

# Making a medical department green



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Even in medical environments we can drive change • Let's learn how:

## An Example from a Lab Manager

Let's share Brenna's story, a Lab Manager from a medical department – addressing challenges she faced and how she overcome them.

### About Brenna

Brenna Knott is a dedicated Lab Manager for the Internal Medicine Nephrology department at Rush University Medical Center. She has a lot of experience, working in the lab, teaching students or coordinating behind the scenes – (and in case you want to know more: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/brenna-knott/>)



### Having a Drive



Every change-maker needs a strong inner drive. Brenna's commitment to sustainability stems from her personal experiences growing up in a low-income family and working in a clinic that served underprivileged patients. These encounters instilled in her a deep appreciation for not wasting valuable resources and a desire to help those in need.

### Starting by Sharing

One of the primary challenges Brenna faced was spreading awareness of sustainable practices. To overcome this, she went big. Naming a few concrete examples: posting articles in RUSH News, reaching out to interested labs, distributing flyers on campus, sending email notifications, and actively explaining initiatives to staff members.



# Opportunities to make change

## How Brenna leverage possibilities

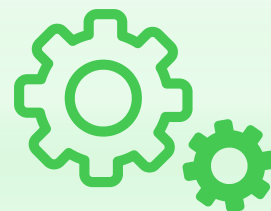
### Update The Culture

Culture is an essential aspect of all human interaction. Brenna knew how to leverage it: she emphasized the power of small actions and collective impact, e.g., turning off lights, regularly defrosting freezers, updating chemical inventory, recycling batteries, and utilizing platforms like Rheaply for resource sharing. By integrating sustainability into everyday routines, Brenna successfully transformed sustainability into a shared responsibility within the lab.



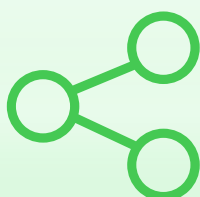
### No Need To Reinvent The Wheel

Brenna's advice: take the time to familiarize yourself with sustainability programs implemented by other hospitals and universities, identify supporters and potentially engage with other departments or laboratories to gain insights into their sustainable practices. A comprehensive groundwork is the foundation for successful implementation. Benefit from others experiences and knowledge.



### Share The Passion

Brenna showed that it can be vital to help employees and leadership to understand the importance of change. She showed a powerpoint by MyGreenLab about impact of lab waste on the environment. Her boss, the department chair, loved this presentation and sent the information to higher administration. Her tip: be passionate! People feel whether you really stand for what you do.



# Handling the difficult stuff

Let's address challenges you might face

## Finding Funding

One significant obstacle was securing funding for sustainable initiatives. Brenna collaborated with the Environmental Sustainability Department, which provided the necessary budget and sponsorship for the lab to pursue a My Green Labs Certification. A great demonstration of the importance of cross-departmental cooperation and support for implementing sustainable practices.



## How To Engage A Team

Another aspect Brenna emphasizes is Teamwork. She highlights the importance of designing a common goal. "Design a goal or project for your group to work on as a team. We collected ice packs for the month of April, we donate them to the Chicago public school district, homeless shelters and jail system". Furthermore, she and the Environmental Sustainability team organized the "Earth Month Challenge," encouraging employees to engage in events like waste audits, subscribing to conservation newsletters, and attending environmental symposiums.



## You Can Do It Too

Brenna has established a thriving culture of sustainability at Rush University Medical Center. And she started from 0. Remember, we are all there for you – you just need to do the first step!





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