

Ideas to Fight the **CLIMATE CRISIS**

Sustainable Resolutions for a Business



Bas Fransen



For Planet Earth, as there is no planet B



FOREWORD

With the climate crisis looming albatross-like around the world's neck, individuals and organisations are asking questions about how to keep the world spinning just a little while longer.

Tree planting to save the earth has been described in many terms—"mind-blowing potential", "overwhelming top climate solution", "the best climate change solution available today".

The fact of the matter is tree planting is one of the easiest large-scale ways to stave off climate change in a world where burgeoning economies are depleting resources faster than ever.

This book is a collation of EcoMatcher articles that have had people sit up and take notice of obvious solutions. It's a narrative of arguments, facts, cajoles and firm resolutions to act.

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1

The Power of Small: How Smaller Organisations Can Make a Difference in the Environment





Corporate social responsibility initiatives are in the consciousness of most large, medium-sized or small organisations. Increasingly, as environmental change gets louder, more extensive and tougher to ignore, with more people feeling the impacts of climate change, many of these organisations and businesses are choosing to move towards CSR initiatives geared towards environmental sustainability. More firms are taking up initiatives that are centred on environmental sustainability projects in order to combat the effects of global warming and help find effective climate change solutions.

Businesses can make a positive environmental impact in many ways. As part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives, companies often take part in adopt-a-tree activities, wherein employees either actively participate in the tree planting campaigns, or trees are adopted and taken care of on behalf of employees, or even as corporate gifts.



In addition to other environmental initiatives, businesses can also foster environmentally sustainable work practices to contribute to the environment actively and consciously. This is something that businesses of any size, small or big, can adopt. Regardless of the service or product offered by an organisation, they can adopt sustainable development goals and targets. In order to do this, businesses can work towards streamlining their manufacturing processes. Production efforts in particular could be reworked in a way that uses fewer materials, or they are extracted and used in a way that significantly reduces the impact of those existing processes on the environment.

While smaller organisations face different challenges both from business, as well as operations point of view, efforts for ecological conservation or preserving environmental health don't have to be restricted to larger firms only. Here is how even smaller organisations can contribute to making a big difference to the environment:

Reciprocal programs to maintain the environment and profits

This is one of the multiple ways in which small business can help contribute to the environment even if they do not have a humongous budget to allocate to CSR or environmental sustainability projects. For every service, item or product produced or sold, the company can pledge to clean a similar or reciprocal amount of trash from the ocean, a nearby forest or even the sidewalks of their own cities. Alternatively, another common way that many small and medium, not to mention even large-sized businesses, are doing today is to plant one tree for each item or service sold, to offset a reduction in their overall carbon footprint. This give-and-take system builds a



functional and sustainable cycle where the business continues to make profits but uses that same power to give back to the environment and the society.

Involving employees in environment clean-ups

Employee initiated clean-up campaigns is another sure-fire way to work towards smaller businesses, set and achieve sustainable business development goals and also promote sustainable practices at the workplace. This sort of CSR and green initiative does not need an extensive fund. A program of this kind can be organised on a spartan, even shoestring budget, with expenses that may only include the cost of protective gear and equipment for the employees, masks, transportation costs, and refreshments or lunch. The end result is not only CSR, but also a great way to promote employee engagement whilst still being incredibly beneficial to the environment.

Several companies have tried this on a global level—that is a company-organised clean-up drive utilised to good effect. Corporate groups, big and small, have involved themselves in clean-up programs at beaches, riverbanks and city areas infamous for their serious litter issues. On several occasions, the garbage collected from these areas has exceeded thousands of tons—an example of how a little will power and proactive behaviour can go a long way.

Several programs abroad run on a much larger scale to clean up marine environments for animals. First, people are made aware of the magnitude of the issue at hand, and even on an individual level, they are influenced to potentially act. Second, since most of these are smaller-scale operations, their success often inspires and encourages individuals to participate.



