

# Roll Up Your Green Sleeves: Implementing Sustainable Initiatives

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## ABSTRACT

Nearly all building projects have a mandate to achieve a low initial construction cost and to meet the sometimes aggressive design and construction schedule. Quite often, sustainability intentions get set aside to ensure these priorities are not compromised. But aren't initiatives such as improved building envelope efficiency, reduced project carbon footprints, and use of alternative construction systems that result in less resource consumption, important too? Sometimes, the situation calls for not caving in to the naysayers, rolling up your sleeves and getting to work, in order to properly accommodate all of a project's requirements. Jim and Jodi have been facilitators - and instigators - of advancing sustainable initiatives for years. They will share stories of successful - and unsuccessful - building projects that meet sustainability goals while respecting projects' schedules and budgets. The focus will be on presenting useful perspectives and empowering attendees to make responsible change, allowing them to realize their potential to make a difference in their projects and in the world. Some of the categories of stories that we'll share:

### 1. Acknowledge your goals - and respect the goals of others

What are you trying to accomplish? And what are other members of the team trying to accomplish that may synergize with, or conflict with, your goals?

### 2. Cut through the hearsay

Erroneous beliefs, widely held or rumored, can stop a green initiative dead in its tracks. One common one is the false assertion that all green initiatives cost money. Some can save a significant amount!

### 3. Play your role / acknowledge your power

Own it! "I'm only the structural engineer" won't cut it. A disparaging comment by a conservative member of the project team can prevent a good idea from being implemented. Conversely, being familiar with, and open to, alternative construction systems from the traditional can lead to interesting, successful projects.

### 4. Resist "creeping conservativeness"

Some engineers bump up beam or equipment sizes "just to be safe." A version of this is sticking to decades-old wall details that may have worked well countless times, but are resource-intensive or allow thermal losses through the envelope.

## 5. Pick your battles

Educating team members about the possibilities on a project, then having the possibilities rejected for some reason beyond your control, is not a complete loss. It's all about education. Next time it will likely be easier - if you don't burn your bridges.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

**Jodi** is the Director of Sustainability Programs for DASNY. She's had many leadership roles with USGBC local and national committees. She's been an architectural designer and administrator and assisted with greening the Executive mansion. Her work includes implementing green building goals and green procurement, and advancing state policy related to green buildings.

**Jim** is a Principal with Klepper, Hahn & Hyatt, with 30 years' experience as a structural engineer, responsible for design of new buildings and renovations. Interests include alternative structural systems and building envelope. A former chair of the USGBC NY Upstate Chapter, he was formerly on the USGBC National Board.