

Arthur (00:06):

The climate emergency is rapidly emerging as one of, if not, the biggest global challenge of our time. In response, many organizations have set ambitious sustainability commitments to become focused on doing business in a more responsible way. Achieving these commitments requires a mindset shift to drive increased employee engagement and adoption, which are vital for long-term success. Organizations are increasingly looking to their employees to do their part to contribute. But if you've never worked in sustainability, then where do you begin?

(00:40):

In this episode, we'll explore how sustainability can benefit employees and their careers, revealing why sustainability should be embedded into every role and, crucially, how we can do it. Our guests will also touch on how organizations can create a sustainable culture and overcome key barriers to organizational change and growth. Sustainability offers much more than a climate crisis response. It's a growing opportunity to elevate careers and drive positive change in everything we do. My name is Arthur Jones, and I'm joined by our guests, Tawny Chritton Keene, vice president and Global Head of Corporate Sustainability; Bo Storozuk, director of Global Corporate Sustainability, Talents and Culture; and Reem Habib, the Graduate Environmental Consultant.

(01:24):

So, to start things off, I'm going to start with an easier question as an ice-breaker. How did you all make your start in sustainability? I'm going to start with you, Tawny.

Tawny (01:33):

Great, thank you. I guess my path was not the most linear. Educationally, my undergraduate degree is in English and theater, and I later went back and got an MBA. Earlier in my career, I did more civil society and non-profit work before joining corporate America, specifically through Jacobs. Jacobs afforded me the opportunity to wear about seven different hats in my career so far, spanning environmental sales and strategic planning to international government affairs with a little bit of ethics in there. Ultimately, I was leading some human rights initiatives for the company, which was kind of the most direct path into the corporate sustainability world, and broadening that remit over time to include more of the environmental components and more of the ESG reporting components. And now in this role, I'm heading up the corporate sustainability team.

Bo (02:25):

My journey has also not been so direct. I was probably first introduced to all of this when I moved from Canada to the US to play college hockey at an environmental liberal arts college in northern Wisconsin. I think my sustainability introduction started there. Even when I ended up transferring schools for hockey-related reasons, I continued my journey in majoring in business and minoring in environmental studies. I even had my first fellowship at the St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development, working on

the university's carbon footprint back in the day. From there, I went into grad school and started my career; I went more of the international business route and then went into learning and development. And I don't know, ten or so years later, I had the opportunity to join Tawny's team, and the rest is history. And so it's really been a blessing for me getting to combine all of that experience and consulting and learning and talent and now really just get to focus it on all things sustainability.

Reem (03:41):

Yes, so I actually consider myself to still be somewhat at the start of my career with sustainability. I just recently graduated from university about a year ago, and I'm currently in my first full-time job as a graduate environmental consultant here in the Jacobs Middle East business. Looking back at how it all started, I think for me, my relationship with sustainability was very much tied to my childhood and how I grew up perceiving the world. I still remember how me and my siblings would always give each other superpowers and mine would always be tied to nature and sustainability. And I think many of us in this field sort of start this way through a connection or a profound appreciation and desire for good.

Arthur (04:24):

Amazing. Thank you. I think it's really interesting to see the parallels between the three of you, the fact that you've got such different creative backgrounds, and the variety there. So, thank you for sharing that.

(04:36):

Moving on to our first question, and I think there'll be some echoes of what you mentioned in your backgrounds, why is it critical for sustainability to be considered part of everyone's job? And once again, Tawny, if I could start with you, that'd be great.

Tawny (04:52):

Yeah, thank you. I have to start with just the sheer human perspective here. We as a society are facing some huge and unprecedented challenges from the climate and nature crises to water scarcity issues, global health, pandemics, geopolitical disruption and beyond. And we really all must work together at this moment and in this decisive decade if you will, to come together and tackle some of these challenges to keep enduring towards a future in which we all can thrive.

(05:23):

So, as a global citizen and as a mom to a young daughter, that really drives me personally. And I think a lot of folks, wherever they're sitting in organizations, also feel a similar desire to be part of something that's contributing to that greater good, to be part of helping propel us forward as a society and steward our planet.

