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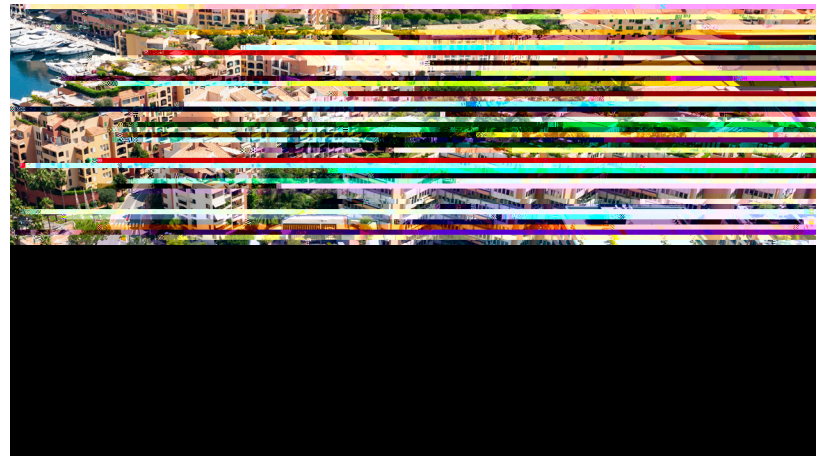
The construction industry has been an environmentally destructive force. It's a significant greenhouse gas emitter and a notorious soil, air, water, and sound polluter. Construction professionals must take meaningful steps toward sustainability to mitigate the worst effects of global warming and contribute to climate resilience.

Construction managers are uniquely positioned to lead the charge in effecting eco-friendly initiatives. There are many ways to be a sustainability superhero, but focusing on these seven best practices is an excellent start.

1. PRACTICING A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy is about minimizing waste, curbing greenhouse gas emissions and leaving virgin natural resources untouched. It comprises businesses engaging in recycling, manufacturing reusable goods, and producing and consuming clean, renewable energy. These enterprises represent sustainability because they help make the world go round while causing little to no environmental impact. Their practices don't make the planet uninhabitable, so they can keep doing business forever — hence, circular.

The linear economy is the opposite. It doesn't need an introduction since it's the mainstream business model of producing, buying, and consuming goods, and throwing them away at the end of their life cycles. The status quo is unsustainable because the world's finite resources will run out eventually and most nonbiodegradable waste will outlive everyone and everything alive today.



The construction industry [consumes 40% of raw materials](#) worldwide. The Circularity Gap Report 2022 says [the world is only 8.6% circular](#), so most resources extracted and used end up as waste. With these two pressing issues in mind, recycling must be high on the agenda of every construction manager with a circular mindset.

Use your position to hire an architect or architectural firm with expertise in green building design. Sustainable structures contain elements optimized for deconstruction — like standardized factory-built components — making them easy to recover and repurpose down the road.

When tearing down older structures, salvage as many materials as possible. Keeping debris from clogging up landfills increases the supply of reclaimed resources on the market. High availability of salvaged materials means more business for circular economy participants and less demand for virgin resource extraction.



Deconstruction is costlier and more labor-intensive than demolition. Still, you can break even by taking advantage of



Provide everyone with reusable dining tools to replace disposable utensils and containers. Discourage smoking to keep the site free of cigarette butts, which pollute the soil [with at least 16 toxic substances](#) and stick around for about five years. Stock up on biodegradable cups, and incentivize recycling. These simple deeds help lay the foundation for a sustainable culture.



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Rose Morrison is a freelance writer with a passion for sustainable building and innovative construction technologies. She has interviewed numerous industry professionals to gain insight into the current challenges facing the built industry and developing strategies for overcoming them.

Rose has over five years' experience writing in the industry and is the current managing editor of Renovated.com. She also regularly contributes to other publications, such as NCCER, The Safety Mag, and Geospatial World. Follow Rose on [Twitter](#)