Tree planting or tree adoption programs

Adopt-a-tree programs are growing in popularity as the world becomes increasingly cognizant of the ill effects of rapidly increasing climate change. As tree planting gains popularity on a more global level, it need not be prohibitively expensive either. While factoring budget into mind, firms like EcoMatcher can help you find the perfect tree, or trees, to gift corporate clients or employees, and help you give them- and the world, the gift of a combat effort against the growing menace of climate change. EcoMatcher helps businesses at any level find the perfect gifts; receivers can monitor their tree's progress, and 'visit' them on a virtual basis too. This means no extra costs need to be borne by the sender or the receiver—everything is electronic, meaning no fuel is spent either.

Programs like these not only help smaller businesses identify the perfect CSR opportunity in terms of tree planting and fulfil them, but also provide for the need of property holders -or choosing the right location for clients as well. In addition to employee gifting, they also undertake corporate tree planting, so even smaller businesses can build a great business rapport and relationship with their corporate clients.

Recycling bins in the workplace

A fundamental method, yet one of the most phenomenally effective ones in terms of promoting environmental awareness in the workplace, is having segregated recycling bins. This practice helps in terms of waste management, which creates a significant impact on the environment. This practice not only creates a positive environment but makes it easier for employees engaged in the job of waste segregation to feel involved.



Additionally, perhaps the most significant outcome from this would be revolutionising employee attitudes towards local and global waste.

Small businesses, particularly the ones which are just starting out, may not have the budget or wherewithal to execute a larger-scale operation of environmental sustainability. But there is always a much easier route to start. Introducing recycle bins and segregating waste at the workplace does not cost too much, and its impact goes far beyond just simple ‘separation of waste’—it results in promoting environmental sustainability in the workplace.

Using energy-efficient appliances in the workplace

Another smaller-scale and easier-to-implement strategy that small organisations can opt for to make a difference to the environment is to equip their offices with energy-efficient appliances. Most, if not every business today, is almost entirely digitised and computerised, with large amounts of equipment occupying space and consuming energy. Most offices are also air-conditioned, which consume large amounts of electricity in addition to regular electrical consumption.

Switching to cleaner forms of energy and appliances that consume less electricity fosters an attitude of environmental friendliness while raising concern for climate change in the workplace. An added benefit of using efficient, eco-friendly appliances such as these is also that they save money, which could be crucial for a small business to sustain.



Conclusion

Helping the environment does not have to be expensive, even if it is done on a corporate scale! While larger organisations do their bit for environment conservation, small businesses need not be far behind. Each one can promote healthy environmental practices and suggest improvements in the workplace while fostering an attitude that understands climate change, its impacts, and actively works towards eradicating them. EcoMatcher is one such organisation that encourages companies to promote corporate tree planting and promote tree gifting as rewards.

Programs that help the environment, which small businesses could partake in, could range from even something as small to understanding basic waste and garbage, to actively participating in cleaning drives. No gesture is too small to help the environment; it is by the combination of many such small gestures that a significant impact is made.



2

The Science of Sustainability





The aim of sustainable development is to balance our economic, environmental and social needs allowing our future and present generations to flourish. In a call for universal awareness, Sustainable Development Goals identified by the United Nations were adopted by all member states in 2016 to protect the planet and all its natural resources. Sustainable development goals consist of a long-term integrated approach to developing a healthy community by addressing economic, social and environmental issues. As responsible citizens, we must minimise the impacts of climate change by avoiding the overconsumption of key natural resources that can be achieved gradually by changing how we develop and use technology.

It is a widely assumed fact that this global crisis from environmental change is a result of conflicting ecological and economic interests. A sustainable way of living may just help us reach our goal for a green ecosystem and allow human communities to thrive as well. Providing food, water, energy and a healthy environment for living does not have to be an option, especially with depleting resources, at present, the situation seems quite bleak. Instead, smart ecosystem initiatives that balance both economy and environment conservation might be the answer to the situation. The whole idea is to let both humans and nature create a balance and live together.



