



Media owners get their green houses in order

As the industry works towards a greener environment, **Suzy Bashford** looks at the action media owners are taking to reduce their carbon footprint

Media is such a broad church today that it's no surprise there's a raft of different approaches to tackling the issue of sustainability. *The Guardian* newspaper sees its role as one of a moral voice, influencing the public through its editorial. In contrast, new media companies such as Google do not have an editorial voice. Consequently, Google is aligning itself with technological projects working towards a greener environment. Satellite broadcaster BSkyB has a different business model again, and so has different opportunities to engage its customer in a green dialogue. For the broadcaster, face-to-face contact is proving a key part of the communications mix.

Media companies now realise that they shouldn't even broach the subject of sustainability without getting their own houses in order. Emap Communications, recently acquired by Bauer, is a good example of a company that saw its recent move into new offices as an opportunity to herald a new era of attitude and behaviour.

Whichever sector media players operate in, they agree that corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies can no longer get away with being "tokenistic". Consumers are becoming increasingly interested in their own environmental impact on the world, and they expect their media to inform, educate and engage them in the debate.

Press The Guardian

Unlike other media companies, which tend to focus on cutting down their personal environmental impact, Guardian Media Group believes the most powerful way it can influence progress on sustainability is through the power of its editorial voice. Seven years ago, Jo Confino was appointed executive editor and head of sustainability, with a remit to strengthen editorial on sustainability. There is also a board director with responsibility for sustainability, corporate affairs director Shaun Williams, and numerous "sustainability champions" throughout the company.

Confino says: "I am a journalist by background, and still am. I wanted to come out of the day-to-day of journalism to focus on the importance of living our values. Usually people in organisations with a CSR remit are from a commercial background and rarely have an influence on editorial. But this issue isn't about commercial versus editorial. At *The Guardian*, we are coming at it from the opposite direction. We are not seeking competitive advantage from doing this; it's built into the fabric of who we are."

Rather than appointing one lone "environment correspondent", Confino is in regular contact with different journalists to ensure the issue of sustainability is covered in depth across a range of subjects. *The Guardian* also believes that sustainability is often pigeonholed simply as "climate change", whereas the topic is much broader. "It's far beyond just about going carbon neutral," he says.

One of the best examples of this dual approach is

the coverage of a community development project in Katine sub-county in Uganda. It started as an editorial idea, but became apparent that to effect the change *The Guardian* wanted, it would need to act. The commercial team approached advertisers about becoming a partner in the project, an offer accepted by Barclays, which donated £1.5m to the cause. "We are also looking at developing other cutting-edge editorial ideas that need corporate backing to do projects on an important scale," adds Confino.

The Guardian's next priority is ensuring its commercial conduct is in line with its values on sustainability and looking at how its business approach could be more socially responsible. It is exploring the possibility of reducing its advertising rates for smaller companies based on sustainable, ethical values. Also, six months ago, Carrina Gaffney was hired as its first commercial sustainability manager to "find more creative" solutions.

Its third priority is auditing its operational impact. "We can't expect others to do what we ask them to without living up to these values ourselves," says Confino. This is concerned with aspects such as how staff can reduce the amount of paper they use and the printing they carry out, and what to do about the problem of polybagging.

Confino adds: "There's been much hype about different solutions promising to be 'the answer', from being carbon neutral to biofuels. But we understand we're on a long, sometimes frustrating, journey and there are no quick, easy solutions."



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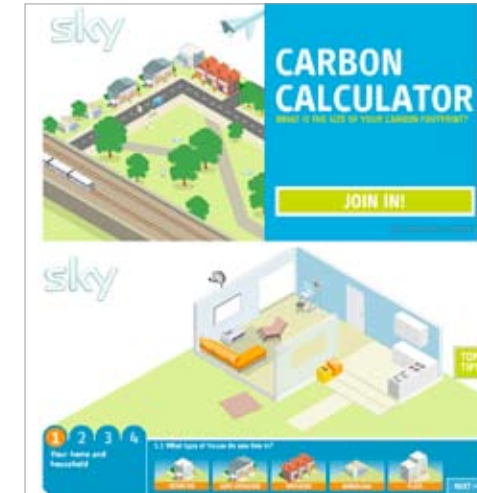
Jo Confino, head of sustainability
The Guardian

TV BSkyB

There is no doubt that BSkyB is one of the leading lights in the media industry when it comes to corporate social responsibility. But - make no mistake - it would never do anything that didn't make sense in the commercial business plan. CSR for Sky is viewed as a business opportunity and a way to leverage competitive advantage as the issue becomes forefront in customers' minds. As Ben Stimson, director of responsibility and reputation, says: "Our success is based on the ability to win customers and keep them. Businesses in tune with what customers care about are the most successful."

