

## **Business Adaptation Case Studies**

From the 'Marketing and Climate Change Programme':

Jointly run by Horizon SW, The Chartered Institute of Marketing and SWCCIP

### **Year 2 Case studies – group A (2007/8)**

Each of the 8 companies taking part in the workshops took concrete mitigation and/or adaptation actions as a result and all produced a case study outlining actions and outcomes (see below). 100% of the programme attendees cited shifts in their own awareness and attitudes as a result of the programme. As part of this final evaluation after the completion of the programme, delegates were also asked to stipulate what helped and hindered them the most and *facts about science* and *case studies* were regularly listed as the most helpful areas.

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## **COMPANY: Burroughs Day Solicitors**

### **Company summary:**

A law firm, run as a partnership with 13 partners and total of 134 staff. Two offices in the Bristol area (Bristol & Portishead). The firm is split into 3 sections – business services, individual client services and personal injury and has been in existence since 1829.

### **Delegate summary:**

The firm sent two delegates, Eleanor Rendell and Maria Moon Park, both in the marketing department. Eleanor is Marketing Manager and Maria works with her. Eleanor is currently working on an MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice and is therefore very aware of climate change issues. Maria was less aware when the programme started but very interested.

### **Company starting point:**

The company was at a very low baseline at the outset of the programme. Service-based companies that do not experience pressure from clients commonly do not consider climate change to be a business issue and therefore do not tend to act on it unless any individual(s) in the company act through strong, personal conviction. This was the case with Burroughs Day so that when Eleanor raised the issue to senior management (due to her personal interest), she received positive responses based on the senior management's personal feelings although there was, however, no official policy commitment on behalf of the business to learn about or deal with climate change.

**Activities:**

Given there were no external pressures from stakeholders requesting the company to act, there was also no real pressure from within the firm. Therefore an internal communications plan was put in place to create some awareness amongst the staff. This led to the creation of an environment group consisting of various staff members, which is currently implementing many small mitigative steps to help reduce Burroughs Day's impact. The marketing team are continuing to produce awareness raising literature and information within the organisation to maintain awareness raising efforts. They have also begun raising awareness of the actions they are taking with their clients and suppliers and as part of this hosted a successful business breakfast for approximately 60 business contacts that focused on climate change risks and opportunities.

**Most helpful aspects:**

Greater understanding of the different motivations behind people's behaviour. Eleanor, the marketing manager, began to understand that different people have different reasons for getting involved with the subject of climate change and that these reasons are equally as valid as her own personal commitment. This has helped her to understand more about how to communicate the subject of climate change to business people in order for them to take it on board.

The structure provided by the programme was deemed to be helpful, as it provided guidance on how to proceed. Another key factor was having like-minded people to share experiences with.

**Biggest hindrances:**

At this point, there is concern that any environmental actions taken by the firm and its staff members would cease should the marketing team stop driving the issue forward. The behavioural changes that have occurred as a result of the awareness shifts to date are not yet sufficiently embedded in the company. Thus while an awareness shift has undoubtedly occurred, it is not yet of sufficient force to ensure that all staff members alter their behaviour permanently.

Time was considered to be a key problem, as this subject is not a priority business area but is seen as an 'extra-curricular' activity based on individual interest rather than part of individual job descriptions.

**Number of people influenced/ reached:**

Est. 250 (both within and outside the organisation)

# COMPANY: HIGHER WISCOMBE

## Company summary:

Higher Wiscombe is a self-catering holiday company in east Devon. The company is run by the two owners and provides three letting units.

## Delegate summary:

Alistair Handyside is part of the owner team and started the business with his wife without any previous experience of the industry.

## Company starting point:

The mission statement is 'luxury holidays with a sustainable twist', so sustainability has been at the heart of this business from the start. The company has won various awards, one of which is a plus Gold award in the Green Tourism Business Scheme and recently they were overall winner in the Devon Environmental Business Initiative (DEBI) 2007 environmental awards.

Both partners were obviously very aware of the issues of climate change, considered it a huge threat and felt it was essential that everybody did something. As they were both so committed, they struggled to see the difficulties others might face in dealing with the subject and also felt that they needed to focus on communications more to help ensure their guests had a clear understanding of the issues.

## Activities:

The owners realised that they couldn't improve their own activities further without greater involvement from their guests, which in turn meant they needed to improve their guest communications activities.

As a result of the programme, they were able to identify ways to focus on the opportunities that climate change provides and on how to communicate climate change positively rather than focusing on the negatives, which meant their style of communication changed.

Guest responses to these efforts were increasingly positive compared to their initial unwillingness to change their behaviour. Now guests are increasingly ready to not only change their own behaviour, but also to challenge the owners to improve their provisions.

