

Issue Sixty one

LAUNCHPAD

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It's time to reduce your business carbon footprint

The concept of green business is nothing new. As the world embraces cloud based software and aims to reduce carbon emissions, it's time to get on board - whether you're motivated by minimising costs, attracting energy conscious customers or making a difference.

According to the EECA (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority) most businesses can reduce their carbon footprint and save at least 20% of their energy costs. It's estimated that 10% can be saved through simple no/low cost actions (with a payback of 12 months or less) and a further 10% with some investment and a longer payback of 1 - 5 years.

Nominate an energy saving leader who'll oversee the development of a meaningful plan and its implementation. Remember it's best to make several changes at once... you'll notice a real difference and happily monitor your ongoing success. Being energy conscious should be a part of your business' daily decision making process.

For more information visit the EECA business website at www.eecabusiness.govt.nz. You'll find some nifty tools and calculators to help you measure your existing footprint and the success/savings you'll achieve as you implement subtle changes in your business.

Simple ways to minimise waste and costs

There is a common misconception that using 'green' products or practices is cost prohibitive. Here are some simple ways to tread lighter on the planet and reduce energy consumption:

1. **Shut your business down completely at night.** It can save between 10 and 15% in wasted standby power!
2. **Get practical energy-saving advice for the equipment you have.** E.g. Use your dishwasher's eco cycle (when it's full) and consider energy star ratings when replacing appliances.
3. **Reuse and reduce use of non-recyclable office products and supplies.** Think before you throw out stationery that could easily be re-labelled or reused.
4. **Consider secondhand office equipment.** Trademe has made it easy to recycle and to buy recycled office furniture.
5. **Minimise packaging waste.** Reuse card and paper for repackaging your own items before posting.
6. **Avoid single use items such as plastic water cups.** Reduce plastic and packaging waste by buying re-useable glasses.
7. **Buy bulk kitchen supplies (tea and coffee).** It's generally cheaper and will reduce packaging waste.
8. **Reach for NZ made green products.** Use eco cleaning products and energy saving light bulbs. Review your options and the items you purchase out of nostalgia.
9. **Minimise printer waste.** Default printer settings to grayscale duplex or reuse paper for internal documents.



11. **Recycle, beyond the odd tin-can.** Make recycling bins (including instructions on what can/can't be recycled in the workplace) accessible. What do you do with printer cartridges and other exhausted office products?
12. **Consider email over post.** By emailing your daily invoices you'll save postage, paper and delivery time!
13. **Consider your paperless options.** It might be easier and cheaper to store and access files online.

Most importantly, get the team on board! Discuss your efforts at team meetings and encourage everyone to do their bit.

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Creating a passionate work culture

Company culture is a term for the way an organisation behaves collectively. A culture is based on the shared attitudes, customs, visions, beliefs, habits, written and unwritten rules, and the values that affect team interaction.

Company culture can change as the company grows and business increases. Check in regularly on your company culture and ensure it remains positive. Display your values in a prominent area where all staff can see them and allow them to contribute their thoughts and ideas.



Establish a culture that makes you proud of what you've created:

- **Hire the right people** - start with passion and commitment when hiring and take the time to hire enthusiastic staff
- **Communicate** - a poor company culture can undermine your business success and what you're trying to achieve, so regularly check in with your staff at team meetings and discuss what is going well and what isn't. Remember to listen
- **Work hard and play hard** - remember to reward your staff and they will be more willing and productive
- **Shoot for the stars** - make your goals big, encourage your staff to verbalise their individual goals at team meetings
- **Embrace difference** - different ethnic cultures and demographics encourage a diverse and passionate working culture

In building a company culture, you create trust and respect and a safe working environment for your employees. This allows your team to focus on prioritising to achieve great results and in turn, you will have happy and positive employees.

'Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.' Japanese proverb



Serious steps to reduce your carbon footprint

Serious change starts at the top of an organisation. Management should enlist specialist help and commit resource to implementing smart, effective and ongoing change to environmental practices.

Develop an energy management policy to take a unified stance. Declare your business' intentions, policies and commitments, and clearly define your short, medium and long term goals.