Impact of the changing ecological environment on a global scale

With human population numbers steadily on the rise, ecological systems are more often than not adversely affected, since any form of human settlement or technological advancement exerts a heavy toll on the environment. Habitats are being uprooted and moved, landscapes are being modified often leaving behind only barren lands, biodiversity is being affected, and entire ecosystems are being altered. Environmental change on a global level has led to a rise in overall temperatures; ice caps are melting, often also threatening the existence of a number of living species, both flora and fauna. Additionally, rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions are another major cause of concern; while low lying cities are at risk of being flooded, arid regions prone to lesser rainfall are now barely getting any.

The changing ecological scenario presents five major environmental problems on a global scale:

- Ozone depletion, global warming and the greenhouse effect
- Desertification
- Deforestation
- Loss of Biodiversity
- Waste disposal and landfilling

All of these concerns are correlated with one another tied by one common factor- reduction in the planet's green cover. In simpler terms, that means there is a massive imbalance between the rate at which trees are being cut down and trees being planted. If we are thinking about climate change solutions, think reforestation, think planting more trees, think global awareness.



One of the main objectives of sustainable development is the minimal use of natural resources for developmental purposes. Considering the state of present affairs, the damage caused to the environment should be the least of all.

Sustainability to combat climate change, and the energy crisis

What is energy crisis? In a classic case of demand versus supply, while it takes an instant to use natural resources up, it takes thousands of years to replenish a store of natural resources. Energy crisis is a problem that concerns us all, as the global demand on already limited natural resources, is increasing. As awareness is being raised on a worldwide level, with governments and individuals joining hands, organisations promoting environmental sustainability in the workplace and coming together to tackle energy crisis, the answer to this problem does not lie too far from home!

Switching to a more sustainable way of living might be the way out. According to the United Nations, there has to be an increase in the use of renewable energy to create a more sustainable way of life and build resilience to climate change and energy crisis. Now, the question arises, how do we do it? Here are a couple of ways in which we can all do our part in switching to more sustainable living.

Use of renewable energy resources

Switching to long term sustainable development goals and targets where clean and renewable alternative energy resources are concerned is a good way to start. Unlike non-renewable fossil fuels that take thousands of years to replenish themselves



naturally, renewable sources are also called alternative sources of energy. These include solar power, wind energy, hydropower, biomass energy, and geothermal energy.

Energy conservation

Reduction in energy consumption, in the long run, is very crucial while contributing to a sustainable way of living. Initiatives like promoting environmentally sustainable work practices, designing smart cities and smart grid solutions go a long way. Also, every contribution counts. Hence, adopting simple solutions like replacing ordinary light bulbs with LEDs, switching electrical appliances, preserving rainwater and more, help in saving energy as well.

Involvement in sustainability projects

Businesses and corporate giants can make a more significant impact by participating in environmental sustainability projects like promoting recycling, cleanliness drives, and tree planting programmes as part of their development goals. Not only does this contribute towards the positive well-being of the environment but also caters to their own corporate social responsibility initiative. Often, customers purchasing services likewise understand the importance of sustainability and want to partner with organisations that incorporate corporate sustainability initiatives into their work practices and business strategies. Businesses can partner with EcoMatcher to promote corporate tree planting, by buying trees and gift them to clients, customers or employees. For a much larger impact, organisations can even adopt trees or plant an entire forest. What's more interesting is, their API integration allows customers to buy and plant a tree in any corner of the world.



Conclusion

Our future and that of the planet depends upon our ability to evolve and adapt to change. Science innovations like biofuels and electric cars are technologies that will go a long way in saving our environment and promote sustainability. Renewable energy is the need of the hour and a key pillar for sustainable development. Adopting environmentally sustainable work practices by big corporates globally is also a way forward. Reforestation companies like EcoMatcher help organisations do their bit and contribute to restoring the green cover of the planet.