(05:43):

From a more business perspective, kind of having some sort of sustainability program and reporting on it is no longer a nice to have or reputational fluff as it perhaps may have been perceived one day at least. It's now table stakes and really a business imperative to meet increasing regulatory expectations and requirements, increasing expectations from investors, from employees, from consumers and beyond. So that's really essential, and that does take everyone across the company playing some role in that. Businesses that really get it and get it right integrate sustainability into the core of their company strategy and into their business model. And that helps unlock innovation, helps foster more attraction and retention of top talent who care a lot about these issues, helps manage enterprise risk and ultimately helps businesses seize the tremendous opportunity that's out there to be part of tackling and solving some of these huge challenges I mentioned that the world is facing. And that creates profit. That creates longer-term resilience and business success for organizations.

(06:53):

Again, with that at the core of company strategy, it's not something that can be tackled and delivered by a small but mighty corporate sustainability team alone. It really takes risk, procurement, legal, sales, ops, project design, project delivery, on and on, and truly every role in this enterprise and other organizations to bring that to life and deliver it full scale. So that's kind of how I see why it matters to be part of every employee's role.

Arthur (07:26):

Thanks, Tawny. That was great. You did touch on talent attraction and retention, which I think is a great point. And I'd love you to fill in a bit on this, please, Reem, because you are starting your career. Could I ask you the same question? Why should sustainability be considered a key part of everyone's job?

Reem (07:44):

I think my answer to this is always going to be a bit more personal. To me, it starts with how I perceive sustainability. Sustainability is very much innately part of what I do, who I am and what I care for. This is what Tawny was saying in terms of trying to attract people who are passionate about what they do and making sure that sustainability puts the business at the heart of what we do.

(08:10):

I know it's easy for someone already in this field to say this, but I think the value is in it for everyone. It's just a matter of trying to recognize what the value looks like to you. And it's important that we collectively do it regardless of background, whether you're a mechanical engineer, you're a project manager, and so on and so forth, because the essence of the future that we want is that nobody gets left behind. And I think for people to start really considering sustainability in everything they do, it's important for us to understand it. Because when people understand, they're able to empathize. When people empathize, they're able to care. And when people care, that's when they start to take action.

Arthur (08:50):

Amazing answer. Thank you very much. Bo, I know you weren't initially asked to answer this but is there you'd like to weigh in on this question?

Bo (08:59):

Just to try and round out what Tawny and Reem both said, which I think were incredible answers, is that when we step back and look at the value and impact of a sustainability lens and what that brings, for me, I think it comes down to the fact that the lens of sustainability provides such value and impact because it's a more holistic view of how we can do things. It provides career opportunities, it provides innovation opportunities. There's just so much value and impact there that if we start looking at it this way, it's going to benefit everybody involved.

Arthur (09:44):

Great, thank you. I love how you put that; it has to be a mindset change, which I think is really important. And I think that ties in beautifully into the next question. I mean, there's always going to be people that are, I suppose, nervous about making this part of their role or unsure of how to do it. So, what would you say to people who think sustainability isn't part of their job? Tawny, I'm going to start with you again.

Tawny (10:06):

That is a great question, Arthur. Thank you. Rather than saying something to that individual, I'd actually start by asking that person to say a few things to me. I would ask a few questions to try to understand how they understood what their role is for the company or the organization, how they understand what their team or function's role is for the organization, how they understand what the organization's overall purpose or role in society in the world is and try to just unpack that a little bit because nobody comes at this from the exact same direction. Everyone has different life experiences and different perspectives on why they view their job or they view the world the way that they do. There's no one-size-fits-all message that I could just deliver to any given individual who expressed that this isn't part of their job.

(10:52):

So I think once I understood a little bit more where they were coming from, I would then maybe open it up into a bit of awareness raising or myth debunking or even just demystifying what sustainability really even means because it's such a holistic term and mindset and approach to things that span those environmental topics, those social topics, those economic and governance topics that I think a lot of folks may not quite realize how all-encompassing it is. So, it's not just about reducing emissions or improving waste management. It really touches on supplier diversity, social value and equity, human rights, and building resilience systems and infrastructure that can endure shocks from nature and into the future.