The priority for Sky is to help its customers reduce their environmental impact. That's not to say that reducing its own impact isn't paramount, but, as Stimson points out, Sky can effect much more change by getting the message out to viewers. For example, it has developed an auto standby function, which automatically switches inactive Sky HD and Sky+ boxes into standby mode overnight. This not only saves money for customers, but also reduces carbon emissions.

By doing this, 3.8 million customers have switched to auto standby, which has led to a reduction in collective carbon footprint of 49,000 tonnes. To put



this in context, all Sky's initiatives to reduce its own footprint so far have saved 48,000 tonnes of CO₂.

Sky is also in a privileged position because it has much face-to-face interaction with customers, as well as contact through its programming and billing. For instance, when installers put a Sky system in,

part of their brief is to educate customers about the cost-saving and environmental benefits of using low-energy light bulbs. "There is definitely strength in this human-to-human conversation, which is very helpful in helping people tackle environmental issues," says Stimson.

Sky has also developed an online calculator allowing customers to work out their carbon footprint and how to reduce it. So far, more than 16,000 customers have calculated their footprints since June 2006.

Internal green campaigns are also a key part of Sky's strategy, with ideas for both customers and staff set out on www.jointhebiggerpicture.com. An employee incentive scheme also allows staff to earn rewards for certain behaviour.

There are also plans to increase the amount of green themed programming, with this genre steadily increasing over the past few years, but there are no formal links between the CSR department and editorial or commercial. However, Stimson adds that "we continue to look at advertising rates for smaller companies with strong sustainability values and we'll talk about this more specifically later in the year".

Magazines Emap



When Emap Communications moved five of its divisions from locations in London's West End to one in Camden, it saw this as a chance to change staff culture. "It was an opportunity to be more conscious of our working impact on the environment," says Ben Greenish, managing director, Emap Construct, who led the office move. A "green group" was formed to decide how the new building could do this.

Emap has introduced "central multifunctional print stations". Employee print jobs are only activated if they confirm it by walking to the station and swiping a card. If they fail to do this within 24 hours, the job is deleted. Also, the default for all printing is double-sided and the company has reduced its photocopying and printing activity by 60%.

The new building is also full of "binless offices", so employees tend to gather waste and dispose of it in the relevant central recycling bins. "Culturally, this is a big change and people have got used to it," says Greenish. Higher volumes of waste are recycled this way. For instance, in October 18 tonnes of paper were recycled. As well as all these initiatives, Emap has introduced intelligent lighting, reduced car-parking, increased bike parks, and a café, which sources biodegradable, recyclable and fair-trade products.

Digital Google

Google prides itself on its environmental consciousness, with not only a comprehensive policy in place, but also an entire philanthropic arm called Google.org.

Last year, Google committed to being carbon neutral and has reduced its carbon footprint through office initiatives such as replacing all incandescent bulbs with more efficient lighting. Additionally, its US headquarters in Mountain View is solar-powered. Steps have also been taken to ensure that Google's data centres are as energy efficient as possible, such as by using evaporative cooling technology, which saves power.

Green business operations project manager Benjamin Kott says: "Google takes its commitment to being green really seriously. So this means that as a company we're investing in green technologies for the future - things such as our solar panels in Mountain View and the plug-in hybrid cars."

Far from jumping on the green bandwagon, Google's creation of Google.org is testament to how seriously it takes environmental concerns. Google.org investigates strategic opportunities and allocates budgets to this end.

In January, Google pledged to invest a further \$25m in five projects by donating around 1% of the company's equity and 1% of annual profits, plus employee time. Projects include supporting the Innovative Support Emergencies, Disease and Disasters (INSTEDD), the Global Health and Security Initiative (GHSI) and climate change experts Clark University.

These investments join established programmes for solar thermal power company eSolar, which has ambitions to produce power for the masses that is cheaper than coal. Google.org has also



donated funds to Makani Power, a wind energy firm that claims wind can provide the world's electricity needs.

The company also has well-developed internal policies. As Kott, who works in the London office, says: "We're running projects to reduce our carbon footprint and impact on the environment. In the London office, we're encouraging Googlers to use their refillable water bottles as opposed to grabbing a plastic one each time they're thirsty, and with the bikes given free to every Googler last year, many people now have the option to cycle to work as opposed to travelling in by less environmentally friendly means."