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FROM BASELINE TO ACTION:
A PRACTICAL SUSTAINABILITY SERIES BY PATH ZERO

After the Easy Wins: How to Find the Next Wave of Emissions Reductions

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After the Easy Wins: How to Find the Next Wave of Emissions Reductions

Most suppliers start their sustainability journey with obvious actions: recycling programs, basic waste tracking and energy awareness. Those steps matter, but eventually, progress slows. That slowdown is normal.

Once the easy wins are complete, remaining emissions are driven by how the business operates as a system, not by isolated activities. At that point, internal teams often need help seeing what's next.

This is where a sustainability audit becomes valuable.

For many suppliers, starting with a sustainability audit feels more comfortable than trying to piece together a program internally. An audit provides structure, clarity and a neutral assessment of current performance – without requiring suppliers to already know what to measure or where to focus. Instead of guessing, suppliers gain a clear starting point and a prioritized path forward.

Why Progress Stalls After the Obvious Improvements

Early sustainability actions are visible and discrete:

- Recycling and waste diversion
- Lighting upgrades
- Basic energy efficiency

After that, emissions are embedded across operations, facilities, purchasing, logistics and even community interaction. These opportunities are harder to spot because they:

- Cross departmental boundaries
- Involve trade-offs between cost, efficiency, and impact
- Require technical or regulatory insight

Finding them requires a broader lens.

What a Sustainability Audit Actually Evaluates

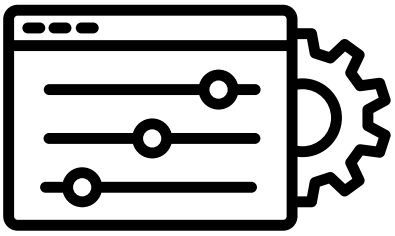
A sustainability audit reviews the entire facility, operation and surrounding context to understand where emissions, inefficiencies and risks truly originate. Programs like *Shop! Path Zero Consulting* assess current performance across integrated focus areas, including:

OPERATIONS & ENERGY



- Emissions management
- Energy use optimization
- Energy-efficient buildings
- Renewable energy options
- Refrigerants

FACILITIES & ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS



- Indoor air quality
- Particulate controls
- Water use
- Waste reduction

LOGISTICS & SUPPLY CHAIN



- Shipping and transportation
- Packaging
- Purchased goods and capital goods
- Purchased services
- Finished goods

PEOPLE, LAND & RESILIENCE



- Land use
- Travel and employee commuting
- Community impact
- Resilience and climate risk

From Assessment to Action: How Opportunities Are Prioritized

An effective audit doesn't stop at identifying issues. It scores current performance, identifies improvement opportunities and ranks those opportunities using clear criteria such as:

- Environmental impact
- Organizational priorities
- Stakeholder impact
- Economic impact
- Ease of implementation

This structured prioritization reveals what to do first, what can wait and where meaningful sustainability targets can realistically be set.

The Bottom Line

After the easy wins are complete, progress in sustainability depends on insight – not effort. A sustainability audit provides a clear, defensible roadmap for next steps, which helps suppliers move beyond basic actions toward measurable improvement, risk reduction and long-term value. That's how sustainability evolves from good intentions into a strategic advantage.



ABOUT PATH ZERO

Shop! Association offers a suite of Path Zero sustainability programs designed to help members document, track, and improve performance—building credible, measurable results across operations and projects.

Path Zero Emissions: An easy-to-use platform for tracking Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions—capturing utilities, waste, water, and operational data in alignment with the GHG Protocol for reporting needs, including California SB 253.
Path Zero Element: Transforms architectural drawings and specifications into material quantities and embodied carbon—capturing store-specific variations across design, fixtures, and displays for scalable, repeatable reporting.
Path Zero Benchmark: Evaluates sustainability performance across 135 qualitative and quantitative data points—delivering industry benchmarking and recognized ratings supported by third-party assurance.
Path Zero Consulting: Provides hands-on support for sustainability strategy, facility and program audits, target setting, and implementation planning.

Each program can be used independently or together, depending on your organization's goals and reporting needs.

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ABOUT SHOP! ASSOCIATION

Shop!, the global trade association dedicated to enhancing retail environments and experiences, embraces a culture of inclusion where diverse voices are active in all aspects of our organization. This supports an environment in which all individuals feel respected and are treated fairly, and different viewpoints, opinions, thoughts, and ideas are encouraged and embraced. We proudly maintain the highest standards of ethics and transparency.

Our Purpose: Empowering our members to innovate at retail.

Our Mission: From ideation through implementation, Shop will engage our diverse array of members with education, insights and events that enable them to co-create innovation that evolves retail worldwide.

Our Vision: Shop's members will shape the evolution of retail.

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