

How to

Reduce your Carbon Footprint

The Ultimate Guide for your Business



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Introduction

9,000,000,000,000

Nine trillion tons. That's how much ice Earth's glaciers lost in just 55 years from 1961 to 2016.

- The Melting Ice Caps - TheWorldCounts¹

Many people look at the growing issue of climate change and may think, "I am such a small cog in the wheel that it won't make any difference if I change what I do as an individual or a company." The issue of course is that if everyone thought like that, nothing would change.

The issue of climate change is now accepted as a real threat with global temperatures increasing, ice caps melting, sea levels rising and the earth's resources quickly diminishing. Governments and companies are now committing to short and medium term objectives to reduce Carbon Emissions and help the planet.

Aside from protecting the planet, businesses also need to stay up to date with the changing values of the newest generation of consumers. Buyers are growing more concerned about where their products and services are coming from and the environmental impact of the brands they are purchasing from. In a survey conducted by Accenture², 72% of global consumers are currently buying more environmentally friendly products and 81% said they expect to buy more over the next 5 years. With this information, it is clear businesses need to keep up with growing expectations of their customers to stay relevant and valued by them.

In 2019, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy determined that 18%, almost a fifth, of all carbon dioxide emitted in the UK that year was generated by the business sector³. Although this percentage is dropping each year, there's still more which businesses in the UK need to do to help reach the Government's reduction goals.

Growing pressures from the UK Government and consumers alike are putting strain on businesses both large and small. Although the task may seem impossible, more solutions have become available in recent years to help companies in all different sectors become more eco-friendly and maintain a good brand reputation.

With this in mind and the UK Government committing to a 68% reduction in emissions by 2030⁴, all companies across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are going to need to review their processes and policies to do their bit to meet the challenges ahead. The battle to protect and save our planet falls with individuals, companies, and the authorities. This document looks at some of things we can all to help...

‘ You really can change the world if you care enough. ’

- Marian Wright Edelman



Chapter 1

Where to start

Conduct an audit to spot opportunities

It may sound simple to create a few tweaks to your processes and reduce your carbon footprint, but if your ideas are not defined and implemented properly, your emissions will remain unchanged. Before generating initiatives to recycle all your paper and make all staff within a 5-mile radius cycle to work, you need to consider what simple changes can be made within your business first.

There are a few basic elements you need to keep in mind before brainstorming ideas which are: **Time, Resources, Cost, and Stakeholder Support.**



If your plan is missing just one of these, then it is unlikely your efforts will remain long-term and make a significant difference to your carbon footprint.

How to complete an audit of your business

Before you can start implementing strategies to improve your business' environmental impact, you should conduct an audit on your processes to assess areas where changes can be made. Identifying the best opportunities for minimal change but significant outcome is the key to becoming a more eco-conscious company.



1.

Consider your current everyday processes, start from the beginning, and map out a stream of your operations.

2.

Break down each part of your operations and consider what resources go into each stage, think about the time, resources, and cost it takes to make it successful.

3.

Consider which areas would be simple to change and require the least time, resources, and cost.

4.

Speak to your team, stakeholders, and consider customer response. Ensure you have support from those who need to make a change.

Once you have fully developed an audit of your processes, it is important to benchmark where you are right now in order to improve. Measure your carbon footprint and don't worry if it's less than desirable at this stage. Remember, becoming kinder to the planet is not an instant change, but a long-term commitment which will become easier over time.

Take inspiration

One luxury of starting to reduce your business' carbon footprint in 2021 is that there are plenty of places to draw inspiration from. Admiring where and how others have created initiatives can help you start to think about how to develop your own.

Whether your business is looking to make long-term commitments or small changes, there is plenty of case studies and examples to gain insights from and help develop a framework to expand on your own ideas.

To begin the process of thinking about options for your business, look at these case studies from others doing their bit to reduce their carbon footprint. Keep in mind while reading, the size of these companies, their financial positions, and the individual investments they have made.

‘Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought. ’

- Albert Szent-Györgyi



Fashion. Sustainably Driven.

