General Mills Sustainability Challenge

Request for Information

Background

General Mills markets some of the world’s best loved brands, including Betty Crocker, Häagen-Dazs, Pillsbury, Green Giant, Old El Paso and Cheerios. Its brand portfolio includes more than 100 leading U.S. brands and numerous category leaders around the world.

General Mills strives to be one of the most environmentally sustainable consumer foods companies in the world, and is committed to attaining and continually improving environmental performance and sustainability.

In 2008, General Mills’ commitment to reduce its environmental footprint gathered momentum throughout the organization. It marked the first full year that Gene Kahn, an organic foods pioneer who founded Cascadian Farm in 1972 and Small Planet Foods in 1997 (which were acquired by General Mills in 2000), began coordinating sustainability initiatives across the company as the Global Sustainability Officer.

General Mills is committed to protect and conserve the natural resource base our business depends upon by continuously improving our environmental performance. We continue to make progress against our environmental goals. Read more about what General Mills is doing in the Corporate Social Responsibility Report.

In addition to our ongoing sustainability goals, General Mills is driven to undertake bold and dramatic steps to find and create new and improved sustainable offerings as retailers and customers are increasingly valuing sustainability-positioned products.

Purpose

General Mills is inviting universities and colleges that possess the requisite skills to develop a Grant Proposal for a new General Mills human food business that drives environmental change through leverage of one or more of the following sustainability principles: a) encouraging sustainable consumption, b) maximizing socio-economic benefit, c) minimizing environmental impact, and/or d) maximizing natural replenishment.

General Mills encourages respondents to be bold and creative in developing approaches and products. We will consider one Grant Proposal per institution, and encourage teams to work collaboratively within universities.

Sustainability: The consumer perspective

General Mills has conducted a variety of sustainability-related consumer research studies evaluating consumers’ insights and desired benefits. The following information is intended to provide guidance around consumers’ perspectives and is not exhaustive.
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Consumer’s Insights

- Conscientious Citizen of the World
  “I want to contribute to the well-being of those in need.”

- Nature’s Advocate
  “I want to preserve nature.”

- Stewardship of Resources
  “I want to use nature’s resources responsibly.”

Consumer’s Desired Benefits

- Power of Small Steps
  “I know that small steps, when combined, can make a big difference.”

- Protecting our Children’s Future
  “I want to protect our natural resources so my children can enjoy them too.”

- Less is More, Waste is Bad
  “I want to reduce the amount of waste I create.”

- Go Green Save Green
  “I feel good when I save money and do something for the environment.”

Process

- Kick-Off Webinar: Introduction to Sustainability Challenge
  - June 15th, 2010
  - Join General Mills in an online webinar to hear our Sustainability Team discuss our sustainability initiatives and how you can take part in helping us create a new sustainable food business; details on the address and time will be send in an email the first week of June
  - Learn about the process for submitting your business idea, the evaluation criteria, and funding process

- Submit Letter of Intent for Grant Proposal
  - Due at 5pm on July 15, 2010; submit your Letter of Intent to sustainability.challenge@genmills.com
  - Summarize your business idea on two pages or less in a “Letter of Intent”; include only non-confidential information in your submission
  - Letters of Intent that offer scalable business ideas with a highly relevant and authentic sustainability propositions will be invited to advance to the next phase of the project
  - A group of General Mills leaders will assess your business idea by July 30th, 2010 and will invite a select group to advance, and submit a full Grant Proposal. For those not selected, we appreciate your idea and will also inform you by July 30th

- Check-In Webinar: Q&A with General Mills Sustainability Leaders
  - Week of August 10th, 2010
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- Speak with General Mills Sustainability leadership directly about your business idea one-on-one, ask questions, and further solidify your Grant Proposal
- Submit Grant Proposal
  - October 1st, 2010 at 5pm CST
  - Please send your Grant Proposal to sustainability.challenge@genmills.com
- Funding Announced
  - We will inform you of our final funding decisions by October 30th, 2010
  - If chosen, we will work with you directly to discuss the details of the allocated funding and next steps

Evaluation Criteria:

Letters of Intent:
Does the business have a relevant and authentic sustainable product proposition?
Is the opportunity unique?
Is the opportunity viable for integration into General Mills?

Grant Proposals:
Proposed Market Opportunity (33%):
Is the sustainability opportunity clear, authentic and realistic?
How original, innovative and thoughtful is the proposed product?
Is the target market sufficiently large?
Does the business concept have competitive advantage(s) over existing solutions?
Financial Viability (33%)
Is the revenue generation plan logical and comprehensive?
What is the plan for profit?
Execution Plan (33%)
Is the business operationally feasible?
What are the barriers to integrating the business into General Mills?
If there is a technology claim, is it sound?

Funding

Based on the evaluation criteria above, select participants will receive grant funding. Grants will range in size from a minimum of $50,000 to a maximum of $200,000 per grant. General Mills will determine grant sizes based on the market opportunity of the business idea. General Mills reserves the sole discretion in selecting proposals for funding and no applicants may be supported.

Thank you.