

PRESENTATION SUMMARY for Diane Bunse

“THE POWER OF ONE”

Herman Miller Environmental Specialist Diane Bunse Discusses How Individual Initiative Can Drive Environmental Action

Herman Miller’s reputation as an environmentally aware company is well known. What is perhaps not as widely known is the depth and breadth of the West Michigan-based furniture maker’s environmental commitment, and how the actions of individual employees throughout the company have accelerated its development.

As a Herman Miller Environmental Specialist, Diane Bunse supports the company’s day-to-day “green” initiatives. This gives her a unique perspective on the many and varied environmental activities underway on any given day, the dollar value of these actions, and the vital role each individual Herman Miller employee plays. It also provides the basis for “The Power of One,” Diane’s presentation that articulates how the actions of even one person can have a profound impact on raising a company’s –and even an industry’s – environmental awareness.

“I share a number of anecdotes I’ve picked up over my years at Herman Miller that highlight our successes as well as a few missteps and lessons learned,” Diane explains. “The point I really try to make is that many of our environmental achievements come as the result of one person saying, ‘I know we can do better.’ I want to encourage anyone listening to start thinking and asking questions at their own company.” Herman Miller is regularly acknowledged for its environmental activities and has earned a number of distinctions for its efforts, most recently a top 10 ranking in Business Ethics magazine’s “100 Best Corporate Citizens.” The company was singled out for its leadership in environmental stewardship, sharing the No. 1 designation in that category with four other companies. “On one hand, it’s great to be recognized as a leader,” Diane admits, “but on the other hand, we know we have a lot more to do.”

With our environmental management system, our employees are aware of how their jobs impact the environment. “My emphasis is on how you as an individual can inspire your company to become more environmentally progressive,” she says. Diane touches on a number of subjects including energy efficiency, green product design, packaging, environmental compliance, indoor air, environmental communications, and manufacturing impacts. Diane also draws on a variety of facts and figures to emphasize that “going green” is good for business. For example, since joining the EPA Energy Star Building program in 1999, Herman Miller’s energy efficiency projects have yielded a 37 percent return on investment. Information of this nature tends to drive home the point that it takes more than halfhearted corporate directives or a clever marketing slogan to be truly an environmentally conscious company. Again, she returns to the essence of her presentation: “Each person has the ability to create greater environmental awareness and action within his or her company. I’m here to share what we at Herman Miller have learned. Based on our experience, everyone has a part to play.”