

Going Green:

Case
Studies
in



Outstanding Green
Business Practices

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Re-imagining our Business

Like the other names for the primary colors, the word “green” has many connotations. It can illustrate envy or serve as a synonym for inexperience. In this guidebook, “green” refers to environmental stewardship, and we’re not alone in placing high importance on this aspect of greenery—do a Google search for “green” and you’ll find that most of the top links relate to the environment, not the color. But let’s consider the “inexperienced” definition of green for a moment, and the irony therein.



This guidebook on Going Green is based on the premise that most of us are rather inexperienced when it comes to building a predominately green business and reducing our carbon footprint, both in our personal and business worlds. And that’s OK. Haste makes waste, and we’ve already seen too many cases of “greenwashing”—companies claiming to be green when really they are half-good at marketing. Case in point: Research firm Ipsos Reid found that 70% of Americans believe a green designation for a company is “just a marketing tactic.” Yet most employees in nearly every survey I’ve read said it’s extremely important that their company be environmentally progressive.

This perception problem is an opportunity for you as communicators and marketers. At PR News, we talk to executives on a regular basis about best and next practices for not only developing a sustainable business, but communicating those initiatives in a clear and honest way. This book is designed to make you less green (as in more experienced) when it comes to understanding how to go green (as in being environmentally responsible) and remain green.

We’ve asked executives from all types of organizations—from major corporations to small colleges to large manufacturers to major media companies—to share what they’re doing, what they’re learning and how they are communicating their green initiatives. This guidebook is designed to provide many perspectives and varying tactics on going green. What’s right for one company may not be right for yours, but throughout this book you’ll see that the worst you can do is to not try.

As Hilary Smith of NBC Universal notes in this book, “In a fiercely competitive business, green is the one area where we can take our boxing gloves off.”

Now is the time to re-imagine what your brand stands for, to reinvent and reconfigure your operations and to reap the benefits, both for the environment, for your stakeholders and for your bottom line. In many cases, as you’ll read in this guidebook, going green actually saves you money.

Before you start digging into this book, consider this reminder from Mike Lawrence of Cone, who notes in Chapter 10 the distinction between doing less bad versus doing good. He says: “Avoid seeking too much credit merely because you are decreasing your environmental footprint, as this is rapidly becoming a consumer expectation, not one that warrants increased loyalty.”

I hope you find this guidebook useful. If you implement just a few of the great ideas contained within, both your organization and our environment will be all the better for it.