

Paris Smith takes steps to reduce carbon footprint

Recession is a difficult time for all businesses and altruistic ambitions tend to be put on the backburner, outranked by what we see as the imperatives of business survival

The partners at Paris Smith, however, believe that continuing to focus on community and social responsibility is an essential part of being successful even in a recession.

Alan Cousins, practice director, supports this viewpoint "Running a business goes beyond acquiring wealth and it is important that businesses consider the interests of their employees and the community as well as their customers"

Recognising this, in January 2008, Alan set up a committee to drive forward actions to reduce the firm's impact on the environment, made up of volunteers from every level in the firm.

"I was encouraged by the enthusiasm of the staff and partners and we soon banked some significant achievements".

The first step was to calculate the carbon footprint in order to understand how much CO₂ was produced and this helped the firm identify wastage and reduce its power consumption by 20%.

It was evident that operating responsibly was resulting in improved profitability and the committee turned its attention to recycling waste, incentivising staff to use public transport, using eco-friendly stationery and cleaning materials, and a 'switch-off' campaign. Also, action to reduce water consumption saved 148,000 ltrs pa and use of paper was reduced by 30%.

"The progress made by the firm has captured the imagination of our staff who feel pride in working for a firm that takes social responsibility seriously".

Commenting on Corporate Responsibility, the managing partner, Andrew Heathcock

said "As the largest law firm in Southampton, it is important that we take a lead by supporting charities, sponsoring Southampton Football Club, Hampshire Cricket Club and The Mayflower Theatre and providing pro bono legal advice to local not for profit organisations".

Cousins added, "It's easy to talk about corporate responsibility but it's more important to actually do something. It's not just about rhetoric and increasingly businesses are judged by their actions, rather than their words."

Paris Smith is committed to making a difference with its initiatives and the firm has been awarded joint first place in the medium business category of the 2008 Sustainable Business Awards, sponsored by Hampshire County Council. They also were one of only four UK firms



Alan Cousins

shortlisted for the 2009 Law Society Excellence Award in Environmental Responsibility.

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Paris Smith