The 1-year-old fashion company nu-in has developed its entire brand and products around their sustainable, low-impact values. Even though the company can still be considered in its infancy, the fashion company has a wide range of eco-friendly policies which keep their carbon footprint to a minimum. Carbon off-set shipments and upcycling waste fabrics are just some of the many ways they contribute to saving our planet.

Without using 'fast-fashion' nu-in has had to transfer some of the cost to the price of their products, making them less affordable than cheap brands such as Boohoo and Missguided which have recently come under fire for their lack of sustainable processes⁵.

Consumers do not seem to mind this however, with many preferring to spend a little extra cash to support a brand which helps protect the planet.



brighter bottle, brighter future

Starting their journey in 1999 at a music festival, Innocent has transformed into one of the most recognisable smoothie brands in the UK. The focus for the brand is their recyclable bottles, a key part of their sustainable campaign which has taken 18 years to develop into the sustainable bottles they use today. In fact, all the cartons, bottles, cans, and caps which are used in containing an Innocent smoothie are recyclable and allow for a full circular economy where no waste needs be generated.

Along with their eco-friendly efforts, Innocent have also gone a long way to market their activities, developing a fully interactive website to take you through their eco-journey from past to present.

Innocent are a great example for how sustainability is a long-term commitment, adapting to circumstances and developing new ways to become more carbon efficient is key to reduce your company's carbon footprint.

We care for people and planet

Mobile phones are one of the most common items we use daily in both our personal and business lives. FairPhones are a phone manufacturing company founded in 2013 who aim to develop smart phones which are produced with minimal environmental impact.

Much like laptops and tablet devices, mobile phones require precious metals and elements to be used in the construction of their internal components, which can be difficult to extract in recycling. FairPhones design and create smartphones which reuse these elements and can even be easily extracted after the phone becomes redundant.

The company has become a leader in making repairable phones, with a 10/10 repair rating for their devices awarded by iFixit, the first smartphone in the world to receive this rating. With socially responsible practices and recycled, fair materials, FairPhones is becoming a competitive alternative for eco-conscious customers looking to replace their old Apple, Samsung, or Google phones.



Committed to greener beauty for more of

One of the most well-known beauty brands in the UK, Garnier is now promoting their sustainability within their 'Green Beauty' campaign. Promoting sustainability and helping provide jobs to communities are just some of the elements in their 5 promises to become a more sustainable beauty brand by 2025.

In terms of minimising their carbon footprint, the company have pledged to use no virgin plastics in their packaging by 2025, eliminating the need to manufacture more virgin plastics for their packaging. Along with this, they have also committed to be 100% carbon neutral in 4 years, stating they will utilise the renewable energy of solar panels, biomass, and wind energy.

Although we may believe reducing carbon emissions to be a long and difficult task for our businesses, these companies have already led the way to an eco-friendlier future. Looking into other businesses which are more closely related to your own will provide you with the ideas and motivation to help save the world.

A hand is shown holding a small green plant with several leaves. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal background. A circular graphic with four arrows pointing clockwise is centered behind the text.

‘The shift in consumer buying, with more consumers willing to pay extra for environmentally friendly products, reinforces the need for companies to increase their commitments to responsible business practices.’

- Jessica Long,
managing director in Accenture Strategy²



Chapter 2

What to consider

The next steps to reducing your CO2

With the previous examples providing some inspiration, now it's time to consider what would be best to implement into your specific business. Of course, not all businesses can provide recyclable packaging or biodegradable fabrics, so creating ideas which are specific to your business is important to developing an effective plan.

Some of this is being driven by legislation also. Whilst legislation already exists in Europe for products that are designed and manufactured with the environment in mind (Directive 2009/125/EC) and for producers to be responsible for their own waste (WEEE directive 2002/96/EU). New legislation goes further and legally obligates producers to ensure products are able to be repaired as a first option instead of being replaced.

This is happening globally with a movement called 'right to repair' (explained further in our 'refurbish and reuse' section) championing the right for everyone to be able to repair and reuse products without issue with parts obsolescence and issues with software support.