(11:38):

So there are so many entry points to it when you understand the whole umbrella of sustainability that I think might open up some opportunity for more dialogue with that individual and how their role really

does and can play into that. And I guess the last comment would be it's not be just one chat probably, this requires ongoing dialogue and conversation among peers and colleagues and others to really sort this out as an individual and as a collective how one can play into this in meaningful ways.

Arthur (12:09):

Thank you, Tawny. That was an amazing answer. I definitely learned a lot about how it's actually quite a collaborative solution, what needs to be collaborative. It's not just a one-person problem. And I also love the way you explained how vast and complex this topic actually is. And I think that leads beautifully into my next question, which I think, Bo if you could please answer this. How can we make sustainability easier to apply to our work and our lives?

Bo (12:35):

So when you look at that definition that Tawny started to provide about the breadth that really fits under this sustainability umbrella, you start to see that there are almost limitless options to be able to start to apply that. I think the key, first and foremost, is to make it personal because if it's not personal, people will be indifferent to it, right? If you're not passionate about it, you're not going to take action. So what are the things that really matter most to you, and why did those things matter most to you? Don't worry about doing it all. That umbrella is vast and broad. And there's even this term eco-anxiety when people in this space feel like they're almost taking on this entire problem of saving the world and having to do too much. We all have a small part to play, and every one of those small parts matters.

(13:26):

So, personally, I think there are lots of opportunities, and you don't have to look further than your home and your community. If it's around the house, everything, what are you passionate about? If it's gardening and composting and food choices and things like that, we just had to replace a couple of energy appliances in the house, and we made the choice as those things came up to do it more energy efficiently and apply solar panels and things like that. Again, don't do it all at once. But as it makes sense and as things come up, you can choose how to make better decisions in those areas. And then in your community, with local schools, causes, or organizations you can donate or volunteer for. Whatever those things that are part of your life and have an impact, we can look at getting involved and making a difference or just making better choices in each of those areas.

Arthur (14:25):

Just to understand this a bit better, how could you make this all relevant for various groups across an organization?

Bo (14:33):

I think what's important again is, what are you passionate about? And then finding all the ways that you can plug into that sustainability umbrella that we're talking about. If you don't know where to start, you are

only a Google or an AI search away to understand what are the most critical trends and important issues for sustainability in finance or HR or any role that you're in, right?

(15:02):

So, a couple of examples in that space. Finance, the world is moving to more from voluntary reporting to mandatory reporting and disclosures. And that's not just financial reporting; that's non-financial reporting. So that space is changing entirely around that. If you look at a profession like HR, human rights, employee wellbeing, health and wellness, that's all only expanding. And I think we saw it especially accelerated coming out of Covid where work and personal life and personal wellbeing is blended and really critical for people in their professional lives too. So there's a lot of opportunity there.

(15:43):

If you're in sales, you think about what are these regulatory drivers that are changing, especially things if you're a publicly traded company and there's a vested demand around changing laws in the EU or the SEC that's going to impact your clients in what is required and maybe how your company or what you provide as a service or a solution for them is going to be needed. So the more you understand those regulatory drivers, what's going on in regional nuances or marketplaces around this. Talking to experts if you have them in your company. And if you don't, find organizations out there – there are plenty of them that you can reach out to understand this landscape. Things are just changing and moving so fast in this space. The more that you can stay engaged in understanding what those trends, themes and impacts are, guaranteed you'll have no shortage of opportunities to find how to plug and play into this.

(16:43):

I think the last thing I'd say, nine months into my role in this space, the most learning that I've had is truly connecting to people in each of these spaces. So doing a little bit of research on my own, but then talking to the people living and breathing in these professions. They probably don't realize it, but I easily have 50 plus mentors across the company. These are informal mentors that I'm just learning from every day as we converse in this space and understand what's going on, where we need to go, and what actions we can take.

