

Sustain**ABLE**

How to find success as a sustainability professional
in a rapidly changing world



VIRGINIA CINQUEMANI

ACTION STEPS WORKBOOK

DEAR GREEN GORILLA IN THE MAKING...



This workbook has been created as a companion to the book *SustainABLE: How to Find Success as a Sustainability Professional in a Rapidly Changing World*.

Do your exercises as soon as you read the corresponding chapter and commit right now to invest your time and focus in them. Practise the techniques I suggest in the book and in the action steps as often as you can.

Skills need to be practised consistently to become habits and, eventually, change you for the better.

If you have any comments or questions on the book or the *Action Steps*, feel free to get in touch via the website www.thegreengorilla.co.uk

I wish you a lifetime of success and satisfaction.

PART 1

Chapter 1 - Let's Start with You

How can you free yourself from your limiting beliefs and what's holding you back in your career?

The power of visualisation is immense in changing our mindset and lives.

Below, you'll find questions that I ask my career coaching clients, which I advise you to answer as honestly as possible. Try to imagine how your career will develop, and create your own vision of the future.

1. How do you define career success? Are you achieving some level of success in your current job?
2. Imagine your bills are paid and you have relatively unlimited cash reserves. What would you do with your time?
3. What would your career be like if you had the power to transform it into your ultimate vision?

4. What should your obituary say about your career accomplishments and the types of impacts you left on the people you worked with?
5. If absolutely no obstacles stood in your way, what would you like to attain most in your career?
6. Who are the people you most admire? What about them or their careers attract you to them? Is there something they have or actions they take, which you'd like to emulate in your career?
7. Imagine yourself in the future, at a point where you've achieved great career success. What is it that you've accomplished? What does your life look like?

8. Do you feel you have a gift or calling? How can you share this gift or best answer the call to achieve fulfilment?
9. What is the one activity you most love? Is it part of your career? If not, how can you make it part of your career?
10. In five years' time, where would you like to be in your career? Would you be in a leadership position, or a senior role? Would you want to have started a family? Would you be preparing for retirement or taking a career break to travel the world?
11. How about in 15 years? What would be different in your life, and how would your job affect it?

12. Now, take a few minutes to write down what stops you from achieving your full potential in this career.

13. Is it something that's within your power to change (i.e. you need further training, or to work on your emotional responses and limitations)? Or do you not share values with the company that employs you?

14. Write down a full list and see what actions you can take, right now, to change and move closer to your goals.

Chapter 7 - How to Keep Your Passion Alive

1. Look at your future self, a few years down the line:
 - Who do you see?
 - What are you known for?
 - What type of person are you?

2. Then, make a list of five potential activities or changes you can implement to feed the sort of person you want to be - at work and outside it.

3. Now, pick one and implement it in your life.

For example, make an enquiry, sign up to a group or a course, talk to a friend about it so you have accountability, add a reminder to your phone for that activity at a specific time every day or week, treat your goals with the same respect you pay to work-related tasks and meetings.

Keep the list on your phone. Every month, add one new activity or change to your life.

Chapter 8 - What If I Can't Make an Impact?

Take the Green Gorilla quiz to help learn which soft skills to focus on and develop.

Do you feel generally uncomfortable in professional circumstances, but don't know where to start?

The Green Gorilla quiz will provide insight on your soft skills and help you understand which one needs the most attention.

You can also receive a free one-to-one coaching call with a member of the Green Gorilla team to start your personal journey towards empowerment.

www.thegreengorilla.co.uk/test/

Note down any insight you get from the quiz here:

PART 2

Chapter 1 - How Your Technical Skills Can Support You Throughout Your Career

I use the following resources and questions to help my sustainability career coaching clients get started. Afterwards, we go into greater depth on how they can find *ikigai* in their jobs.

Finding Your Inner Strengths and Values

Strength Test: www.high5test.com/test/

Value Test: Personal Value Assessment: www.valuescentre.com/tools-assessments/pva/

Character Strengths: www.viacharacter.org/

Questions to Ask Yourself to Keep Your Technical Knowledge Current

Who can help you?

Is there someone you can follow on social media, for example, that provides helpful insights on the industry? Do you have a mentor in your workplace that you can learn from? Is there a group of people who seem to be doing the right thing? Try joining up.

Where can you find reliable data and info?

Do you subscribe to relevant magazines and newsletters that can give you valuable insights on the industry? For example, Edie, McKinsey, IEMA's Transform, your membership organisation's magazine.

What groups/memberships can you join?

Joining a membership organisation is always a great move for credibility. However, it also helps keep up your CPD, because membership organisations ask for a certain amount of continuous professional development activities to maintain your status. They also provide

opportunities for formal and informal learning via training courses, networking events, conferences, exhibitions, and so on.

