

Change Agents:

Sustainability Ambassadors at York University are agents of change for a sustainable future. Being a change agent is not as easy as it first may sound because of the differences inherent in a richly diverse community like York. To be a successful change agent at York, sustainability ambassadors must possess the understanding, motivation, and skills to create that change. **Understanding** relates to knowledge of the environmental, economic, and social issues related to sustainability. **Motivation** means having a personal set of values that include sustainability plus a desire to act on those values. **Skills** is about having the abilities and traits to convincingly share that understanding and motivation with others.

Understanding:

- Engage in self-assessment, self-reflection, and analysis
- Reflect on what is happening to make meaning, gain perspective and understanding
- Analyze power, structures of inequality, and social systems that govern individual and communal life
- Understand the need for systemic change
- Understand “organic” change
- Make ethical decisions which incorporate responsibility to self, community, and society

Motivation:

- Recognize the global implications of their actions
- Help envision, articulate and create positive scenarios for the future of society
- Act with integrity and courage
- Involve others, inspire and excite participants, engender support and commitment

Traits:

Resilient	Optimistic	Tenacious	Committed	Passionate	Emotionally intelligent
Patient	Assertive	Persuasive	Empathetic	Authentic	Ethical
Self-Aware	Competent	Curious	Caring	Innovative	Leadership

Skills:

- Collaborate, network, and build teams
- Set realistic and clearly defined goals and objectives
- Be both a leader and a follower, as necessary
- Be willing to take baby steps if needed
- Commit to finding solutions, not just problems
- Communicate ideas clearly, concisely, and precisely both orally and in writing
- Listen to others and incorporate their ideas and perspectives
- Accommodate individual differences in decisions and actions and negotiate across these differences.
- Challenge the status quo effectively when appropriate
- Ability to analyze and influence groups

And last but not least:

- Tolerate ambiguity and cope effectively with change themselves!

Useful theoretical models for further research:

“A Social Change Model of Leadership Development” (1996)

“Systemic Leadership” (Allen & Cherrey, 2000)

“Reframing Organizations...” (Bolman & Deal, 2003)

“Relational Leadership” (Komives, S. R., Lucas, N., & McMahon, T. R., 1998)