To date, the owners had been reluctant to look at adaptation, as they felt that this would mean exploiting something for their own gain. As a result of the programme, however, they have begun to see the need to do so. Their outdoor facilities (heated swimming pool, picnic area) will be available for longer periods of the year due to the warmer weather and they will initiate marketing activities highlighting that in the near future.

In the future they will look at producing their own renewable energy by installing their own wind turbine and will seek to communicate any opportunities for further positive environmental behaviours to their guests in an effort to engage them more while on site (e.g. further recycling opportunities etc.)

**Most helpful aspects:**

The most important thing was the feedback from others received during the course, which resulted in the owners modifying their actions on site.

**Biggest hindrances:**

Cannot think of anything on the course that this could apply to.

**Number of people influenced/ reached:**

In excess of 300. This number will grow continuously due to constant advertising and marketing of the business as an environmental business and also Alistair's involvement in the South-West Tourism body.

# COMPANY: INSPIRATIONS ADVERTISING & DESIGN LTD

## **Company summary:**

Inspirations are a high-end design, communication and marketing agency situated in Devon working nationally and internationally. The company consists of one key person and freelancers as additional support where required.

## **Delegate summary:**

Pete Williams is the owner of the business and the driver behind the sustainability focus of the organisation.

## **Company starting point:**

There was quite a high baseline here before the company started on the programme. The company had already signed up as a supporter of DEBI and had realised the need to set itself apart by defining itself as a sustainable agency from the outset. Clients and suppliers were already being actively encouraged to review their environmental practices.

## **Activities:**

The aim before coming on the programme was to identify better promotional methods to further increase awareness around environment and sustainability activities. The company also wanted to use this programme to get a better understanding of the needs and attitudes of other companies.

As a result of the programme, the agency has become more careful and considerate when promoting any of its green activities and has decided against promoting a green lifestyle as such. It has been decided to refocus on promoting products and services whilst demonstrating that they can offer a like-for-like product at the same financial cost to a client but with much lower environmental impact and added benefits. This is becoming relevant, as it has been found that the company's clients are under increasing pressure from their customers to justify their behaviour.

The company has also decided to promote itself within the specific market sector of environmentally focused businesses, to whom it is able to provide a low impact service due to the mitigation processes it has applied to itself. The BACLIAT tool has also been used with one of the company's clients.

## **Most helpful aspects:**

The main thing that helped with the course and ultimately the case study which resulted from it, was the ability to eliminate the green-wash from the marketing plans and develop a strategic benefit that can be put out to business.

## **Biggest hindrances:**

The internal approach to the process, i.e. danger of green-wash, not defining it as strategic benefit.

## **Number of people influenced/ reached:**

6,000 (use of email newsletter in conjunction with Business Link)

# COMPANY: PAIGNTON ZOO ENVIRONMENTAL PARK

## **Company summary:**

Paignton Zoo Environmental Park is situated in Devon and is an education charity as well as a visitor attraction. 193 people are employed by the organisation and it comprises both Paignton Zoo and Living Coasts, both visitor attractions in Devon.

## **Delegate summary:**

Two delegates attended – Pippa Craddock the Director of Marketing and Development at Paignton Zoo and Vicky Barnes, Marketing Manager. This is Vicky Barnes' case study.

## **Company starting point:**

The company's baseline was reasonably high with very high awareness levels throughout the organisation and an ongoing commitment to increasing climate change mitigation activities. The company has held ISO 14001 since 2005 and in 2008 they received a Gold Award from the Green Tourism Business Scheme. The environment, sustainability and climate change are at the core of the charity's mission and all employees are heavily involved with all these processes. It became apparent however, that the charity's visitors were not aware of their activities.

## **Activities:**

The programme identified a real need to communicate the very positive actions taken by the charity to their visitors. Therefore the Environment Officer and the Marketing Manager jointly decided to organise an Environment Event where they could showcase various alternative 'green' lifestyle options that people could adopt. A new events committee was also organised, which involved the help of the Environment group. Both groups involved members from all parts and levels of the organisation.

The planned environment event has been scheduled for half-term October '08 and the local paper – The Western Morning News will be media partner, creating a supplement and telling stories. One of the other delegates – Higher Wiscombe self-catering holiday accommodation is also getting involved in a joint promotion, offering a free week family stay for winners of a competition. There will be an exhibition on Climate Change and the Met Office and South-West Tourism will deliver workshops and activities. The event will be run using the 'greener events guide' and as a next step, local businesses, trust, charities and producers will be invited to take part in the Green Solutions festival, which will follow the October event.

A new event planner is being used, which helps to plan events with the environment in mind.

As a result of the course, internal communications have improved dramatically and the willingness of all staff members to get involved in providing ideas for a range of events has also increased. These improved communications have also created a greater sense of environmental responsibility amongst all staff members at both a tactical and a strategic level.