Initiatives like these help businesses to increase the lifetime value and use of their devices, reducing the costs of buying new every time an asset stops working, and preventing the need to manufacture a replacement.

When a laptop, computer, or other asset does stop working at your business, taking the steps to ensure it doesn't damage the environment after it has reached the end of its life is important. Resources like The Waste Hierarchy Model can help us decide how to dispose of our waste, so be sure to have a practice in place at your business to make the process of disposal easier for your staff.

The Waste Hierarchy Model

The model below is a useful tool that businesses like yours can use to better determine when waste must be disposed of. By following the model and keeping it in mind when making decisions about what to do with waste, your business can prevent sending waste to landfill unnecessarily and improve your carbon footprint in the process.

When looking at any areas of your business, whether it's electronics, paper, or something else, using The Waste Hierarchy Model can help you make the best decision for those items to ensure the very last resort is disposal.

For example, we could apply the below chart to the lifecycle of a laptop. We would first consider how you can minimise the effect of the device on the environment by choosing to buy a sustainably made model. Then once that laptop becomes redundant to us, we could pass it onto someone else to reuse, if this is not possible because it is damaged, we could have it repaired.

When the laptop becomes completely unusable, we can still go on to recycle it so the valuable internal components can be recovered for future use. This will leave leftover parts which may be hazardous or otherwise unsuitable for disposal by incineration or other means.

Reduce

Reuse

Repair

Recycle

Recover

Dispose



8 Areas to consider for your business

Reduce

All businesses use technology in one form or another and ensuring every piece of technology used in your company is fit for purpose, you can help reduce your carbon footprint. These don't have to be huge and expensive changes, not all of us can afford to replace all our vehicles with electric ones but making more eco-conscious choices in our businesses can be a good place to start.

For example, changing to more efficient lightbulbs and ensuring they are turned off when a room is not in use can be simple ways to make a small, but contributing, difference.

Refurbish and Reuse

Expanding on recycling your assets, why not consider fixing them up before throwing them away? Often devices which are only a few years old can be refurbished and redeployed, preventing extra costs of buying new assets and prolonging their lifetime value.

Along with this, electronics made after April 2021 in the EU will be bound to the 'right to repair' rule of electronic manufacturing⁶, meaning electrical items need to be able to be repaired and reused for up to 10 years after purchase. This is an important step in our world's journey to becoming more eco-friendly and will make it easier for your business to repair and reuse its assets in the future.

Recycling

Recycling may seem like an obvious solution, but you can expand on just recycling your old paper documents. In fact, E-waste is one of the largest growing waste streams in the world, and in 2019, only 17% of it was recycled globally⁷, so when disposing of any old electricals, consider recycling them to prevent valuable materials being thrown into landfills.

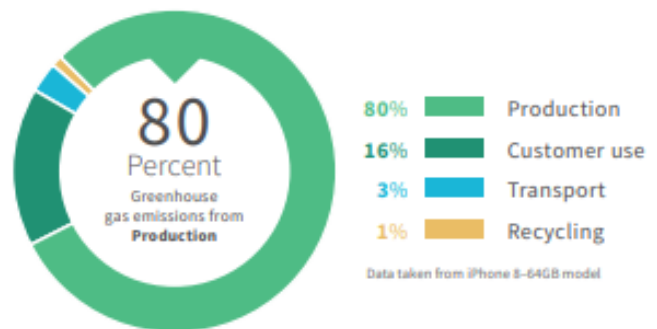
The recycling of waste electronics has become especially important with the Government's WEEE regulations¹³ which require businesses to dispose of their electronic waste responsibly. Failing to follow the regulations can result in negative environmental impacts and serious fines, so be sure to check your WEEE disposal processes regularly.

Buying responsibly

If your technology is beyond repair and you must buy replacements for your business, be more aware of where you are buying from.

