

# TEN BUSINESS REASONS

to green your office

If you're thinking about moving or refurbishing your office, taking an environmental approach offers real, practical business benefits – for your people, your profits and your reputation.

Here are our top 10 reasons to 'go green':



## By Sophie Hutchinson

As an authority on sustainable office design and energy reduction in buildings, Sophie understands how a greener design can help your business perform better. She holds a degree in Environmental Policy from the London School of Economics, is BREEAM trained and is an associate member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). And if that's not enough, she has also climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, ran a half marathon in the Sahara Desert and has recently completed the London Marathon.

## 1. Save money

Being a sustainable organisation can add to your bottom line. For example, installing energy saving lighting, heating and ventilation in your offices can significantly reduce your energy bills. The savings go straight to your profits.

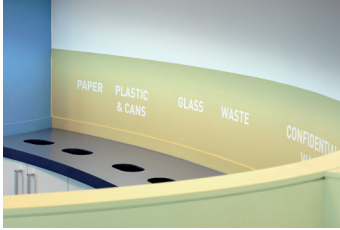
Take, for example, a company that turns over £1 million. Saving 20% on their £40,000 annual energy cost is equivalent to increasing their profit by 8%<sup>1</sup>.

Turnover	£1 million
<b>Profit (10%)</b>	<b>£100,000</b>
Energy cost	£40,000
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Savings potential on energy costs (20%)	£8,000
<b>Profit increased by 8%</b>	<b>£108,000</b>

## 2. Cut your tax bill

Heard about the Enhanced Capital Allowances scheme (ECAs)? It's a government plan that gives tax breaks to companies if they install certain energy efficient equipment and machinery. Put simply, you can write off the whole of the capital cost of your investment against your taxable profits.

<sup>1</sup> Source: The Carbon Trust, <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/>



### 3. Take out a 0% interest loan.

The Carbon Trust 0% interest loan<sup>2</sup> is aimed at SME's who are looking to reduce their carbon footprint. The scheme has been designed to offset anticipated energy savings against the loan repayments, meaning the equipment should pay for itself while you can continue to make savings.

Does your company operate within the UK public sector? A Salix interest free loan<sup>3</sup> provides funding for public sector bodies for CO2 saving technologies.

Loans are available for amounts from £3,000 up to £100,000

### 4. Stay on the right side of legislation

The government is getting serious about going green, and new legislation is constantly coming into force. That can mean hefty fines for companies that don't comply.

Take the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme for example. Formerly known as the Carbon Reduction Commitment, it is the UK's mandatory climate change and energy saving scheme. The CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme has been designed to raise awareness in large organisations, especially at senior level, and encourage changes in behaviour and infrastructure. So if you're planning changes in your office, thinking about the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme now could save the headache of financial penalties later.

### 5. Avoid negative press

No company wants to hold an emergency press conference on the evening news, defending themselves against bad publicity.

But many companies have found themselves in that position. That's because environmental organisations are taking a stand against companies they believe aren't considering their responsibilities. Greenpeace, for example, have staged protests where they've found companies using illegally sourced timber from protected forests.



### 6. Improve your brand and competitiveness

Consumers and companies are increasingly showing their environmental awareness by choosing to deal with responsible companies. So taking a green stance can give you credibility, and the edge over the competition.

<sup>2</sup> Source: The Carbon Trust, <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Salix Finance, <http://www.salixfinance.co.uk>



## 7. Attract the best employees

There's a whole generation of younger workers who've grown up learning about the importance of environmental issues, and it's now a key social concern. For example, the popularity of films like *An Inconvenient Truth* on university campuses shows how green issues are really resonating with younger people. Reflecting those ideas at work can be a big attraction for potential employees.

This was shown in a recent survey by Eversheds. Two-thirds of employees said that their working environment had a significant influence on whether or not they'd accept a job.

## 8. It can keep your team healthy

A green workplace can help reduce absenteeism in your office. Plenty of fresh air and natural light are good starting points. But what about the hidden concerns?

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are substances that can be harmful to health. They include formaldehyde, which is in the top 10% of the most hazardous substances to human health. Yet it's found all over many offices, in everything from fabric finishes and fire retardants, to gloss paints and insulation.

If you're considering a move or a refurbishment, choosing products that contain few or no VOCs can help to improve the wellbeing of your staff.

## 9. Your people can save you money

Protecting our planet has become an important issue for many people. It's very likely that your staff will want to make a real difference, and they may already be taking action outside work. Encouraging it in the office can tap into that commitment within your team.

One way is to promote recycling. So if you're planning a move or refurbishment you could, for example, build recycling points into your design, rather than having individual rubbish bins. You'll save paper and reduce your costs, so there's the potential to save even more money.



## 10. It's your chance to do the right thing

According to the Department for Trade and Industry, the built environment, including offices, shops and factories, is responsible for 47% of carbon emissions. That's a pretty sobering statistic.

We see this as a chance for positive change. Although it's not always easy being green, businesses have a real opportunity to be cleaner, greener, healthier and more profitable.

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