***When* are you doing your CPD reading/learning?**

Just as importantly, when do you plan to learn? It's easy to leave your CPD to the last week before it's due, or to subscribe to magazines and newsletters and never read them.

Try spending a few minutes thinking about your *when*, and distribute that effort throughout the year.

My advice? Put it on your calendar like a formal meeting, so that you're less likely to forget about it.

For example, you may dedicate half an hour on Sunday morning while sipping your tea. Or on a Friday, during your commute to work. Or you may plan a few key events and courses at the beginning of the year, which you'll attend throughout the year to enhance your professional growth.

Chapter 2 - The Power of Communication

Change the Way You See Yourself

Identify Your Limiting Beliefs

Think about a specific issue you find difficult to overcome. Using the following questions, brainstorm and explore what limiting beliefs might be restraining you:

1. *What rules have I created in my life that could be limiting my ability to [be confident in public / be listened to / make an impact with clients / get recognised in my work]?*
2. *What pessimistic thoughts and fears reoccur in my head every time I think about [being confident in public / being listened to / making an impact with clients / getting recognised in my work]?*
3. *What unnecessary assumptions do I make about [being confident in public / being listened to / making an impact with clients / getting recognised in my work]?*

4. *What limiting cliches, quotes, aphorisms, or other catch-phrases do I entertain in my head?*

5. *What stereotypical beliefs or cultural myths am I allowing to hold me back?*

6. *Are my standards about "how" things should be negatively affecting my ability to make things happen?*

7. *Am I holding onto any values that interfere with my overcoming this issue? Do I value something that contradicts what I need to move toward?*

8. *What self-defeating narrative have I created, based on my past failures with important tasks?
How does this narrative limit me and become a barrier to achieving my goals?*

9. *What disempowering, recurring stories or mental scripts do I play over and over again in my head?*

10. *Do I hold onto any absolute convictions that keep me frozen in a passive state?*

Now, using the table below, rewrite each limiting belief you've identified in a **positive, action-driven** light.

For example,

"I am a terrible public speaker"

can become:

"I can improve my public speaking skills by preparing adequately and doing some breathing exercises before my next presentation"

My limiting beliefs	My new positive, action-driven beliefs

The cookie jar

Jot down 10 big and small successes or achievements you recall and are proud of. These will be your “cookies”, which you’ll mentally pick out at times of difficulty. They should remind you that you can overcome any difficult situation, just like you’ve done before.

Chapter 3 - Selling 101

You now have all the elements to go out and sell sustainability to your clients.

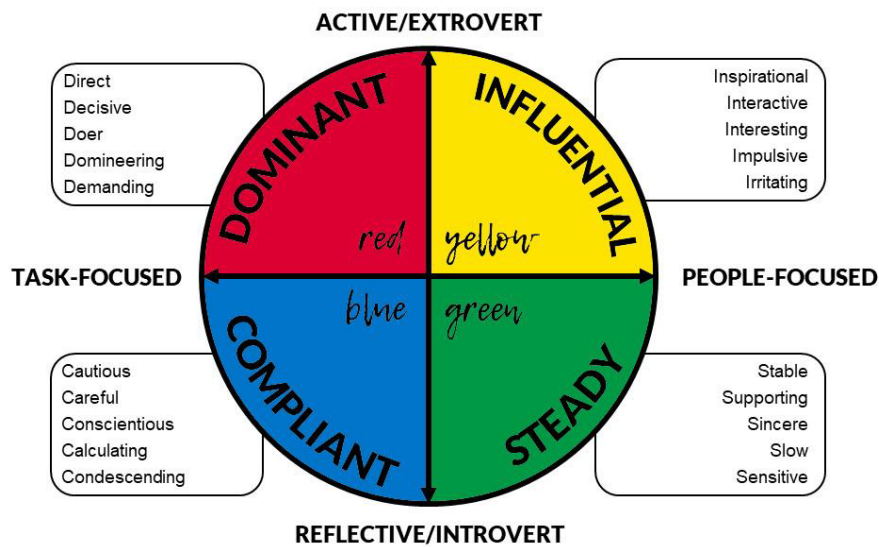
Put together a strategy of how to approach a new client. You can use the checklist below to guide you. The most important part is: do it. Be playful about it. Any new skill takes time to develop and become second-nature, so try the techniques I suggest, but also be curious. Step outside your comfort zone; that's where the real excitement begins.

WHO Do You Want to Be?

