

GREENING YOUR WORKFORCE

Notes from a workshop delivered by Environmental Training Network about how to get everyone from your organisation on board.

1. Who are we trying to “green”?

- People who are unaware of the issues
- People who are confused about the issues
- The initiative fatigued
- Inherent greenies
- Volunteers
- Leaders, councillors, decision makers

2. What is our motivation?

It is important to bear in mind the reasons for our motivation when encouraging people to become more environmentally aware and take action on green issues. Our motivating factors could be:

- To have a green and pleasant future
- It's our duty and responsibility
- It's a survival instinct
- To maximise better use of resources
- We are nature lovers
- We have seen the visual impact
- It makes good commercial sense

3. What does being “seen to be green” mean to people?

Positive Images	Negative Images
Can be like celebrities Trendy Walking the talk Being on the right side of the law Being community minded Showing motivation Showing passion Saving money Inspiring others Showing knowledge Good for mental and physical health	It's a backward step It's dirty and unpleasant It leads to drop in status It's a nuisance Takes up a lot of time Feeling second best Self righteous Posing as fashionable It's too difficult Boring old soul! Scaremonger Socially inept Tree hugger Someone with a hidden agenda It means sacrificing something

We have to challenge these images if we want to motivate people to be involved in environmental practice in the workplace.

4. What are our colleagues doing already as regards good environmental practice?

There will be colleagues within our organisations who, whilst not necessarily seeing themselves as being green, are carrying out green actions. Such people include those that:

- Use free travel pass
- Open windows in summer instead of using fans
- Walk upstairs instead of taking the lift
- Use real crockery instead of plastic disposable ones
- Wash cups up at same time
- Use plugs in sinks
- Car share
- Are self elected light and equipment monitors
- Use double sided printing as a matter of course
- Make their own lunch
- Use notepads from scrap paper

These are our “embryonic” champions in the workplace and they should be acknowledged and rewarded for good environmental behaviour in a non-patronising way.

5. What are the barriers that discourage people to get involved in environmental projects?

The barriers could be:

- Lack of awareness of impacts
- Lack of knowledge
- Legislation
- Resistance to change
- Busy lifestyles
- Uncertainty and confusion over issues
- Perception that its too involved
- Perception that it takes up too much time and costs too much
- Disbelief
- Inconvenience in terms of image and culture of organisation
- Habit
- Lack of infrastructure in the workplace

We need to overcome these barriers if we are to “green” our workforce.

6. What are the hooks that will motivate our workforce to take action?

The hooks could include:

- Learning something new
- Saving money
- Career progression
- Achieving prestige and recognition

- The feel good factor
- Feel less guilty
- Increase efficiency
- Setting a good example
- Being with others – the social angle
- To meet targets
- Improve health and wellbeing

We will need to use a variety of these motivational hooks if we are to “green” our workforce. Using one hook will not include everyone.

7. How can we maintain colleagues’ interest over time?

- By setting realistic short term, medium term and long term targets
- Example: amount of recycling bags put out/position in energy saving league
- Reviewing and providing feedback on these regularly
- By awarding weekly or monthly certificates to those departments that are delivering good environmental practice
- By introducing different initiatives throughout the year
- By providing feedback, recognition and acknowledgement for good environmental action within the workplace

8. What actions have been effectively introduced into the workplace?

The following actions have worked well in the workplace:

- Showing Al Gore’s film “The Inconvenient Truth” to colleagues with discussion before and after the showing
- Setting all photocopiers automatically to double sided print
- Leading by example
- Changing to purchasing green electricity and offsetting the extra cost against energy saved in the workplace
- Removing the water cooler and putting jugs of water in fridges instead
- Setting up a green floor challenge
- Using mascots (e.g. green pixies) which are recognisable to all as pertaining to good environmental practice
- Rewarding small actions such as switching off computers with chocolates/biscuits
- Giving away cloth bags with logos on as rewards for good environmental action
- Changing to the services of a milkman instead of buying plastic disposable milk bottles
- Holding brown bag lunches
- Setting up a food co-operative
- Holding a “bike to work” breakfast for colleagues
- Organising Climate Change team events
- Holding public events and away days on environmental themes
- Organising a Swap Shop: identifying equipment at home and in the office to swap with others
- Setting up computer donor schemes
- Rewarding a “star of the week” badge for departments conducting good environmental practice

- Recognise and promote good practice with a Green Achiever Standard for your whole organisation: <http://www.greenachiever.co.uk/>

9. Points to remember

- Change can take time – small steps in the right direction will lead to big change over time
- One method may not be good enough - you may need to try a drip, drip, drip approach
- Identify the ripple effect – think of it as throwing a stone in a pond: the ripples do get to the side of the pond
- Feedback and celebrate success that is already happening
- Keep fishing for the motivational factors that work for your staff, volunteers and organisation!

Useful websites:

www.carbontrust.co.uk

www.netregs.gov.uk

www.businessclimatechampions.org

www.envirowise.gov.uk

www.bestfootforward.com



This toolkit has been developed as part of the **Creating A Climate For Change Programme** by Friends of St Nicholas Fields and Creating Space For You.

For more information contact John Brierley: john@stnicksfields.org.uk or call 01904 427641.