Executive Summary

With 86% of FORTUNE 500 companies having an established sustainability report published in 2018, it was surprising to find out that Stryker, a global medical device manufacturer, did not have a sustainability strategy in place (Governance & Accountability Institute, n.d.). Stryker’s Sustainability Solutions division, a smaller entity of the larger Stryker corporation, reprocesses and remanufactures single-use medical devices (SUDs). Reprocessing is the practice of inspecting, cleaning, function testing, sterilizing, and packaging SUDs so that they can be clinically and safely used again. Being the division focused on sustainability initiatives, it made sense for this division to pilot a holistic sustainability strategy that had thoughtful environmental goals for the organization to achieve by 2025.

To begin on its sustainability journey, Stryker’s Sustainability Solutions needed to approach it through a systems perspective that wove sustainability into every department of the organization so it would embed itself into the culture. A sustainability charter was developed to outline goals for the organization and be a north star when it comes to a sustainability strategy. The charter allows Stryker to keep up with competitors in the marketplace and use it to recruit and retain top talent. Additionally, customers of Stryker had recently been inquiring about what Stryker was doing to not only deliver quality products but better the communities and world it serves.

The sustainability charter for Stryker covers three focus areas of resource efficiencies, process improvement, and people development. The resource efficiency section of the charter outlines goals to reduce water, chemical, waste, and energy usage. The process improvement focus area looks at how the organization runs its internal processes and suggests goals to be implemented around the supply chain and new product development. The people development
section emphasis the importance of education and awareness around sustainability to engage the entire workforce. Gaining top-down approvals from the c-suit was essential for the execution and implementation of a sustainability strategy. Without their support, the charter would not succeed and make an impact for the organization.

This paper explores the journey, tactics, and tools needed to implement a sustainability strategy and can be applied to other companies and organizations.