1. Change the Way You See Yourself

- ☐ Check your own mindset for unhelpful thoughts and make them into helpful action; try journaling.
- ☐ Build your confidence; use the cookie jar method.
- ☐ Think: *what's the worst that can happen?*
- ☐ Visualise yourself being successful before your next big challenge.
- ☐ Visit the venue beforehand to get familiar with it.
- ☐ Pay attention to your body language and voice; to increase your presence, strike a power-pose or visualise yourself entering the room as a Green Gorilla.
- ☐ Use breathing to calm your nerves down (4-7-8 technique).

- ❑ Understand your own personality using the DISC model:



WHO is Your Client?

2. Do Your Research

- ❑ Company maturity level.
- ❑ Company sustainability stance.
- ❑ Drivers:
 - Client expectations.
 - Reputation.
 - Business transformation.
 - Legal compliance.
 - Risk management.
- ❑ Barriers:
 - Financial.
 - Business culture.
 - Lack of strategic/operational alignment.
 - Lack of management support.
 - Direct resistance to change.

3. Build Personal Rapport

- ❑ Smile.
- ❑ Handshake.

4. Assess Your Client's Personality

- ☐ Dominant.
- ☐ Influential.
- ☐ Steady.
- ☐ Compliant.

5. First Meeting: Ask the Right Questions, Explore Their Needs, and Explain the Process

- ☐ Open questions; in particular "WHY".
- ☐ Explore their needs, challenges, plans, and misconceptions.
- ☐ Explain HOW you will help them, explain the process, and create a roadmap for them to follow.
- ☐ Explain WHAT you have to offer (fine details can be left for later meetings with less senior people).
- ☐ Keep It Super Simple and jargon-free.

6. Get to Know the Project and Context

- ☐ PESTLE - Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental/Ethical.
- ☐ SWOT analysis.

7. Provide a Specific Solution to Their Specific Issues

- ☐ Avoid box-standard.

8. Put Everything in Writing Afterwards

- ☐ Signed agreement.
- ☐ Sustainability objectives embedded in a sustainability strategy or brief.

HOW to Deliver the Message: Influencing Techniques

1. Influencing Techniques:

- ☐ No-nonsense, scientific.
- ☐ Inspirational.
- ☐ Feel-good.
- ☐ Reciprocity.
- ☐ Asking.
- ☐ You are not alone.
- ☐ Authority.
- ☐ Fear.

2. Storytelling:

- ☐ And-But-Therefore.
- ☐ Archetypes:
 - Coming of age.
 - Overcoming obstacles.
 - Constant evolution.
 - True as it ever was.
 - Re-birth.
 - Quest.
- ☐ Use case studies, images, and a compelling narrative to illustrate your point.

WHAT Are the Benefits of Adopting Sustainability in This Specific Case?

- ☐ Explain the five capitals (financial, manufactured, society, human, nature) and how they are all complementary.
- ☐ Business case for sustainability: match it to the client's personality and position, and the company's needs.
 - ☐ Return on investment.
 - ☐ Risk management.
 - ☐ Growth.

Use the tables below to select which benefits are most relevant to your client. Then, pick the three that provide the most value (monetary or otherwise) and write them at the bottom of the tables.

Financial / ROI Benefits	Relevant to my client? [✓ / X]
Obtain licence to operate (e.g. regulations, client's own policies/contract).	
Reduced upfront investment costs (e.g. via designing waste out, materials efficiency, optimised transport, lean processes, etc.).	
Sell/rent more quickly (e.g. real estate assets).	
Sell at a premium.	
Higher productivity among employees.	
Reduced absenteeism.	
Reduced operational and maintenance costs.	
Reduced cost / frequency of component replacements over time.	
Increased longevity of product/asset.	
Access finance (e.g. green bonds, investments, government incentives).	

Risk Management Benefits	Relevant to my client? [✓ / X]
Encourage due diligence.	
Compliance with CSR obligations.	
Increased resilience of product/asset/company.	
Avoid fines related to pollution, waste, non-compliance with laws.	
Reduced risks connected to supply chain volatility.	
Minimised faults in the installation/assembly of components.	
Protect the company's brand and reputation.	
Better managed company and projects.	
Reduced complaints from customers/users.	
Improve performance.	

Brand and Growth Benefits	Relevant to my client? [✓ / X]
Gain an edge over the competition.	
Have a powerful marketing story in an increasingly competitive and demanding market.	
Innovate and produce original products/assets.	
Attract and retain customers.	
Make the brand and company resilient.	
Make the product/asset resilient.	
Encourage feedback loops and learning for future projects.	
Attract and retain talent.	
Access to more bids/investments.	
Access to new markets.	