Be sure to buy assets which will have as little impact on the environment as possible. For example, buying refurbished assets prevents the need for the production of a new one, saving a large percentage of carbon from being emitted into the atmosphere.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions of a Smartphone



Gas emissions of a Smartphone⁸

Carbon Offsetting

Many companies have started to measure their carbon footprint. Whilst doing this, the established Greenhouse Gas Protocol measures footprints in terms of Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

- Scope 1 - Direct emissions from sources such as company vehicles and facilities.
- Scope 2 - Indirect emissions from purchased electricity, heating, and cooling services.
- Scope 3 - Emissions as a result of employee travel, capital goods, leased assets, and investments.

Many companies simply report on Scope 1 and 2 but some have committed to measuring and reporting on Scope 3 as well.

Once carbon footprint is measured, reduction targets can be created. Many companies chose to offset their emissions, this can be done with different schemes around the world that plant trees or similar efforts to help offset the carbon produced by the business. The authorised scheme in the UK is the Woodland Carbon Code⁹.

Alternatively, you can work directly with a forestry commission and/or charity who will plant and manage trees on your behalf to offset Carbon. There are usually many charities like these which operate in local areas, so be sure to research which are operating in your area.

Sustainable Materials

This can encompass all areas of the business and it's important to assess the sustainability of products used in each department. Where do you source office supplies, where does the food in your canteen come from, what are the products you sell made of?

Look for opportunities to support businesses which are eco-friendly when purchasing materials and resources. By supporting other eco-friendly institutions, this will promote a positive reputation for your business and potentially open doors for future support and partnerships.

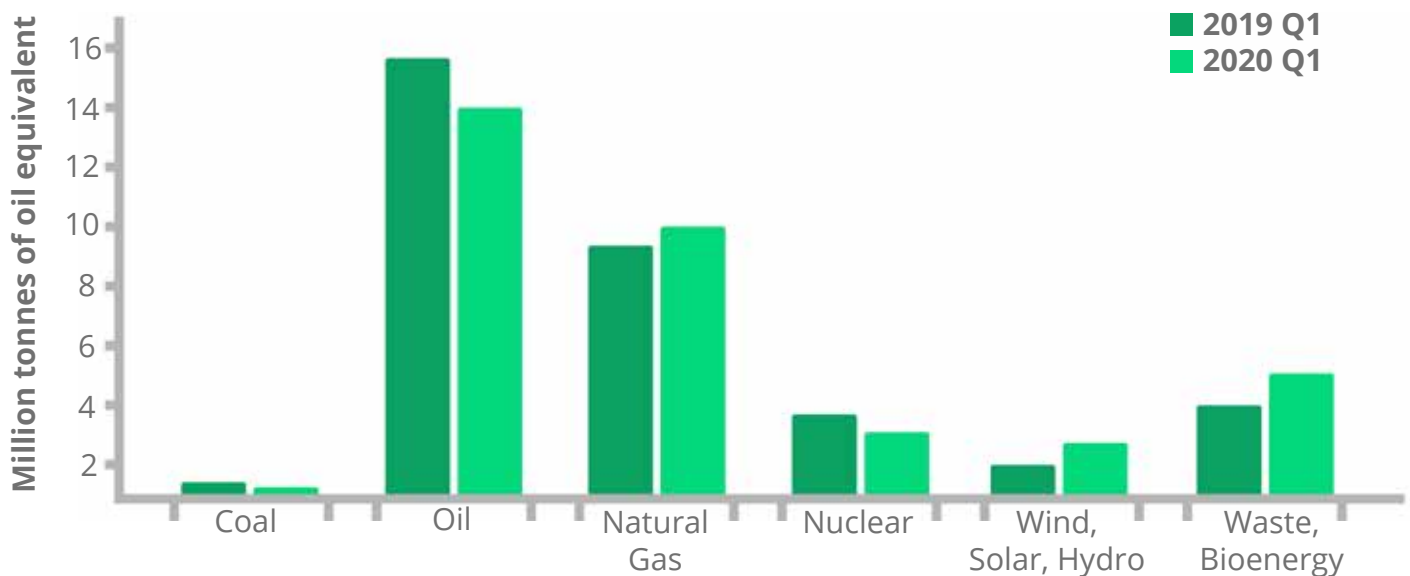
Energy Providers

This is potentially one of the most simplest your business can make to help reduce its carbon footprint. Look into your own and other company's energy providers, try to opt for one which uses as much renewable energy as possible. Buying energy from an eco-friendlier provider, makes your business eco-friendlier, but be sure to review your provider often to ensure they are meeting your expectations and are remaining efficient.