3

How to Make Sustainability an Everyday Part of Your Business





The number of companies and organisations signing up in support of environmental sustainability and climate action is on the rise. Sustainable development has largely moved from a political rhetoric to a practical, indeed necessary structure that has permeated industries in both the public and private sectors. This could largely be attributed to how much clearer the picture is getting—the era for running away is over and it's time for corporates to step up in favour of global goals for sustainable development or get called out for it.

How, then, can businesses employ environmentally sustainable business practices on an everyday basis? Before we get to that answer (and there *is* an answer), it's helpful to look at why making sustainability a part of your business is essential.

Meeting The Demands Of Stakeholders

Society, media, governments and shareholders among other stakeholders have increasingly held businesses to higher ideals in terms of responsible management practices. A lot of it boils down to being environmentally sustainable in process, product and functioning. Economic performances are now tied in part and parcel to these practices, so it only makes sense that businesses endeavour to incorporate sustainable measures to maintain their value and brand image.



Deriving Value From Sustainable Activity

Managing long-term social and environmental risks has crossed the threshold of being morally driven to becoming value deriving. There is concrete data to evidence the harmony with which ecological and economic successes appear—the focus is now on evaluating how successful a company is deemed if they meet at least one of six business case drivers through voluntary sustainable activity. Note that the use of the word ‘voluntary’ indicates that businesses have already gained a sense of understanding on the Business Case of Sustainability and aren’t just going through the motions under pressure or force.

Garners Compliance-Related And Competitive Advantages

Compliance refers to being in accordance with strict regulations in industry-specific fields as well as in terms of general pollution, energy and waste management norms. To start off with, businesses that tick all the right boxes on regulatory checklists are considered compliant, and this is half the battle won.

Needless to say, this also keeps interested investors in the picture as there’s a lower likelihood of risks and defaulting that could have been controlled. In fact, 44% of investors, according to BCG/ MIT data,¹ claimed that they stay well away from companies with poor performance in sustainability as it invariably comes with high compliance risks.

So, getting back to the question that was posed earlier—*how can businesses make sustainability a part of their business model?*

¹ Haanaes, K., 2016. *Why all businesses should embrace sustainability*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.imd.org/research-knowledge/articles/why-all-businesses-should-embrace-sustainability/> [Accessed 5 November 2019].



Naturally, the answers to this depend on the budget, resources and time available to the business in question. That said, there are a few strategies to adopt par industry and budget:

- **Engage In Green Procurement**

Procurement refers to the process of sourcing goods (or services) from an external source to use to further business needs. There are some steady supplies that office needs, regardless of what industry or set up it falls under—paper, food, coffee, energy, and lighting. Procurement policies can be made sustainable to the extent possible, by dealing only with fair trade suppliers or switching out unsustainable orders for zero-waste alternatives. Even minimising the use or abuse of goods within the office space due to mere convenience is a positive step toward cleaning up these channels. For large events, consider eco-friendly corporate gifts like trees through EcoMatcher in place of branded, single-use ones.

- **Establish A Sustainable Culture**

As the saying goes, small drops make an ocean. To see immediate changes as well as take sustainability from organisational rhetoric to a personal one, businesses can establish (and encourage) a culture of sustainability within teams. An excellent way to do this is to introduce successful employee engagement strategies that involve smaller sustainable goals such as recycling, energy-saving and corporate tree planting. Plenty of organisations today have exciting rewards schemes based on fitness or miles walked in a month; similar structures can be put in place for team-based sustainability competitions. On the social front, encourage employees to donate and contribute to charities, either by spreading awareness, tying up with NGOs or partner organisations like EcoMatcher, even making donations in employees' names.



- **Consider It As An Important Parameter To Every Organisational Strategy**

The fight for sustainability wasn't as strong yesterday as it was today, and will be even fiercer tomorrow. To account for this, it's crucial that businesses immediately add sustainability as an important deciding factor while making changes, restructuring or signing off on important strategies. Engage all players in the grand scheme of things. As time goes by, the system will steadily begin taking sustainability into account by default.