**Most helpful aspects:**

Information on different styles of communications and advice how to communicate with others.

**Biggest hindrances:**

Na.

**Number of people influenced/ reached:**

Several thousands by October 2008.

# COMPANY: PAIGNTON ZOO ENVIRONMENTAL PARK (A)

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## **Company starting point:**

The company's baseline was reasonably high with very high awareness levels throughout the organisation and an ongoing commitment to increasing climate change mitigation activities. The company has held ISO 14001 since 2005 and in 2008 they received a Gold Award from the Green Tourism Business Scheme. The environment, sustainability and climate change are at the core of the charity's mission and all employees are heavily involved with all these processes. It became apparent however, that the charity's visitors are not aware of their activities.

## **Activities:**

The motivation for taking part was to help identify how climate change and environmental issues can best be communicated to visitors and to determine whether the public interest in these subjects could ever become a motivator for visiting the zoo. This was the main reason for taking part in the programme as the organisation is already committed to changing its behaviour and reducing its environmental impact. As Vicky Barnes was also taking part and using this programme to review the internal activities and approaches, it fell on Pippa Craddock to look at the external communications.

Initially, some research was undertaken to determine visitor interest in and understanding of climate change. The marketing activities used consisted of an article in the monthly e-newsletter with a link to an online survey about climate change. 3% of the newsletter recipients read the article and less than 1% completed the survey (68 people during August 2007 – January 2008). The survey results did not provide any new insights and have not affected the internal workings of the zoo. As a next step, a survey amongst school children will be taken via the education team and then one for day visitors through the visitor survey. Other channels are also being pursued.

Simultaneously, the Environment Officer is undertaking steps to raise greater awareness by including an environmental logo to all interpretation, signage, POS and other communications where the contents include an environmental message.

There are further plans in place to refine the communications of environmental issues to the public with the aim of inspiring them, which will involve the education team from within Paignton Zoo.

There is also recognition that further investigations will need to be carried out to identify whether environmental credentials can be a USP for a zoo, which may link in with making the conservation angle a key motivator.

## **Most helpful aspects:**

Reducing the wealth of information in the public domain to a digestible amount. Providing pointers where to go if more information is needed. Networking with business people who work in completely different industries and sharing ideas and experiences.

**Biggest hindrances:**

Some colleagues felt that further research was unnecessary, as they assumed they knew the answers. Visitors' response rates were reasonably small, which limits the value of the results.

**Number of people influenced/ reached:**

E-newsletter went to 11,600, 3% read the full article, 68 filled in the survey.

# COMPANY: PLASTIC SURGEONS

## **Company summary:**

Plastic Surgeons Fine Finishers are household repair specialists providing cosmetic repairs to the construction and housing industry. They work with the leading building and property development companies around the UK. They are based in Devon and work nationally with approximately 160 employees.

## **Delegate summary:**

Rob Mouser was Marketing Director at the outset of the programme and was promoted to Managing Director a few months ago.

## **Company starting point:**

The company already had a sustainable service offering, as it reduces the need for product replacements due to snagging in new build houses by repairing the damage to them. Further the company was aware that none of its clients in the construction industry was behaving in a sustainable way even though some of them were promoting themselves on the sustainability 'ticket' and it decided to become a true leader in that area.

## **Activities:**

Plastic Surgeons initially decided to identify the environmental impact of its own work for each project and to communicate this on customer invoices. This achieved little or no response from customers, who seemed not at all interested in this information. Generally, the customer base did not consider climate change or environment to be a primary issue affecting their working practice and saw no relevance in Plastic Surgeon's actions. Some months ago the Plastic Surgeons decided to expand and looked for investors to help them move forward. Unexpectedly, the investment market showed extreme interest in their environmental communications practice and considered it to be of key importance.

More recently however, a shift has been happening in the construction industry and many of Plastic Surgeon's clients have realised the need for their own behaviour to change. As a result, they are now approaching Plastic Surgeons asking them for information and advice with regards to their own activities.

## **Most helpful aspects:**

Day to day 'business as usual' is all consuming and developing these case studies has enabled the management team to step 'outside of the circle' and 'look in' enabling it to assess the impact of climate change on Plastic Surgeon's own business, staff and customers

## **Biggest hindrances:**

Lack of time resource

## **Number of people influenced/ reached:**

760 (160 staff + regular customers).

# COMPANY: PROECTA CAR PLAN

## **Company summary:**

The company provides flexible vehicle leasing solutions and was formed in 1995. They currently have over 60 staff making them the largest dedicated Employee Car Ownership team in the UK.

## **Delegate summary:**

Helen Webb was Marketing Manager for Provecta throughout the programme and has since left the company.