S2S's choice of energy provider is Bulb¹⁰, who source 100% renewable energy for their clients and have 100% carbon neutral gas. It's providers like Bulb who can help businesses make a significant difference to their carbon footprint.

Luckily, the availability of eco-friendly energy is increasing, with the proportion of renewable alternatives in the UK's energy production rising each year...

Production of indigenous primary fuels¹¹



Transport

It is no secret that vehicles are one of the biggest offenders for releasing carbon dioxide into our atmosphere. Although green vehicles are more accessible than ever, not every business can afford to buy a new fleet of electric transport.

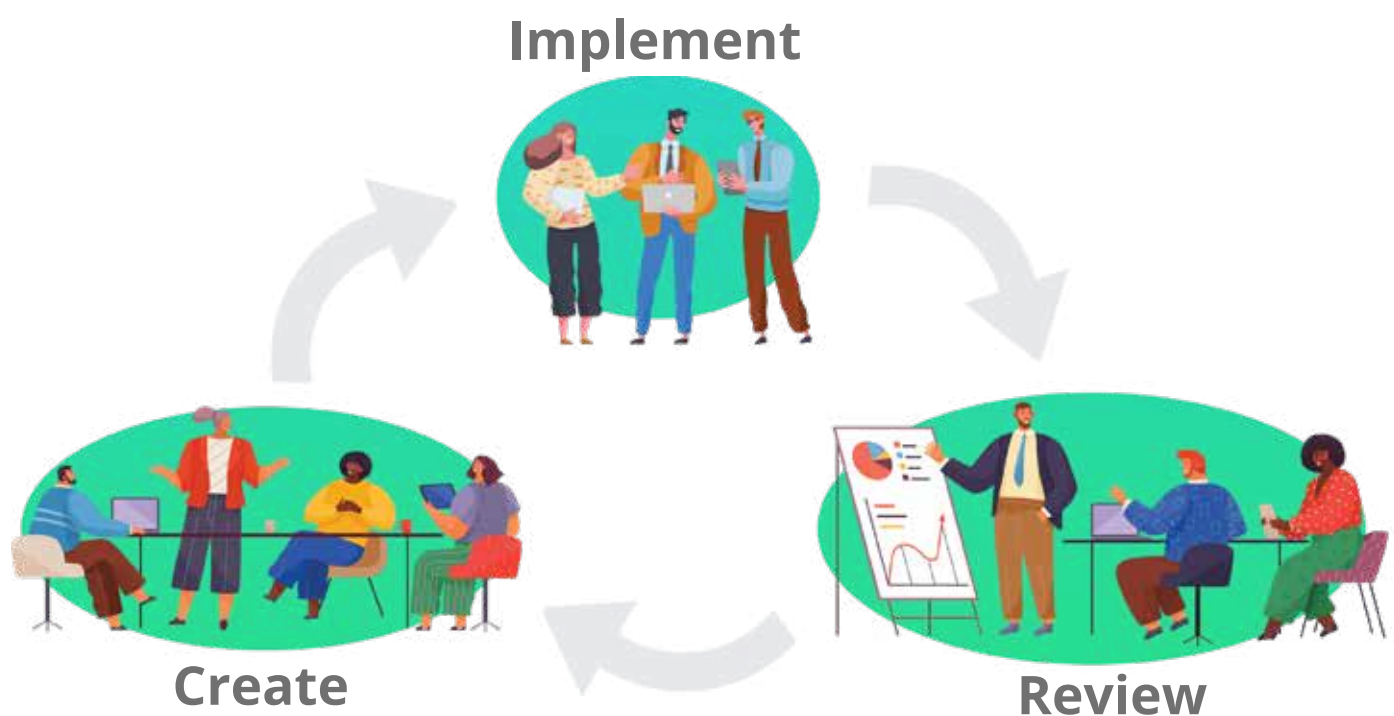
Consider instead areas of your transportation where you can reduce the mileage of your vehicles. Bundling jobs in similar areas to reduce the number of miles, and the amount of carbon you emit, can be a good start to reducing your emissions.