Arthur (17:18):

Thank you, Bo. That was an amazing answer. I really enjoyed learning about having a sense of curiosity, I think, to ask questions and working with people to understand and to learn more about your specific role and also, I think aligning it to your passions, which I think is really important. I love the way you spoke about gardening and composting or finding whatever that you are passionate about outside of your role to work with.

(17:39):

And on that note, Reem, I know that, as you said earlier, you started your career in sustainability, but I'd love to hear your point of view: how do you apply sustainability practically in your day-to-day job?

Reem (17:53):

While it may sound counterintuitive initially, but my approach to continuously integrating sustainability into my day-to-day job is in maximizing my interactions with professionals and individuals who are not working within the field of sustainability. And I think, like Tawny mentioned, people come in from all directions, and it's important to try and recognize and understand that. For example, what we do within our team is occasionally have interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary workshops with other team members when working on projects. And so what happens is you get these questions from professionals within other disciplines that challenge you into either reinforcing or re-evaluating your approach and how you apply sustainability within your job. And I think it's also a great means for you to continue to remind yourself to up-skill and to keep up-to-date with what's new. And it's a constantly evolving process, really, like what Bo mentioned.

Arthur (18:51):

Great. Reem, thanks so much for your answer. That was very enlightening. I'd like to delve a little bit deeper there. Could you please provide me with a few practical examples of how you up-skill within your role?

Reem (19:03):

One of the ways that I do that is within my own role as the outreach lead for the STEAM committee here at Jacobs Middle East. I think this role enables me to not only reach out and volunteer and connect with all sorts of schools, universities, professional institutions, but it also allows me to first-hand interact with the students and people of different backgrounds. That sort of prompts you to suddenly start picking up subtle hints that later on you see is a potential trend or change within sustainability. I think that interaction also serves as a great reminder and motivator for me that there's always more out there to learn.

(19:44):

We have to be able to acknowledge, I think, that change is constant. And I find that young people tend to be a great insight into these new trends. So like Bo puts it, the opportunities and resources to stay connected are limitless in today's time, whether that's through your professional network, attending workshops, webinars, looking at social media, online resources, or even in something as simple as a conversation with your child, your parents, or your loved one. Every interaction really is equally valuable and will always be an opportunity to learn something new.

Arthur (20:22):

Thanks so much, Reem. That's a great answer. Then, moving back to more of an enterprise or commercial scale, Tawny, many organizations are struggling to help employees upskill and improve sustainability. What tips could you give them based on the journey Jacobs has been on for the last few years?

Tawny (20:42):

Yeah, this is a great question and really top of mind for many organizations globally right now trying to get at this in different ways. I'd say a couple of things. I think one of the first challenges is making sure you're balancing the global employee population and understanding what information you do need to get to all of your employees to have that baseline foundation of knowledge, but also understanding who your target audiences are and highest priority folks that could be needle movers in this space to drive your sustainability agenda and help achieve the objectives and goals you've set out. So doing that work upfront to do the stakeholder mapping, the empathy mapping, target your key audiences and personas, and then develop learning journeys and content and outreach activities to reach those folks is really important and something we've been focused on.

(21:32):

Secondly, make sure you are dedicating adequate headspace time resources to this. And we've been trying to get at that in a number of ways. Perhaps most delightfully for me, as we were able to bring in Bo and create this whole new role on our team that's dedicated to talent and culture and driving those organizational changes and up-skilling needed here. So we've now got someone who's A, fabulous, and B wakes up every morning thinking about this and designing strategies and approaches to make this happen. So that's hugely important.

(22:03):

And then I would also add kind of making sure you're also thinking about the top down and the bottom up approach where you have a very strong tone from the top coming from your senior most leaders. And they're not only talking that talk, but walking that walk and kind of the clear, consistent messaging around sustainability being a high priority for the company, integral to company culture and something we should all be adopting that sustainability mindset in our day-to-day decision-making and activities. And with that, too, paired with harnessing that grassroots energy of your entire employee base because there are so many folks across all different functions like we're talking about that have passion in this space and really just want to figure out how to plug in and contribute to this. So providing channels, resources and ways of reaching out to understand where they can plug into it and get activated. So those would just be a few tips.

