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THE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR: WHY SPACE SUSTAINABILITY ATTRACTS TALENT

Abstract

Space programs inspire generations to reach for the stars. Today, this is more true than ever with companies like SpaceX, Blue Origin, and Virgin Galactic, attracting an abundance of talent who desire to be a part of a bigger purpose to explore beyond Earth orbit.

At Astroscale, we are seeing a similar attraction, although it is not based on exploration. There is a growing desire from the wider space talent pool to contribute to the responsible stewardship of space. This is not unlike the movements happening for earth sustainability, which have included international participation in youth climate strikes and other youth-led activism, reaching from school courtyards to fora such as the United Nations climate summits, congressional hearings, and parliamentary speeches. Across the world, it is becoming clear that responsibility, stewardship and sustainability in space activities is a motivating factor for young professionals when choosing employers in the space industry. As public awareness around sustainable practices and corporate responsibility increases, space companies competing for fresh talent should be aware that potential new hires may weigh the company's plan to leave Earth orbit in a better state as a deciding factor in both accepting employment and enthusiasm for their missions.

This paper will outline the results of a survey conducted to investigate attitudes and opinions of self-identified young professionals under the age of 35 in the space industry towards various elements of space sustainability. Utilizing the study results, the paper will discuss the implications of sustainability movements on the future of the space workforce across government, commercial, and academic space activities, and will include an examination of corporate sustainability practices on workplace hiring and retention of young employees.