

Why do manufacturers go green?



'Sustainability' is certainly the latest buzz word businesses are being expected to follow. The big questions though, are why should a business take it seriously (aside from global catastrophe of course!), what's in it for them and what should they do? One of the places offering support in achieving environmental excellence is the Green Achiever Scheme.

This initiative between E4 Environment Ltd and Carbon Earth Ltd, helps businesses get on the right track through an innovative award scheme. Here, the Green Achiever experts explain: 'What drives manufacturers to go green?'

1. Cost Savings

This is the big one: Energy prices and mounting landfill taxes are enough to cause most businesses a headache. The cost of energy for power and heat is increasing and seeking ways to reduce consumption can only benefit the manufacturer and the environment.

Alongside reducing consumption, some manufacturers are using solar, wind, anaerobic digestion or wood chip burner power source generation on their premises. This will become increasingly more important with the implementation of the Carbon Reduction Commitment. This can become more economic still when business parks establish an alternative power source for the whole park.

Finding ways to reduce waste (a clear environmental concern) has helped a lot of businesses to cut costs - through the reduction of raw materials required, and also in the costs of waste disposal or recycling.

Monitoring water usage and using water saving devices can also reduce overhead -collecting rainwater for use on site can also help lower costs.

2. Reputation - for investors, suppliers, customers

Investors, customers and suppliers are increasingly using 'environmental practice' as a factor in making choices about their relationships with manufacturers. In a recent interview, Deborah Meaden (of Dragon's Den fame) explained that, when considering businesses to invest in, a company that tackles its environmental issues tells her more than just its environmental commitment. It also tells her that "they are probably running a bloody good business and that they are excellent through and through."

It's also clear that companies use environmental questions as one of their screening options for suppliers. The Green Achiever's Business Directory lists not only the registered company's details but also their environmental policies and declarations as credentials for everybody to see.

It seems that companies are looking to clearly demonstrate real 'green' credentials rather than

'greenwashing'. From our experience, many customers are not only looking for a 'green' end-product but are concerned about the whole life cycle of what they buy. So manufacturers who can demonstrate environmental concerns in their whole processes can capitalise on a competitive advantage. Some manufacturers have even developed environmental concerns into their purchasing processes and consider environmental impacts in the design and purchasing of equipment

3. Legislative Security

Environmental legislation requires targets to be met and data to be collated (for example around levels of packaging used or relating to the disposal of electronic or electrical equipment). This is becoming increasingly complex and being a 'Green Achiever' enables every business to receive a bespoke legislative health-check report.

4. Corporate Social Responsibility

The whole world is taking an interest in climate change and the impact industry is having. It means there's an increasing impetus for manufacturers to demonstrate that they are taking on responsibility for the environment. Showing social responsibility and concern for sustainability is a business requirement now, not a nice-to-have.

The careful use of resources and the reduction of waste protects the environment from pollution - It also protects businesses from a new thirist journalists are developing for rooting out damaging or negative press - not to mention any clean-up costs.

This is why it's important for businesses to have a genuine understanding about carbon foot-printing and carbon off-setting, advice integral to being a Green Achiever.

IF you want to find out more you can keep up to date with environmental debates at Green Achiever. Or if you are or aspire to be a real 'green' business, sign up to be a Green Achiever today.