Bo (22:52):

I'd like to jump in and add one more piece to that because I think those are really fantastic specific examples of everything that needs to happen from the leadership level, from the practical level, and of how employees can get engaged and how we enable that to happen. I think that underpinning that all is company culture.



(23:11):

Culture is something that's always talked about, but sometimes it is often hard to define. The most helpful way that was shared with me to define culture is by looking at artifacts. Artifacts can be stories, they can be events that happen again over time. If you think about what happens personally in culture, it's music, it's food, it's holidays. It's all these things that bring people together over specific milestone events. It's no different for company culture, right? What are those things that bring people together? What are we bringing people around? How are we sharing those stories? What are the stories that we're most promoting and sharing to help people go on these journeys?

(23:57):

It's about really understanding where you're at on this cultural transformation. Is sustainability something that's just plugged in in certain pockets with certain experts or one part of the company? Or is it truly integrated into your operations and decision-making at all levels? And listen, we're all at different points in that journey as organizations as we figure this out, especially with how fast things are changing. So I think it's really key for organizations to step back and look and what are those artifacts? What are the things that we already have in place that we can double down on and leverage? And then what are those gaps that we can start to fill in with a lot of the things that Tawny mentioned? Because if you don't have that strong culture underpinning all of this, each of those things may be beneficial for maybe short periods of time, but you might not see them sustainable and have the shelf life that they need to really drive behavior change and culture change in the company.

Arthur (25:01):

That's great. So I'd love you to answer the next one, Bo. What advice could you give others to help incorporate sustainability into their work regardless of their role?

Bo (25:10):

Yeah, when I look at this, I take a step back and look at two things. One, people are being asked constantly to put more into their roles and integrate into the services or solutions that they provide. Companies are demanded or required to implement these things, and it's sustainability, it's inclusion and diversity, it's AI, digital transformation, and the list goes on. And that can be overwhelming.

(25:42):

So, topic agnostic, I break it down from a learning journey perspective. First of all, what is the baseline information, foundational knowledge that you need? How does that apply to my specific role and deep domain expertise? And then how do I integrate that across different roles with the necessary collaborations?

(26:08):

So, let me break that down a little bit more. That baseline information and knowledge and sustainability, when we talk about everything going in the environmental space and decarbonization and circular economy and nature-based solutions or generative design, there's all these really amazing things that are happening in the world, energy transition, what's going on in these spaces and how might your role plug into it? But even a baseline awareness of that is healthy, so you know what you don't know, and you know where to plug in.

(26:40):

On the social side, with supplier diversity and human rights and general inclusion and wellbeing for employees, a lot of spaces to plug into there. And then there's all sorts of the governance and financial reporting and things that we talked about there earlier as well. So the more that you understand the lay of the land and the basics of all of that, the more you can understand where you fit in. So that's the next part. What is my role? What is the opportunity for me to play in the space in my own deep domain expertise or profession? And so the more that you can understand, I provided a couple examples already, what can sales focus on, finance and HR, whatever your role is, again, doing the research to figure out what are those themes and trends? What are the things being impacted, and what is the role that I need to play in that?

(27:34):

When you look at what roles exist today and what careers and roles might not exist yet but might six or 12 months down the road, you start to see that there's really a lot of opportunity for innovation, career growth and things like that. So understanding what your specific role to play is that next piece.

(27:54):

Once you have that baseline knowledge and you understand how that pertains to your specific role, then we talk about this concept of horizontal connectivity and collaboration, right? If you're in a corporate function, what cross-functional relationships between HR and finance and learning or procurement and other things do you... If you make a decision that pulls one lever and affects someone over there, how do you need to collaborate and are you aware of those interdependencies? Or if you're in an organization that maybe works across multiple markets or multiple regions, again, understanding what the relationships are and how we need to collaborate even internally as organizations is really critical in this space. If we don't do that, we get stuck playing in silos. And whatever we're providing as a service or a solution for our clients and our customers and the world, it's not going to be its best. As we talked about this sustainability really being this profound holistic lens, and if we're operating in silos or only attacking one piece of that, we're missing out on the opportunity, and we're missing out on the potential for more value.