As well as the transport you use for business activities, do not forget the commute of your workers. Many employers are now part of the Bike to Work Scheme which will not only reduce carbon emissions, but it will improve the physical and mental wellbeing of employees too.

Starting small

Trying to reduce your business' carbon footprint may seem a daunting and expensive task, however, starting small and building up to more effective processes is a good place to start, as we have seen with Innocent smoothies. The main common theme throughout any case studies for businesses turning eco-friendly, is that they never transform overnight. All initiatives are built up of lots of small changes conducted by lots of people, which makes them last longer, and more effective.

Looking back at your audit, now is the time to analyse the areas where small changes can be made to help your business become more eco-friendly.



Firstly, consider where in your audit small changes will cause the least difficulty for staff and customers. It's important to think small here and explore ideas which can be built upon over time to become more effective. You can help do this by setting realistic goals for your business which both you and stakeholders agree are achievable.

The second step to making small changes is to start to implement them. This is the part where ideas become actions. You may not see much of a change in your emissions for the first month or so, but once processes become second nature the benefits will become apparent.

Finally, once you have your processes in place and they've become standard working practices within your business, it's time to see if you've met the goals you've set and revise what to do next. Ultimately, this loops back to first stage, where your ideas are revised, and tweaks are made to make your initiatives more efficient and effective.



Chapter 3

Environmental Policies

Developing a policy for your business

Environmental policies are key to determining what your business wants to focus on in its initiatives, what targets are going to be set, and how you are going to achieve them. This is the stage where ideas develop into actionable goals, so it's important to ensure you gain input from all stakeholders of the business.

Environmental policies are long-term commitments, and need to be consistently reviewed and monitored to ensure the goals you have set are likely to be met.

Be sure you revise your policy at least once a year to ensure the initiatives in place are continuously effective. Any policy, environmental or other, is useless if it is not reviewed and edited in accordance with changes in the business.

‘A goal without a plan is just a wish.’

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

How to create your Environmental Policy

Set objectives

Remember that any goals you set will be accessible to customers and clients, so don't make promises you can't keep. If this your first time creating an environmental policy, start small, you can always review and revise your goals later down the line.

Research

Consider what laws and guidance you will need to take into account when creating these plans, will you be able to comply with them?

Who's involved?

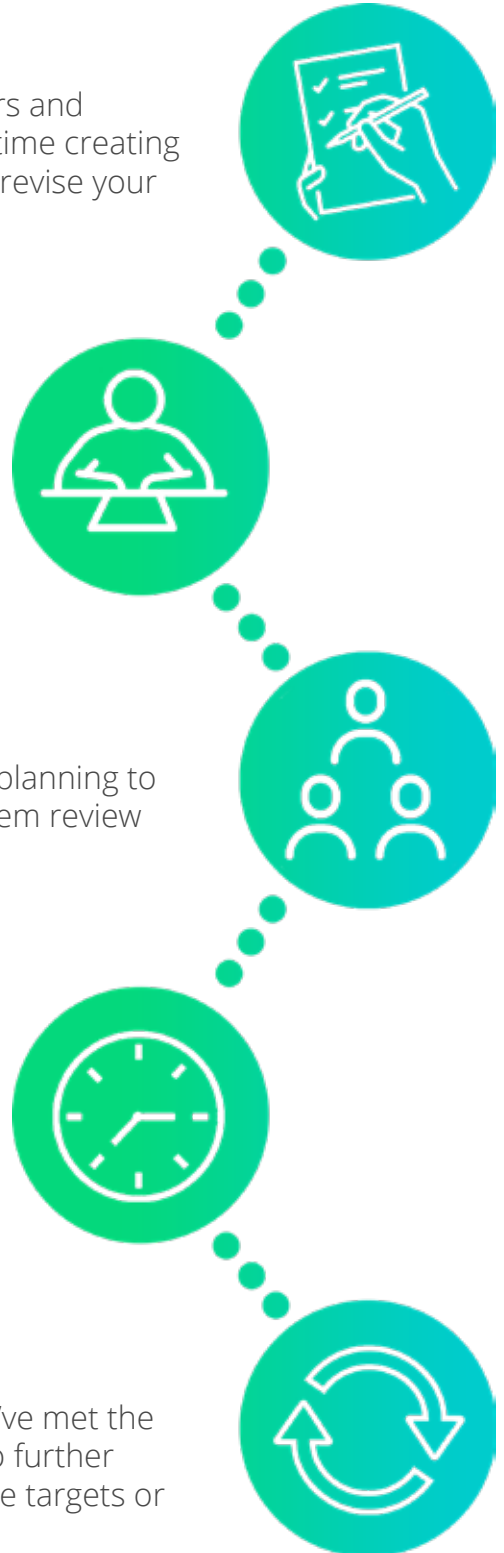
Outline who will be involved in achieving these goals. If you are planning to partner with other businesses on objectives, be sure to have them review and sign off anything concerning them in the policy.