- **Undertake A UN Sustainable Development Goal Or Two**

For those without much of inkling about sustainable processes, taking the first step can be confusing. The UN recognised this way back in January 2016, when it released a list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to act as guideposts in the fight against negative environmental change, poverty and unsatisfactory lives for all². By picking goals that align with their industry and capabilities, businesses can progress with a more structured approach to sustainability, whether they want to make their alignment known to the world or keep it within the network. Common goals like climate change action, human rights and gender equality transcend the boundaries of industries and structures; forming organizational sustainable development goals and targets around these can also be fruitful.

- **Move To The Cloud**

Cloud computing is a solution to quite a few resource-draining setups in a typical workspace. Cloud-based apps enable employees and clients to share files and collaborate digitally. This reduces the paper waste that comes from taking printouts, sending snail

² United Nations Development Programme, 2015. *What are the Sustainable Development Goals?*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>



mail or even faxes. Sharing files could be a way to reduce travel costs; especially intra-city commutes to visit clients or other important stakeholders over a few documents. It also reduces the need for server equipment, which cuts costs and will lead to a significant drop in levels of energy consumption. Cloud computing also takes things mobile, so that reduces the need for larger equipment while also making data accessible at all times to authorised parties.

- **Acknowledge The Time It Will Take**

Building a sustainable organisation, indeed even implementing sustainable practices into current frameworks, isn't an overnight process. It's hard work to implement strategies at every stage and then look towards suppliers and sources to ensure standards are adhered to. However, perfection is not possible anyway. Small yet significant changes add miles to your strategy—a massive overhaul isn't the only way out. While implementing strategies half-heartedly or out of compulsion is definitely a cop-out, having the entire organisation back one small change or policy is the way to go.

As a business, one of the most interesting and collaborative ways towards climate change action and general sustainability is to partner with firms that make these processes more manageable. On the environmental front, EcoMatcher can help businesses engage in tree planting and reforestation to add to CSR initiatives and sustainability strategies.



4

Including Sustainable Development Goals in your Business Plan





The United Nations (UN) put forth a set of Sustainable Development Goals in 2016, and in 2019, they're still as relevant. As the number of businesses multiplies, the economy of business is slowly drifting into uncharted waters. However, the public still tends to run a demolition job on those firms whose sustainability vision is undisclosed or non-existent. That's no doubt because of the massive role firms play in the impacts of climate change—whether aggravating or alleviating them.

Naturally, this pushes firms to participate in upholding, working towards and realising the Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN. This could be a commitment in the open, like Shell, Volvo and Sainsbury's among others do, or it could be by weaving these goals into the firm's own sustainable development goals



and targets (e.g. aided by EcoMatcher enabling corporates to integrate tree planting into their businesses).

The UN-Outlined SDGs

Before getting into how to implement SDGs, here are the 17 goals outlined by the UN to “end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity”¹:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequality
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships to Achieve the Goal

Arguing In Favour Of SDGs In Businesses

All things considered, including SDGs in a business plan is a logical choice, despite the journey of strategy and implementation often being long and meandering.

¹ United Nations Development Programme, 2015. *What are the Sustainable Development Goals?*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html> [Accessed 5 November 2019].



Improved performances: Firstly, companies that focus on environmental change, social and geo-political sustainability is likely to incur lower costs of debt and equity and have the potential to outshine their market competitors within a single decade. In fact, the MSCI added a Sustainable Impact Index to their All Company World Index (ACWI) very recently—this means the numbers are backing up the morality of acting in favour of SDGs.

Decreased costs: Contrary to popular notions, putting sustainable business practices in place could actually reduce costs in the long run. Benefits of these practices include a significant drop in regulatory or strategic risk, cleaner supply chains, greater customer and employee loyalty and increased avenues for product innovation.