Think strategy. How will your goals tie into the wider business plan? Who will manage and be accountable for achieving goals? What is the budget and dedicated resources? What reporting systems will be implemented and how will results be monitored?

Complete a waste audit, evaluate energy consumption and develop a tailored plan.

Establish areas of strength/concern to define realistic goals. Exhaust short term payback opportunities to build on your success. Consider investing in solar power. You may qualify for an energy grant.

Review energy contracts and negotiate better rates. Consider current business partners/suppliers, and align yourself with those taking a similar environmental stance.

Demonstrate your commitment to the community. Donate time and energy to worthy green causes. Get your hands dirty by helping in coastal cleanup initiatives or tree planting. As a team decide on a few important causes and get involved.

Encourage car pooling or weekly bike to work day. Do you have the necessary bikes, locks and so on to make it easy for staff to take the road less travelled?

Review your office premises. Are you utilising natural ventilation and lighting? Would it be beneficial to upgrade aspects of your fit-out? Do you have any older, inefficient office appliances? Be conscious of long-term energy payback when replacing big ticket items.

According to EECA, businesses should allow roughly one hour per year for every \$2,500 spent on energy. Therefore it's likely the role of energy manager will fall inside someone's wider job description - be sure to make it formal and ensure you communicate the importance of energy and the environment to your staff.





Blogging for business - is it right for you?

What is a blog?

The term blog originates from the words 'web' and 'log.' It is a simple website in which businesses and/or individuals can record thoughts, opinions and information. A blog is like a basic website, except it is free to set up and doesn't require so much technical knowledge, so you don't need to know how to write code! Blogs are generally user friendly, making the initial set-up a breeze.

What can a blog do for your business?

Blogging for your business can boost your brand. It can act as your voice, providing another outlet to express your company's goals and ideas in a more informative and interesting way. By doing so, your customers develop a familiarity with you and your team which in turn, builds trust and rapport.

Writing a blog should encourage you to stay up to date with industry trends and related content, making you more knowledgeable and capable of answering client queries on different levels.

Be savvy with keywords. With the use of certain keywords, your blog may appear at the top of search results. These keywords, along with other various blog promoters, are called search engine optimisers, or SEOs. Google and other such search engines are the first ports of call for people delving into cyber space. SEOs are an important part of directing traffic to your blog.

Don't discount blogging. Accept it as a challenge. You may be surprised as to what you learn about your business, your brand and your employees.

The benefits of blogs

- It's a cost effective way to stay in touch with your customers
- It directs steady traffic to your website
- It builds brand awareness
- It differentiates you from your competitors
- You can provide information outside your normal marketing communication
- It allows your customers to comment and provide valuable feedback