Time

Set out clear timings for each of your goals and state how often you will be reviewing them. There's no point having a policy if it is never updated.

Review

After your allotted timeframe, return to your policy to see if you've met the objectives. If you have met them, consider upping your target to further reduce your carbon footprint. If you've not met them, reduce the targets or revise your processes to improve the initiative.



How to get buy in from your stakeholders

Once your policy is drafted, you now need to get your employees on board to help make it happen. Different staff will have different requirements needed from them in order to start implementing your policy, so be sure to take into consideration each individual's ability and willingness.

Often, employees are keen to help their business become more eco-friendly. Most already have habits at home such as using recycling bins and reusing containers, so transferring some of these practices to our workplaces should be a simple task.

For those who may be more hesitant to change, there are a number of different ways to gain the support of your staff, but remember that different tactics will work for different businesses depending on the values of your staff and your work culture.

Consider the incentives below and how they might help motivate your staff to support your business with your eco-activities...

Potential ways to gain staff buy in:

Fundraising events

Everyone loves a day off or social event, organising a day where employees can step away from their day-to-day duties and do something different will be appreciated.

Incentives

Some of us can be competitive, and the incentive of winning a prize can be a good motivator to get your staff involved and excited.

Cooperate and collaborate

When requiring more time or effort from your employees, ask them what they think could be done to improve the process. Communication is important to ensure your staff are happy to be involved.

Lead by example

If you are asking staff to do extra or give up something in aid of being eco-friendly, start by getting the leaders of the business involved, this will encourage others to follow suit.

Train and teach

Encouraging staff to transition into a different way of working can be complicated and confusing. Ensure you provide full training if needed and ask if any extra support is needed.

Marketing your efforts

Many steps you take to make a business more sustainable and lower your carbon footprint are behind the scenes, therefore no one will know the actions you have taken. This is the perfect opportunity to shout about your green initiatives and enhance the positive perception of your brand.

As we discussed in the introduction, consumer values are changing, and by aligning yourself with those values, you can gain positive brand recognition if you promote your involvement. Concerns on climate change is increasing each year, and by implementing your new initiatives, you are doing your bit to help meet those concerns and demands of your market.

A green seedling with two leaves is growing out of a small mound of dark soil. The background is a teal-green color with a faint, glowing circuit board pattern. The text "You've done the hard work... time to shout about it." is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

**You've done the hard work...
time to shout about it.**

In a study conducted by Kantar¹², "Globally, climate change remains the number one concern with 16.9% of respondents citing this, an increase of 0.5% compared to 2019'. This displays that consumers all over the world are growing more aware of climate change and the pressures placed upon them to help prevent it.

As more consumers become eco-conscious, their buying habits for products and services will reflect this, with many opting to research the ecological benefits of purchasing from one business over another. Don't make it difficult for potential customers to find this information, it's time to shout about it!

