

### Introduction

Green practice that went throughout the whole organisation as part of their core values rather than an add-on used to be the preserve of niche companies like Body Shop. They started off by appealing to a certain sort of consumer, only to find that many more customers shared their views. Today Marks & Spencer proudly display its green credentials on every high street in the land.

### Psychology

There are many reasons for greening the workplace, whether it is to save money, achieve competitive advantage or simply to do the right thing. As with every part of your business, staff can be encouraged to do what is asked of them using the carrot or the stick. For example electricity bills are overheads that affect profits. It is not unreasonable to expect employees to switch off monitors when they leave the room or their PCs off at night when asked to. And if they fail to do so there may well be a case to discipline people. However it would be far better if they all remembered to carry out this simple action because they wanted to. There is a clear case for a carrot, but this is perhaps not it and we will give examples later.

### Education

If staff are being asked to change their behavior although this can be incentivised (see overleaf) it is desirable if this is completely voluntary. If people understand and take seriously why they are being asked to do something then the ultimate outcome is likely to have a greater long-term success rate. Theoretically we should be worried about our environment that we all share as it supplies us with everything we need. This can seem abstract to busy working families who are being affected by the credit crunch, rising inflation, food and energy prices. All of these factors can be used to explain why your organisation is making changes:

- Screen The Inconvenient Truth; distribute information about climate change and ecological damage. Have links to environmental organizations; encourage your staff to campaign from their desktops for ten minutes a day by using their PCs.
- Explain that energy saving plans are being implemented in the face of rising energy prices. It will not be practical to pass any savings on to employees in dividends, but you can explain that any saving will be invested in the company to ensure its longevity. Employees will recognise the need for cost savings as they will be experiencing similar issues in their personal lives.
- Explain that greening of the workplace is necessary to provide competitive advantage. With the credit crunch, a slump in the housing market, rising oil prices and a significant fall in the FTSE, analysts are forecasting a possible recession which will lead to job losses. Employees are obviously concerned about job security so anything that you can do to improve this will be appreciated.

### Leadership/Buy-in

Any workforce is more productive when it is happy and motivated. People are more motivated when they feel included, valued and that they are taking part in a shared vision. This is why education is so important, but it is just as important to include your staff in the process of change from the start. This will enable them to feel a part of it. Any consultation process also allows them to feedback their comments, which will prove invaluable as they are actually at the 'coal-face'. Management should regularly keep

staff informed on all aspects of this project. This two-way dialogue will encourage buy-in, which is the most positive way to achieve success. It might be argued that money motivates which is where that carrot can come in. Finally it is no good asking your staff to cycle to work for example, if managers still use large executive cars, (regardless of whether this is a sales tool that investors expect successful business to use - remember you are selling a different message) as this can be quite demotivating.

## Practical Examples

As part of their 'join the bigger picture' **Sky** has introduced a 'carbon credit card' whereby employees earn carbon credits for environmental activities, which are redeemed for rewards. In its first year over 270,000 credits were earned! Sky also has an intra-net for sharing information on environmental issues and suggesting environmental improvements in the work-place. When this system crashed for a couple of days management received complaints as it is so popular with staff. The site has a lift-sharing programme, information on improved shuttle buses to and from train stations and priority parking for car-sharers. As part of national bike week they installed extra showers, cycle parking, free breakfasts and massages! They also offer financial assistance for employees who purchase a hybrid car.

**Commercial** in Cheltenham also help staff to purchase cycles and have showers for tired cyclists. They have implemented green policies with the full involvement of staff and have encouraged those who are keen to take charge of various aspects of it, for example energy management or recycling. Another example of their inclusive approach is allowing staff a role in decision making – management installed a variety of LED spot-lamps and polled staff on which lighting affect they preferred before rolling out the replacement scheme. Staff are also involved in the process of giving the organisation's money to sustainability and community charities.

**UCAS** in Cheltenham have not just an environmental champion but a whole green team, who are given time and resources to greening the work-place. Each year they have a green awareness week, where sustainability organisations give presentations and man stands on providing practical environmental solutions. They also encourage staff to enjoy the office garden with its pond to foster an appreciation of nature. Staff are provided with recycled office equipment which has a certain cool cache – mouse mats made from re-used circuit board etc.

## Rolling Out the Plan

- Include employees from the start.
- Appoint Environmental Champions or a Green Team.
- Have themed days – e.g. local organic food (with perhaps a staff bar-b-q at lunchtime), waste reduction, energy saving.
- Have training sessions on each issue.
- Have a suggestions board or dedicated site on your intra-net.
- Report progress back to staff and thank them for the continued and valued involvement.
- Reward staff financially or with 'green' gifts like solar-powered electrical items or organic seeds/garden equipment.
- Lead by example; make it fun; team building can improve morale.