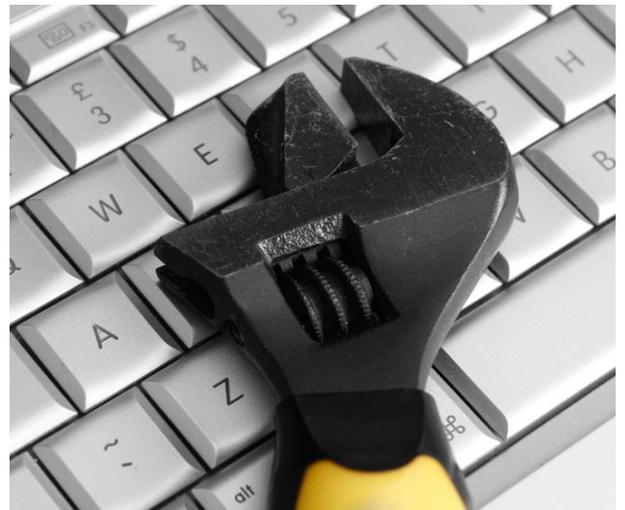


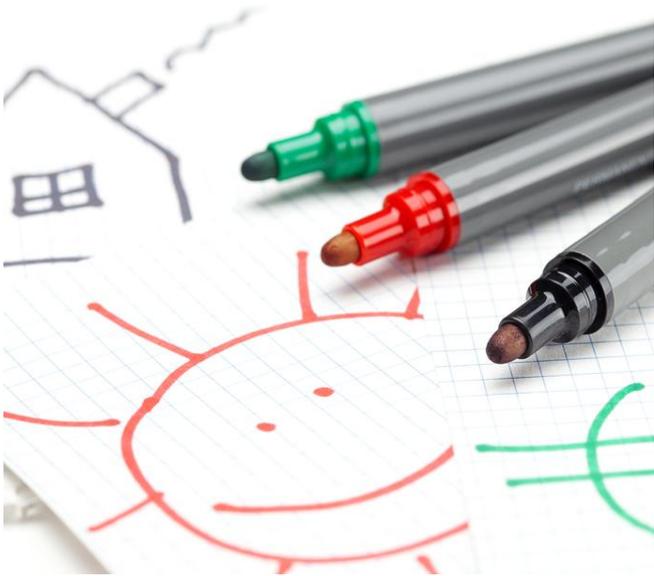
ENGINE ROOM

Getting started - setting up your blog

There are a number of different blog sites available and the registration for each is essentially the same. It's as simple as entering your email address and choosing a username and password. Each site has an array of professional, pre-designed templates which are incredibly user friendly when it comes to loading text and images.

Spend a decent amount of time on your blog design. Look at the different options available when it comes to backgrounds, font styles and sizes. Ensure you have your logo in a prominent place and the colours you use represent your brand. Getting the look right can be fun. Spend time playing around and see what looks and feels best.

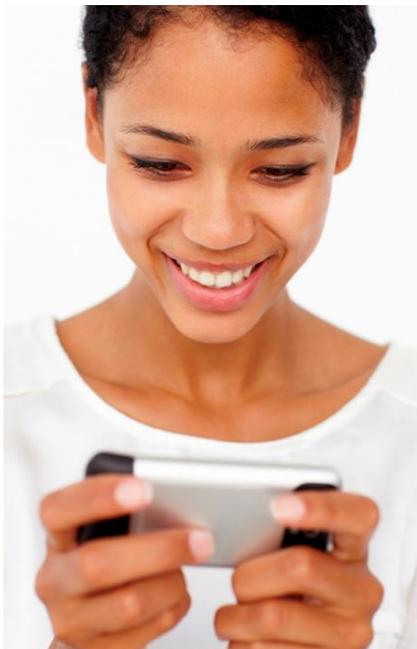




Effective blog entries

Now that you're committed to writing a blog, here are some key points to take into consideration:

- Write catchy headings to entice the reader
- Make entries topical where possible and relevant to current events
- Use hyperlinks to other web pages relevant to the entry (set these up to open in a new browser window so that the reader isn't led away from your site)
- Include attractive or controversial images, provided they sit in line with your brand
- Keep your entries interesting for your followers; think of appropriate article length and formatting options, using bullet points and varied font sizes for headings



Netiquette - the meaning of email

1. **Don't make assumptions.** If you're unclear about the content or the tone then ask for clarification before you react.
2. **Use sentence case.** Typing your emails in lower case can create the perception of lack of education or laziness. Use sentence case to appear more professional.
3. **USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS or BOLD LOOKS AS IF YOU'RE SHOUTING.**
4. **Address your contact with the appropriate level of formality.** Make sure you spell their name correctly.
5. **Be informal, not sloppy.** Commonly accepted abbreviations may be suitable for internal communications but, with clients or customers, everyone should follow standard protocol. Email messages reflect you and your company, so traditional spelling, grammar, and punctuation rules apply.
6. **If you cannot respond to an email promptly,** at the least reply to confirm you received it and indicate when the sender can expect your response or solution.
7. **Avoid High Priority and URGENT!!!** If it's really important then use the phone.
8. **Don't use Read Receipts.** They're intrusive, annoying and easily declined.

FYI...

Greenwashing: A negative term for the glossing over of a company's policies to falsely appear environmentally friendly. Leafy green logos or slogans are used by companies to mask the fact that they have very little care for the environment at all.

Intellectual property: The ownership of rights to ideas, designs, and inventions, including copyrights, patents, and trademarks. Intellectual property is protected by law in most countries.



An Important Message

While every effort has been made to provide valuable, useful information in this publication, this firm and any related suppliers or associated companies accept no responsibility or any form of liability from reliance upon or use of its contents. Any suggestions should be considered carefully within your own particular circumstances, as they are intended as general information only.

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