What to remember when marketing your eco-activities

Show don't tell

Video content is one of the largest consumed forms of media online. Create some behind the scenes videos with your staff about activities they have been involved in to lower your carbon footprint and bring your initiatives to life. These do not need to be high-budget, and can simply be shot and edited on a phone. It is about getting your message across by showing what you're doing rather than just telling.

Use targets for updates

If you have a target in mind i.e. reduce your carbon footprint by 30% by 2025, make sure it's achievable. It needs to be a challenge but at the same time, it needs to be attainable. This provides good opportunities to post updates on how you are meeting your goal and to thank any staff or partners for their involvement.

Show the highs and the lows

Be as transparent as possible, show the commitment your business is making. It's not always going to be easy throughout the journey and showing this vulnerability to your audience will generate understanding and support. Becoming eco-friendly is a marathon, not a sprint, so it is important to inform your audience when you face challenges and what you are doing to tackle them.

Your brand message

Make 'being green' at the heart of your brand both internally and externally so that, as your business grows, it becomes second nature and a part of everything you do. Reducing your carbon footprint is a long-term challenge and by making it a substantial part of how your business operates demonstrates your commitment.





Chapter 4

Check List

Use the list below to start your Carbon-reducing journey:

- ☐ Complete an audit.
- ☐ Benchmark your current carbon emissions.
- ☐ Set objectives which fit into your organisation.
- ☐ Speak to staff and stakeholders about how you plan to implement the objectives.
- ☐ Review your goals and create processes for how to achieve them.
- ☐ Finalise an agreed upon Environmental Policy.
- ☐ Begin implementing your strategies.
- ☐ Plan to revise and update your policy every year.

Conclusion

Trying to reduce your business' carbon footprint doesn't have to be difficult, but it does require a lot of time and dedication. It is important now more than ever however for businesses to make these changes, no matter how small. With rising concerns about climate change and the effect it is having on our planet, it is becoming more of a basic expectation for companies to have eco-friendly initiatives rather than an added perk.

There's opportunity in every business to be greener no matter what you do. It is all about creativity and thinking outside the box. Remember it is ok not to be perfect, it's making the small changes now that will make a big difference over time.

**‘Progress is impossible without change,
and those who cannot change their
minds cannot change anything. 9**

– George Bernard Shaw



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About S2S

As one of the longest-established ITAD (IT Asset Disposal) companies in our sector, we've built an enviable reputation delivering the most secure, innovative and environmentally responsible set of Asset Recovery and Disposal services in the industry.

Dealing with businesses from all sectors and sizes, we've worked hard to become one of the UK's most accredited ITADs. Our team of specialists are committed to the sustainable and responsible disposal of electrical waste on behalf of our clients, doing that extra bit to benefit the environment and our community.

What we do

IT Asset, Mobile and Tablet Refurbishment

Full asset refurbishment and repair can prolong the life of your IT estate, retain value, and save your organisation money on replacing assets. Our services can be tailored to meet your individual needs, preparing your assets for reuse with full testing and preloaded software to 'plug in and play' when deployed.

WEEE Recycling and Disposal

We hold full licensing to treat, recycle and process waste at our secure facility. Our zero-to-landfill policy maximises reuse and reduces carbon emissions for our customers to support your environmental responsibilities.

Secure Data Erasure and Destruction

Fully certified and audited to high standards, our data erasure removes all trace of customer data from devices, with a full audit provided for each asset which passes through our facility. Any data bearing devices that cannot be accessed or reused are physically destroyed to render all data on it irretrievable and safe from unwanted access.

Data Centre Services and Decommissioning

We can handle the installation, deployment, and decommission of your server estates securely and safely. With full auditing, consolidation, and sanitisation available to ensure the safety of your staff and performance of your assets.

Technical IT Services

By providing our team with a 'Gold Build' master asset, we can effectively image 400 devices simultaneously by deploying identical programming onto the assets, ready to be used straight out of the box.

Sanitisation / Disinfection Services

We use Sanosil fogging equipment to eliminate traces of harmful bacteria and viruses to ensure that all devices and work areas are fully disinfected. All products and services within our facility can include this process to help protect your staff and working environment.



Providing the **solutions**
to corporate data **security**

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www.s2s.uk.com