBC is positioned to focus on the future and is scaling up for strong, targeted growth in the United States and around the globe.

Ready to Help You

Booz Allen's work with USGBC illustrates the type of services we provide to associations, foundations, and charities across many sectors, including housing, education, health, the environment, and defense-related non-profits. Our experience, including extensive work with the federal government, gives us the ability to understand a non-profit's need to identify and address its strategic mission and to deliver end-to-end services from innovative and lasting strategies, to powerful financial and organizational models, to technology support. To learn more about how Booz Allen can help your organization meet its strategic mission and be ready for what's next, visit www.boozallen.com.

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