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# B2B STRAIGHT UP

## Considering green B2B marketing? Just follow the money

Still wondering how to get profit from going green? As **Kimon Lycos** attests, it's better late than never.

**T**here are a number of angles that are covered in this article, without hugging a tree, chaining yourself to anything or buying a Pelvis (sorry, a Prius). It's all to do with making some smart business decisions regarding your B2B marketing to incorporate a green strategy.

Let's smack the first issue on the head. Do not get involved with 'green washing', the act of declaring that you are environmentally friendly, while pouring Drano into creeks. It's stupid to set yourself up for a fall and you deserve every bit of nastiness that happens to you for faking your brand as being 'green'. (Faking your brand as anything for that matter.)

Pretend that you hate trees, don't care about future generations and personally get a kick out of watching million-year-old glaciers melt away, so that any changes in your business related to going green have to make hard-core business sense first. Which is fair enough, because no sensible business decision-maker wants to diminish profits to save something as insignificant as the planet.

The fact is, if you believe Al Gore or not, climate change is here, as a financial and business system. What too many B2B marketers/CEOs are thick headed in understanding is that they will have to look at their carbon and environmental impact, because those they supply to will demand it.

It's a simple supply chain thing with large companies wanting to save/make money on carbon, so suppliers who make up their carbon footprint will need to change, because

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those who do will actively contribute to customers' profits, and those that don't will end up looking like an Amazon rainforest farm development.

Let's consider a giant of industry – that enviro-happy business, BP. Way back in 1997, BP decided that lowering emissions to 10 percent below 1990 levels would be a smart thing to do. The whole program went company wide, to do everything from tightening valves to using energy efficient light bulbs – it also put the broom through operations, which many suppliers were a part of.

They also embarked on an education program and currently claim to do this for other industries. Truth be told, I'm not a fan of 'big oil' – BP has distributed its fair share of grief on the world as others have done, and this is what I like about BP as a 'case study'. If it made these steps, there is sure to be a buck in it.

BP met its emissions goal by the end of 2001, nine years ahead of schedule, saving a reported US\$650 million. You can imagine

that anyone not on board the green train got shoved off, especially as the numbers got sweeter and sweeter.

It's important to understand that you can't just turn around and say, "I'm green", because you reuse paper. It has to become a core strategy or else you are going to look dim-witted to everyone.

With so much being transformed because of climate change, new business opportunities will be provided if you have the right position and B2B marketing focus. If you need any more encouragement the World Bank estimates that the global carbon market traded volumes were worth over US\$30 billion in 2006. Being fuelled by the biggest banks powering this economy means if you are not in the mix, you will miss out.

If Fortune 500 powerhouses such as DuPont, Ford and IBM are voluntarily capping and trading their emissions, it would be foolhardy to not make a serious assessment of what your business is marketing from a green perspective.

Increasingly, governments are adding leading questions, such as asking tenders what their company's sustainability policy is – this is not just for big industry, but for everyone, even silly service providers like advertising agencies. Soon it appears that if you don't have a green strategy, the doors to dealing with large customers, commercial and government, will close – no more lattes in Styrofoam cups, guys!

Another key strategic question is talent attraction. MonsterTRAK found that 80 percent of young professionals want their work to



affect the environment in a positive way and 92 percent prefer to work for an environmentally friendly company.

From a corporate brand and marketing strategy, not going green will mean less opportunity to attract talent. That's a scary thought, considering it's hard enough to find good people to help develop growth.

Finally, think about commercialisation and collaboration opportunities. Plugging in a strong and wholesome greenness to your B2B marketing strategy will mean new

opportunities. The Rudd Government has set up a fund just for this purpose.

Technology and innovation will contribute significantly in helping to pull us all out of the global warming poo we have created. Barack Obama made it a point to declare that green technology is a new economic opportunity. And it certainly is – we have had the Iron Age, Industrial Age and IT Age; it's time for the Green Tech Age.

Frustratingly, in Australia we don't have the policies and legislation to unleash

some amazing home-grown ideas to really get this economy booming.

Germans on the other hand are smart. Think of the government-guaranteed buying of power you put into the grid; then think of a lot of people going to banks to get loans on the back of these 25-year government backed securities. Voila – you've got solar power everywhere.

Guess who is now one of the leaders for solar power in the world and generating incredible scales of economy to lower manufacturing prices, while raising innovation levels? Guess who will be left behind and will have to pay a premium for solar technology developed overseas in a climate that is grey and cold?

There is more than ample evidence available that a new age is here and you can only hope that political and industrial decision-makers recognise this, embrace it and leverage it for all it's worth. And it is worth a bundle – everything from transport to energy, water, waste and manufacturing can get turbo powered if we become savvier, like the Germans.

So for all you entrepreneurial seal belting, Humvee driving, narcissistic enviro vandals, ignoring green is to restrict potential profits and opportunities. Once more of you stop banging rocks together and make the decision to clean up by greening up, I hope that the groundswell of numbers makes you wealthier and leaves the slowpokes behind to share the fate of the dodo.

On behalf of future generations of Lycoses – thanks! **M**

## DIFFERENT BUT THE SAME



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