## **Company starting point:**

The company's staff are split in their attitude to the relevance of climate change to their market sector. Overall, Provecta is a reasonably forward thinking company and, in particular, the chairman was and is very committed to the environment. This has been expressed in him starting a second company with the aim of accounting for and driving down carbon usage in large companies. Some of the board members have expressed far more reticence and doubt as to the relevance of green activities to the company's profitability.

## **Activities:**

The company had repeatedly had requests for an environmental slant on their Employee Car Ownership schemes, which meant they would offer lower emission products. They had also been asked for their green credentials in tenders and so had experienced some market pressures.

Hence they decided to develop a green fleet product, which would exceed other green fleet products on the market. This product would provide operational cost savings and mitigate the impact of the fleet's emissions on the environment. Although this project was already being considered when the programme started, the Marketing Manager found that the additional information provided and the business case that was made, provided her with useful information to use in discussions with those parts of the board that doubted the new product's relevance, considered it was catering to a minor sector of their market and felt it would not provide adequate ROI.

Nonetheless, the chairman and the Marketing Manager persevered and the product has now been launched.

## **Most helpful aspects:**

Specific arguments defining the business case for implementing environmental measures in a business. Also sharing experiences with others in the marketing field facing the same issues.

**Biggest hindrances:**

Time and resources were the primary barrier, as the programme and related activities had to be taken on in addition to existing workloads. Also the board resistance encountered relating to the financial benefits behind such a move versus the investment required.

**Number of people influenced/ reached:**

Estimated to be in the region of 35 - 40 ranging from internal staff and experts such as Greenstone Carbon Management to the company's brand consultants, other suppliers, training providers, Business Link etc.

# COMPANY: TAYLERSON'S MALMESBURY SYRUP

## **Company summary:**

Taylerson's Malmesbury Syrups are based in North-West Wiltshire and produce premium flavoured syrups for coffees, cooking and milky Frappes.

## **Delegate summary:**

John Taylerson is the owner of the organisation and the only member of it.

## **Company starting point:**

John Taylerson was aware of the fact that climate change was going to have a likely impact on his business and joined the programme as he was interested in identifying the impact of CO2 reductions, food miles etc. for the marketing of the company's products.

## **Activities:**

At the outset of the programme, John decided to use a conventional marketing tool, the PESTLE to review his own business and its position in the market place. As a result of some scientific data that had been provided on the programme, he realised that his products were linked to cold weather and that the market needs for such products would disappear within the next 10 to 20 years. He therefore realised he needed to review his product range to ensure that he could adapt his business to provide products which were suitable for warmer climates. As a result, he decided to produce syrups to be used with ice creams and frappes in the warmer months of the year.

This has proved to be extremely successful with his food industry clients. Existing clients instantly expressed an interest in the product and he has also picked up some new clients as a result. He has also decided to focus his sales activities on the wholesale sector in a bid to reduce his overall packaging, as he is currently too small a business to alter his packaging supplier production methods sufficiently to reduce his own carbon footprint in that area.

## **Most helpful aspects:**

The science facts of the expected climate changes in the region and across the UK, specifically the statistics on average temperatures and their projections for the future.

## **Biggest hindrances:**

Lack of time to be able to dedicate to that issue due to the pressures of running a small business on one's own, which is also a fairly young business.

## **Number of people influenced/ reached:**

Est. 10+

# COMPANY: WALL-TO-WALL SUNSHINE

## **Company summary:**

Wall-to-Wall Sunshine is a total marketing agency situated in Devon. The company has approximately 5 staff and is currently recruiting to grow further.

## **Delegate summary:**

Paul Stevenson is the founder and owner of the company and used to work in advertising before setting up on his own.

## **Company starting point:**

The company was already very aware of the issues around climate change and were involved with DEBI before the programme started.

## **Activities:**

Paul used the programme to review Wall to Wall's own brand positioning. He decided to look at environment and see where it fitted within his value hierarchy. He realised as a result of that exercise that focusing on the environment and sustainability was a core value of his business. He therefore decided to focus all his communications about his company around his inherent values making sustainability a core communications message. His reasoning was that there are plenty of marketing agencies around and that all of them aim to sell their services by arguing that their marketing skills are the key. He felt however, that he had to set himself apart by communicating how his values are different to other agencies and how sustainability is the key communications driver.

As a result of this slight positioning shift, Wall to Wall attracted a range of new clients, increased business turnover and are now recruiting more staff members.

## **Most helpful aspects:**

The integration of branding and marketing knowledge with the subject of climate change. Being able to see that connection and understanding the importance of how to prioritise key communications messages.

## **Biggest hindrances:**

Struggling with prioritisation – the issue of many small businesses of being too busy to focus on intended issues.

## **Number of people influenced/ reached:**

20