

Bronco Challenge for Sustainable Impact

<https://wmich.edu/sustainability/initiatives/broncochallenge>

Weekly Newsletter #6



October 23, 2023

This newsletter will be issued each Monday starting with September 18, 2023; through November 10 when Bronco Challenge Phase 1 Solutions and Project Descriptions are due. The purpose is to provide tips and related information on team formation, project selection and other information that may be helpful to students competing in the Challenge. Previous issues may be found on the Bronco Challenge website noted above.

Bronco Challenge Playbook

Just to be sure everyone is on the same page, the Playbook for 2023-2024 was attached to the email that transmitted this newsletter. There have been changes from last year. For example, this year the team size is set at four people; last year there was an option of 3-5 people. An addition this year is that sponsors had the option to suggest projects. Not all sponsors took us up on that option, but projects that were submitted are in a new Appendix B in this year's Playbook.

Highlights of Selected Sponsor-Suggested Projects

- **Meijer's** Challenge project is for ideas to increase customer awareness and participation in Meijer's plastic bag and film collection program.

The project team will research and evaluate the effectiveness of marketing and communication strategies, including social media, to better engage customers. Based on their findings, the team should create an engagement strategy to be piloted in the Kalamazoo area. Relates to SDG Goal #12.

- **Greif**, a manufacturer of bulk packaging, submitted two projects.

As a first project, Greif needs ideas for environmentally-friendly management of sludge from paper mills.

Greif owns and operates 13 paper mills across the US. These paper mills send approximately 130,000 metric tons in total to the landfill annually, accounting for about 90% of Greif's total waste to landfill out of ~200 global facilities. Nine of these mills send 98-100% of its waste to the landfill because of the lack of known waste diversion opportunities. The waste generated is mostly sludge and "ragger tail" as well as other byproducts. Greif needs help in identifying sustainable waste management solutions for these materials to help them reach their goals of 90% waste diversion from all facilities by 2025 and 99.5% waste diversion at 97% of Greif facilities by 2030. Relates to SDG Goals #9, #11, and #12,

As a second project, Greif needs ideas to strengthen its sustainability report.

Greif has published a corporate annual sustainability report for the past 14 years. The report has evolved and grown over this time, but we want to know how to keep improving and staying competitive with peers. Greif's sustainability report's main audience is for third-party sustainability rating agencies, but recently other audience groups include internal colleagues, customers, suppliers, investors, community members, regulators, etc. What are other large, publicly traded, or manufacturing companies doing for their sustainability reports that Greif could replicate to improve our process? Relates to SDG Goals #8, #11, and #17

Only one team may work on a given sponsor-submitted project. *As of today, all sponsor-submitted projects are available.* Contact Neil Drobny if your team is interested in one of the projects.

Questions: Contact Neil.Drobny@wmich.edu, Bronco Challenge for Sustainable Impact Program Director.