

Tackling your carbon footprint

This month Gordon Jackson of Campden BRI explains why environmental issues don't have to be a business burden.

Increasing regulatory pressures and public awareness of environmental issues are driving them to the top of the agendas of many companies around the world.

Managing a company's environmental footprint and risks is seen as a competitive advantage by investors and other stakeholders. Dealing with environmental issues does not have to be seen necessarily as a burden; many examples in the industry are emerging where being green can actually save a business money through better efficiency, employee awareness and client perception of your products.



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Carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions released as a result of a particular activity, such as individual food and drink manufacturing operations. Calculating your company's greenhouse gas emissions is the first step towards managing and reducing your operation's impact on the environment, as it measures your contribution to climate change, identifies key emissions sources and helps prioritise areas for improvement.

Greenhouse gases (GHG) are chemical compounds absorbing heat reflected from the earth's surface and trapping it in the atmosphere. Many occur in nature; however, human activity has increased the concentration of these greenhouse gases, which over time leads to a temperature rise in the earth's atmosphere.

An overwhelming majority of scientists agree that the climate is changing and that human activity contributes to that. It is a long-term challenge for nations and governments and is unlikely to go away in the near future. However, with increasing effects of climate change on our lives, it is very likely to affect how we do business in the future.

Undertaking an inventory of your company operations' GHG emissions will give you the opportunity to identify the main sources of your energy and fuel consumption and highlight areas where improvements can be made. The process of evaluation is likely to prove beneficial to improving the company's management of resources and will make you more conscious of possible issues.

An additional benefit will potentially come from increased transparency with your prospective and existing clients about your environmental performance, which helps to improve your company's reputation and strengthen ties with stakeholders.

Is there any legislation?

The third Global Climate Legislation Report released last January indicates

that significant progress has been made towards developing climate change legislation in many countries around the world. The study analysed 33 countries, which together make up 85% of the global emissions, and concluded that 18 countries have shown a substantial progress in climate change related legislation, with 14 showing limited progress.

Mandatory GHG emissions reporting was announced by the UK Government in June 2012 and introduces a regulation for reporting for larger companies. As governments around the world are putting more legislation in place to cut GHG emissions, and climate change issues are increasingly present in public everyday agendas, businesses are being pushed towards the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Without measuring your carbon footprint, it is impossible to manage your company's impact or track the success of implementing reduction technologies. **FMT**

This item is based on a fuller fact sheet issued by Campden BRI; to obtain a copy, send an e-mail to auto@campdenbri.co.uk with the subject line: send footprint

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