Foreword

In 2008, I was given the task of organizing the environmental operations of the Cleveland Cavaliers, Lake Erie Monsters, and Quicken Loans Arena. A green team was developed, and it included personnel from each of these organizations. The Quicken Loans Arena facility personnel were well ahead of the curve in terms of green knowledge and environmentally friendly practices because they have been working to make the Arena more environmentally friendly for several years. The other members of the team were eager to learn and to contribute to our new mission.

My job was to integrate existing environmentally oriented operations and processes into a coherent plan of action. I understood our work, but I was a little concerned because I did not even recycle in my personal life. Our team, known as the Sustainability Team, had its growing pains, but over the course of a year, we developed a strategic plan, began auditing processes to determine our environmental footprint, made some important changes to the Arena (changed existing light bulbs into CFL light bulbs and installed motion sensors, just to name a few), and held two useful and popular NBA Green Week events. Today, operations across the different parts of the organization are coming together. Our people are learning more about the environmental issues we face and are taking steps to become contributors to our environmental changes.

Our work at the Cavaliers is being replicated in various ways across the sports world. League offices are working in conjunction with teams, and teams are working in conjunction with local organizations and governments. However, we are only at the beginning of our environmental work. The many different ways sports impacts the environment make it difficult to find a starting point for many sport personnel. Our belief at the start of our work was that we needed to begin somewhere to get a handle on the environmental impact of our organization. However, these environmental issues have to be balanced with the daily activities of running a sport organization. This is what makes change efforts difficult.

Sports marketing leaders like me have a steep learning curve in terms of green issues. I found the key to developing a solid green foundation for any sport organization is to identify the extent to which the organization can go green. Grand plans, aggressive marketing, and wide-ranging goals make it difficult to achieve success; time, effort, patience, and planning will get the job done. Such a methodical approach is imperative; every sport organization has different variables and resources, and sharing ideas and knowledge can increase an organization’s chances of successfully going green. There are costs involved with making an organization’s operations more environmentally friendly, and this makes planning for changes, careful budgeting, and winning support from across the organization critical to long-term success—even if long-term means beyond your time with a particular organization.

Green change takes team and individual efforts, careful planning, and in-the-moment reactions. The process described in this book speaks to such an approach and is meant to assist with green efforts across a variety of sport organizations. Current and future sport managers can use the book to explore ideas and gather data to help them make decisions. This means understanding daily operations and strategic decisions in terms of environmental costs and benefits and developing a perspective that integrates the environment into all aspects of sport organization management.

Perfection is not the goal of environmental change. I am not sure if there is a final goal as compared with a number of holistic goals that work together. Sports marketers at all levels need to begin the green change process. This book is the first step in the process. People around the world love sports. They listen to sport stars and support sports teams...
with avidity and loyalty many corporate organizations only dream about at night. Sport can be a platform to make change and to educate others about the environment in order to better our lives and the lives of future generations. That is something we can all get behind.

Kerry Bubolz
Executive Vice President
Cleveland Cavaliers/Lake Erie Monsters/Quicken Loans Arena