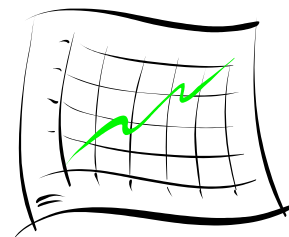
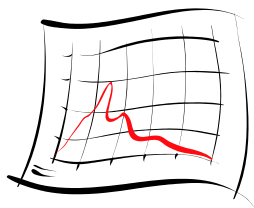


Going green

to stay in the black:
how environmental
initiatives can help your
firm in challenging times



It's hard to be green when you're in the red, right?

Wrong.

When the CEOs of nearly 200 of the world's biggest companies, from ABB to Unilever, get together to form the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the rest of us better start to think about sustainability, too.

We've heard about the 'green shoots' of the economic recovery being pruned already, as well as assertions that they offer the only long term viability for a sustainable recovery.

So what does sustainability mean for businesses in a competitive – and recessionary – environment?

It really means keeping ahead of the competition in times that are likely to get tougher. So where is the added value your firm can offer clients? As well as the profit-creating steps you can take that are outlined in [The true cost of waste: the hidden reasons why you don't know how much profit you're losing](#), you can add the long term cost-saving and other benefits that sustainable products and services provide.

Consider entering an environmental award: it will push you to find out ways you can do better in more ways than you can begin to imagine.

Being green indicates that you do other things well, too

Firms that do well in environmental awards are all-round good performers: those with good environmental management systems also manage their staff well and their projects well, delivering quality service to happy clients. Not surprisingly, they also do well financially.

By contrast, auditors who uncover poor performance in any single area – staff, financial, client relations or the environment – usually see it across them all – and this inevitably reduces company profitability.

One New Zealand roading company won awards for its environmental protection measures and use of recycled aggregate from a road repair job into the new road – a major saving on landfill and cleanfill costs, and a leading competitive advantage in the next tender round!

Setting up good simple environmental management procedures and following them well does help companies run better, and this efficiency is good for the bottom line.

Others, from manufacturers to farmers and the service sector, find that environmental investigation encourages innovations that enable them to out-perform their competitors.



Clare Feeney is a sustainability strategist who helps organisations of all types grow their sustainability capability. She can help you grow jobs, increase profits and improve the environment – and have fun along the way! You can find out more at www.clarefeeney.com and contact her at clare@clarefeeney.com.

Beyond greenwash

75% of senior managers in the 190 companies belonging to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development agree: they see their company and share value go up because of environmental initiatives that result in:

- reduced risk to people and the environment – and lower legal and financial risks (fixing up a problem is always more expensive than preventing it)
- brand enhancement and goodwill result in better market opportunities
- more efficient and effective operations
- better ability to recruit and keep good people
- more efficient use of raw materials and other inputs like water and energy.

In fact 6% of them even thought good environmental management added to the meaning of life – a real boost to job satisfaction!

Sustainability is about people and business as well as the environment. Use your sustainability initiatives to focus on keeping good people in good jobs for the long haul. Look out for the risks and opportunities posed to your operations by the natural resources you rely on to obtain your inputs and absorb your wastes, including competition for these resources. Look at smarter ways of doing things that work with, not against, nature.

The evidence is in: responsible environmental behaviour is a good indicator of good company performance in other areas – and share markets as well as lenders, insurers and clients are taking note.

Make sure you are on the way to best environmental practice – and the profit and satisfaction it gives your staff, suppliers, investors and customers!

Find out more

The websites listed below will help you explore the business opportunities the environment can offer your organisation.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development <http://www.wbcsd.org> – look for a national or regional business council in your area.

What makes people want to go to work in the morning? See the unlimited/JRA Best Places to Work in New Zealand Survey: www.jra.co.nz/bestplacestowork.

Where do responsible investors put their money for solid returns? Go to Rodger Spiller and Associates' ethical investment website <http://www.rodgerspiller.com>.

Also go to Wendy McGuiness' website to find out about ethical funds at http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Resources/Socially_Responsible_Investment.aspx.

The Natural Step has worked with thousands of corporations, municipalities, academic institutions and not-for-profit organisations that have proven that moving strategically toward sustainability leads to new opportunities, reduced costs, and dramatically reduced ecological and social impacts. <http://www.naturalstep.org/>.

Envirowise delivers free, independent advice to UK businesses to enable them to increase profitability and reduce environmental impact. <http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/>.

Follow the inspiring journey to profit and sustainability of Interface Carpets at <http://www.interfaceglobal.com/Sustainability.aspx> and <http://missionzero.org/>.



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