Arthur (29:06):

I've heard some amazing things. I've heard a lot of talk about personal responsibility, the curiosity mindset, collaboration. Reem, I loved the way you said that you should also ask people who are outside of the sustainability field as well. It's collaboration across the board. I love to talk about eco-anxiety and aligning

your passions with what you want to learn in sustainability, which is really great. So, to finish off, this last question is for all three of you. What's the one piece of advice you would give someone who's starting to think about how to embed sustainability into their role? Reem, I'm going to start with you.

Reem (29:43):

Thank you. I think Bo had articulated it very well in his earlier response. I think many of those who know me would also know that my advice very much aligns with what he said, and that's to find your own definition of sustainability. What I mean by that is to try and really take some time to define what sustainability means to you. My own humble take on it personally is that sustainability is as simple as the act of caring, whether it be for a person, for a place, a pet, a memory, or an artifact, as Bo had called it, and wanting to take action to protect it. Because this is really what will essentially help you define that start and find your own way to embed sustainability, not just in your professional role but in your day-to-day life as well.

Arthur (30:32):

Amazing. Thank you, Reem. Bo, I'd love to hear your answer next.

Bo (30:38):

I think for me, it's always going to come down to curiosity and lifelong learning, regardless of the topic. But within each of these, this space is evolving so much right now and even quite rapidly. We see this all the time in learning and careers that the roles that people will be filling six months or two years from now might not even exist today. So, because this space is still so rapidly evolving, I think my advice for everyone would be just to be curious and look for that opportunity. There's so much potential here to innovate in all of our careers and how our roles can play a part in this and what's going to be required for us to play a part as regulations continue to change and demands from consumers and society continue to change. Yeah, for me, it always comes down to continuous learning, staying curious, and just exploring opportunities.

Arthur (31:51):

Thanks very much. And then over to you, Tawny, for the final say.

Tawny (31:56):

Yeah, I love what Reem and Bo both said there, and I agree wholeheartedly, so it's hard to do anything too additive to that. But I guess I might just top it off with really knowing that every little bit matters. Kind of touching on what Bo said earlier, the world does not need millions more environmental activists spending 100% of their time every day working on this. I mean, that would be awesome, don't get me wrong, but the world needs everyone else in all their different roles and their position, spending even 10% of their time contributing or 5% of their time contributing directly towards this. This needs everyone, wherever they're at in the world, wherever they're at in their job, to put on that sustainability mindset hat to find the

individual ways locally and their role and their sphere of influence that they could plug in some small way to this, and that matters.

(32:47):

There was an infographic a few months ago put out by Project Drawdown that I saw that was talking about kind of the most impactful climate actions that individuals and households can take in this space. I was a bit surprised to see the top two by far were reduced food waste and plant-rich diets. And that's way above electric cars, above LED lighting, above solar panels. And so I think people can think we've got to do the big things to move the needle here. And while maybe switching to a plant-rich diet is a big change for an individual, just thinking about maybe eating those leftovers or maybe trying composting or something like that on the home front can make a tremendous difference here and move the needle. So I think just knowing that every person has a part to play in this journey, every choice that you make does make a difference, and that gets that collective whole and kind of the power of all of us coming together and all of those choices coming together that's going to make a difference here.

Arthur (33:49):

Amazing. Thank you very much, Tawny. I loved hearing about that. I loved hearing about the threads of collaboration. I loved hearing about breaking silos, listening to stories and artifacts. There was so much there to unpack and so many insights and information. So thank you very much all three of you for being guests, for spending your time with us. I really appreciate it. And I think I'll finish off with my favorite lesson for today, which was from you, Tawny, and it's about every little bit matters, which I think is a really important lesson from this. So to move past eco-anxiety, I think if we all realize that being curious and just trying to do a little bit where we can, I think will make a big difference to everyone globally. Thanks very much.