The three benefits that provide the most value (monetary or otherwise) to my client:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why You Should Learn to Tell Stories

Create a Compelling Story

Stories are useful tools in your arsenal. Keep a full supply that's designed to win a client or impress them with your (or others') experience. It could be the story of an idea (yours or others'), or the story of results (perhaps how your work brought results to other clients).

Use this crib sheet to craft a short, punchy story that you can learn to use when necessary.

Download it here: www.thegreengorilla.co.uk/sustainable-the-book

Chapter 4 - Resilience and Grit: Are These the Most Important Skills of All?

Develop your grit in three steps.

Step 1.

Define what grit or mental toughness means you:

What is your passion? Your ultimate goal?

What does your heart truly desire, from a professional point of view?

Step 2:

Build grit with small, tangible wins. What daily, small, tangible wins can help you advance towards your goals?

How do you show up every day?

What small actions can you do today to bring you closer to the big goals and desires?

Step 3:

Build strong habits and stop depending on motivation.

List five small actionable steps below.

You need to make them into commitments and eventually habits, instead of vague wishes.

To help you do that, define when and where you will address them, until they become second nature.

ACTIONS	WHEN	WHERE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Now, put them in your calendar and mentally commit to making time for your values, so you can advance your goals one little step at the time.

Chapter 5 - Project Managing Sustainability

Use the checklist below for your next projects. It can help you identify all aspects worth considering when you begin your next job as a project manager:

CONTEXT:

- ☐ Are you aware of all relevant laws, regulations, and best practice concerning the project?
- ☐ Are you aware of the wider economic context that the project is being developed in?
- ☐ Are you aware of any social issues relevant to the project?
- ☐ Are you aware of any environmental concerns and opportunities within the context of the project?
- ☐ Have you spoken to all relevant stakeholders to understand your project in depth?
- ☐ Have you asked them “why” three times to get to the bottom of their needs?
- ☐ Have you performed research to understand any precedents to this project, which can be useful as case studies or examples to inspire and motivate the team?

TIME:

- ☐ Be clear on milestones and deadlines. Are you aware of them? Are all the stakeholders involved?

BUDGET:

- ☐ Has the budget been shared?
- ☐ Do you know what you’re working with?
- ☐ Is there a budget ring-fenced for sustainability?

QUALITY:

- ☐ What are the sustainability objectives of the project?
- ☐ Are there any certifications being pursued? What is the process for those?
- ☐ Are the certifications clearly expressed in a sustainability brief?
- ☐ Is this part of every contract, including the subcontractors’?
- ☐ Is sustainability high on the management agenda?

PEOPLE:

- ☐ Are all the responsibilities clear? Think about the RASCI matrix: who is responsible? Who is accountable? Who is supporting? Who must be consulted? Who must be informed?
- ☐ Have all the responsibilities been shared with everyone?
- ☐ Have sufficient resources been assigned to this project?
- ☐ Does everyone know what *your* role is and how they can help you?
- ☐ Have you identified all the (external or internal) experts and consultants you need to support the project?
- ☐ Have you made your case with your client to hire/use those experts or consultants?
- ☐ Can you think of any potential risks and opportunities connected to people in this project?

TECHNOLOGY:

- ☐ Are there any risks associated with the use of technology in this project?
- ☐ Are all the systems up-to-date, digital or analogue?
- ☐ Is innovation high on the agenda, and are all necessary feasibility studies completed to map out risks and opportunities?
- ☐ Is there enough expertise in the team to deal with the technology issues of the project?
- ☐ Can you think of any potential risks and opportunities connected to technology in this project?

PROCESS:

- ☐ Have you created a risk management plan and a risk log?
- ☐ Is there a clear hierarchy for document and action approval?
- ☐ Is everyone aware of it?
- ☐ What other relevant company systems and policies you need to be aware of?
Corporate Social Responsibility, Environmental Management System, Environmental Social & Governance reporting, or others?
- ☐ Is there a record of every meeting, email, and phone call made during the project?
- ☐ Do you have a system in place to run the project as smoothly as possible?
- ☐ Have you created a project management spreadsheet, or are you using a proprietary project management system?
- ☐ Are you keeping it up-to-date?

- ☐ How are you sharing information? Is this system secure and efficient?
- ☐ How are you recording evidence – if needed?
- ☐ Do you have a clear, easily replicable system to do so?
- ☐ How are you storing important information and documents?
- ☐ How are you keeping all the relevant stakeholders in the loop?
- ☐ Do you have a regular catch-up meeting established and a feedback loop in place, so everyone can continuously learn and improve?
- ☐ Have you established a gateway system, so that the project cannot advance unless you have all the information needed from each stage before moving on?

Notes

