

Exchanging ideas online

Raise awareness, generate ideas and engage employees in carbon management

What's the carbon management issue?

Businesses are under increasing pressure to reduce carbon emissions. This pressure comes from governments, from customers, and maybe even from employees, and it is relentless. Even if you have already reduced your manufacturing emissions, cut carbon from your supply chain and adopted greener facilities management, the choices your employees make every day in the way they work will affect your total carbon footprint.

You may change travel patterns or modes of transport in your company, and increase home working and virtual teaming – and all these will make significant reductions – but if there is to be a sustained reduction in emissions, your employees need to make the changes themselves. If your whole organisation is involved in deciding how to tackle the challenge, employees are likely to feel they own the solution – and as a result, they will change the way they work.

Some people will already be well-educated on this issue, and will have many ideas to contribute and it is therefore vital to capture and share their expertise. Others may still be unaware of the challenge, and will need to have their attention caught and be drawn into discussing the issues, and involved in creating and implementing solutions they are comfortable with.



What's the solution?

IBM's solution – delivered in partnership with Imaginatik – brings employees together wherever they are, to brainstorm solutions to your specific emission reduction issues. Using a web-based tool, you can set broad discussion themes and specific challenges. Your employees can visit the site whenever they have time to review their colleagues' ideas, make their comments, and post their own suggestions.

A publicity campaign before and during the event raises awareness among employees, educates them on the issues, and encourages participation. As the ideas come in, a team of facilitators and experts from your business, supported whenever

necessary by IBM, should be available to stimulate discussion and refinement of the suggestions.

After the ideas-generation phase, the event moves on to analysis and implementation planning. By reviewing the ideas in the online tool, your review team can determine which ones to take forward, and what impact they may have on emissions. We recommend that employee involvement continues throughout the implementation phase: working groups can continue to research and refine specific ideas, identify solutions, and communicate with their colleagues on what is needed. Where the solutions will involve significant change for your business, employee teams can be paired up with our specialist change



managers, who will help them develop the business case, design the project plan, and see the change through to a successful carbon emission reduction.

If your business needs additional help in implementing ideas from your online idea exchange, IBM can also offer specialist support in areas such as travel emissions analysis and reduction, green facilities management, and virtual team working.

How to get started?

To ensure you get what you need from an online idea exchange, we would start by working with you to review your current environmental programmes and to consider how your employees can support them more effectively. If you have been working on your carbon footprint for some time, you may want to raise awareness of existing achievements, seek out fresh inspiration, or locate existing good practice and propagate it across your business. Wherever you are on your journey towards a lower carbon business, our solution will help you and your employees decide together how to take the next step.

Case study: IBM Global Business Services in the UK

IBM has significantly reduced its own carbon emissions over the last 30 years, and is continuing to do so. Home working and virtual team tools have played a large part in managing the impact on the environment. However, within this division, IBM teams often clock up the travel miles by working on client sites.

One solution could be to offset travel using the many schemes available, however the division's UK leadership team was looking for more radical measures. Changing the ways people worked would achieve more tangible reductions. Although IBM has won many awards and has a great track record in environmental affairs, there wasn't much environmental awareness among the consultant teams. As consultants were so focused on day-to-day client work, something high profile was needed to grab their attention.

To address this problem, Global Business Services in the UK ran a two-week online idea exchange. A publicity campaign highlighted the issues and IBM's achievements to date, and thanks to the web-based tool, consultants and back-office staff could connect even from client sites outside the UK. Client perspectives on the problem further caught the attention of teams who were working every day with those same clients.

The event generated 360 ideas, which were grouped and filtered to approximately 20 priority areas, where low to moderate investment might have a significant impact on emissions. Employee teams are now refining the implementation plans for the priority areas, working with IBM teams from across the business to change policies or processes and cut down the carbon footprint.

IBM is committed to environmental leadership in all of its business activities. For further information see ibm.com/ibm/environment

IBM United Kingdom Limited

76 Upper Ground
South Bank
London
SE1 9PZ

The IBM home page can be found on the Internet at ibm.com

* IBM, the IBM logo and ibm.com are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Other company, product and service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates. Copying or downloading the images contained in this document is expressly prohibited without the written consent of IBM. All products and/or services are subject to availability.

This publication is for general guidance only.

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2007.
All Rights Reserved.

To find out more, please contact this person or speak to your IBM representative.

Contact details

Andi Britt
Partner, Human Capital Management
IBM Global Business Services
Telephone: +44 (0)207 0218075
E-mail: Andi.britt@uk.ibm.com