

**path** to making greener working pay?**Barry Paschali**

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**Are you unsure what greener working is,** or unclear on how well your organisation is doing in comparison to others? Don't worry - everyone feels the same way. In addition, every individual organisation will be at a different stage along its own specific path.

Greener working, or true sustainability, only occurs when your organisation is in harmony with the buildings and areas around it and its people, such as your co-workers. My recommendation is don't try and put the whole world to rights. Keep things achievable and relevant - stay local.

Greener working means making efficient and effective use of your resources: the buildings you work in, the gas, electricity and water you use, the travelling you do and the waste you generate. Greener working is not about 'tree hugging', it's cold hard economics. Why do you think 82% of the Global 500 and 96% of the FTSE 100 businesses take part in the Carbon Disclosure Project? Greener working means saving significant sums (at least 15% to 20%) in ever increasing utility costs and spiralling travelling costs, plus indirect costs such as cleaning, packaging and landfill tax.

The benefits continue with improvements to brand, reputation and organisational positioning, staff morale, productivity, space saving, top line performance, good financial return from investments, and lessening the organisation's environmental impact. Greener working is a no brainer; it is a great thing to do. The difficulty is knowing **where** to start and **how** to keep it going. How do you make greener working sustainable?

Our governments (past and present) have introduced various greener working incentives and legislation from the legal binding Climate Change Act 2008, to the Building Regulations 2010, to the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme, to very generous feed in tariffs and now soon to be renewable heat incentives. The next to arrive is the Energy Bill 2011 which will introduce the Green Deal. How all these will work together has still to be worked out but whatever happens greener working is here to stay.

A certainty is that organisations who work in a forward-looking way will be more 'future-proofed' and more profitable. Adopting sustainable policies and improving environmental credentials now will mean the commercial benefits of greener working will be enormous.

Don't forget the significance of existing buildings. Remember that 42% of the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from buildings (24% domestic and 18% non domestic) and over 82% of these buildings are existing and will be with us well into 2050. So let's try and focus on the existing stock - an approach which has the full support of the UK Green Building Council.

The path to greener working starts with top level management engagement and a simple strategy that links the organisational performance with greener working. I recommend setting up a Greener Working Board featuring a cross section of disciplines and teams including those from operations, energy, maintenance, contracting, property, HR, finance and specialist consultants. They have to share the same goals and objectives with each department having something to gain.

Produce a robust action plan for implementation focusing on producing medium and long term solutions together with a people engagement strategy. Seek independent and unbiased advice to ensure you look at the right alternatives and don't get fixated upon a particular technology or solution. Behaviour change and staff engagement is just as important as any physical solution. I explain this to clients by asking them to think of the physical solutions as 'blue solutions' and the behaviours of people as 'yellow solutions'. Only when both are blended and working together do you get true green!



Ways to measure your strategy's success and effectiveness include simple payback, MAC Curves, tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> reduced, £k saved, % return on investment. Also include soft targets such as car journeys saved and numbers of homes that could have been heated. Choose the one(s) that influence the most. Above all, ensure good behaviour is rewarded by proper communication, recognition, feedback and praise. Sometimes cold hard cash does the trick too. Donations to charities such as Trees for Cities and Woodland Trust work well, however meals out with colleagues often doesn't!

In conclusion, greener working:

- Is specific to an organisation.
- Needs embracing by top level management who motivate the right teams.
- Must include people engagement strategies as well as physical solutions.
- Measures its success using the same metrics as the organisation assesses its own performance.

**And remember - greener working pays!**

**Barry** founded Paschali Greener Working Solutions in June 2009 to impart tailor-made sustainable engineering and management support to organisations in the built environment. He promises to help you find a clear route through the jungle of ever-changing sustainability regulations to ensure real value is added to your business.

Barry has enjoyed over a quarter of a century in the multidisciplinary world of engineering. He has worked at director level for global firms such as Arup and Atkins and, as well as possessing a wealth of experience in the diverse sectors of renewables, sustainability and carbon reduction, also has a multitude of skills in business processes, people development and innovation. ■

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## Scaladiary

### April

- 21 ACA Seminar in London - Setting up a practice
- 27 ACA Seminar in London - ACA fee scales (contact Shona Broughton T: 020 8325 1402)

### May

- 20 Eastern Region meeting (contact Steve Holtz T: 01603 706624)
- 25 ACA CPD Conference in London (contact Shona Broughton T: 020 8325 1402)

### June

- 3 **SCALA/SCEME Study Day** at UWE, Bristol, on **'Making the most of what you've got'**. For further information see **Scalanews** Spring edition or go to [www.publicarchitecture.co.uk](http://www.publicarchitecture.co.uk) or [www.sceme.org](http://www.sceme.org).
- 9 NW Region meeting in Wigan (contact Chris Coxhead T: 01772 533270)
- 24 SCALA S&SE & London regions and SCEME joint meeting (contact Bernard Wyld T: 01273 623291)

### July

- 1 Policy Committee and SCALA Forum & Council in Edinburgh ■