Government policy forecasting: 193 governments have come together in support of UN's SDGs, which means businesses that commit to the goals will potentially be looked upon more favourably. Governments have been encouraged to support sustainable practices and give out relevant information which, when flipped, means that businesses can use the chance to gain insights on potential governmental regulations and diktats.

Making A Case For Participation At The SME Level

SDGs can be included in business plans of firms big and small, even if a higher-level strategic plan isn't in the offing. For start-ups-to-be, it's an even better chance to start off with sustainable environmental practices—customers veer towards brands that are making a difference. Taking ownership of that can differentiate SMEs from their competitors for whom sustainable practices often fall to the wayside of profit making.



Naturally, not all sustainable goals are appropriate for everyone, not least because of the difference in industries and objectives of sustainable development. However, there are a few general goals that cater to general environmental sustainability issues, climate change solutions and human rights efforts that any company could support regardless of what their USP is. In fact, 65% of surveyed respondents were engaged in 'climate action' (Goal 13) while 'decent work and economic action' (Goal 8) was second at 60%.²

Here is the lowdown on how to identify the goals to pursue:

Assess Impact Across All Goals

This in itself is a daunting prospect, but don't let that deter you from the process, as it will help identify which goals to focus on. A structured approach is required to assess impact, as a variety of factors need to be looked at, including carbon footprint, supply chain sustainability, energy-efficient facilities, human resource management and gender equality in employee dynamics.

To form an SDG strategy, an assessment of the firm's impact across all 17 goals is key. Some goals may overlap, yet others may be interconnected or not at all related. However, the impacts of processes can spread far and wide, so it's worth taking a magnifying glass to each department and structure to assess its impact.

Pick And Choose From Relevant Goals

It makes little sense for one firm to tackle all goals; the pitfalls are many and more intense than the benefits. Instead, firms can

² Ethical Corporation, 2018. *Risk of 'SDG wash' as 56% of companies fail to measure contribution to SDGs.* [Online] Available at: <http://www.ethicalcorp.com/risk-sdg-wash-56-companies-fail-measure-contribution-sdgs> [Accessed 5 November 2019].



use their structural assessment of impact to identify relevant goals from the list that they can valuably contribute to, rather than investing resources in furthering goals that don't directly affect their customers, industry or company in itself. Some goals are a natural fit, others take a bit more time, while yet others are universal, regardless of industry. It would do well to pick a general goal, like climate action, and a more specific goal, like clean energy for a traditional O&G firm.

Firms must evaluate how much they can bite off before they chew, not least because a failure to reach set targets could lead to reputational and financial damage. This is another benefit of picking relevant goals—by investing in something that immediately affects the company and its immediate dealings; change is felt by some, if not all.

Understand The Risks Of Commitment

Committing to an SDG isn't without its own risks. These could be financial (diverting precious resources), reputational (failing to reach set goals) and even productive (losing focus of other business goals in favour of SDGs). Commitments could also run the risk of becoming a 'SDG wash' where the goals are used as a communication or marketing gimmick without actually involving them in active strategy or measuring before-after impacts.

If using the goals as only a philanthropic 'get out of jail free' card, chances are that a firm could cut things fine when it comes to public sentiment and brand image. The SDGs were meant to be more than that—beyond being a guidepost for the present; they were also intended as a springboard and a mould for business models of the future.



Evaluate The Rewards Of Commitment

As with everything else, some risk brings reward even the world of business sustainability. The key is to be smart with where you put your money. In working towards solving a major world problem like climate change or poverty, businesses can create increased shareholder value and reduce the chances of ‘stranded assets’, which are assets that require resources that are dwindling or worse, no longer available. Investing in furthering a goal such as #3 on the list could have a massive positive impact on a business’ own employees, making them more productive and happier to be at their jobs every day.

A cost-benefit analysis is of utmost importance when deciding whether to take the SDG plunge or not, because commitment comes at a cost and it needs to be profitable in the long run to be justified in the accounts book.

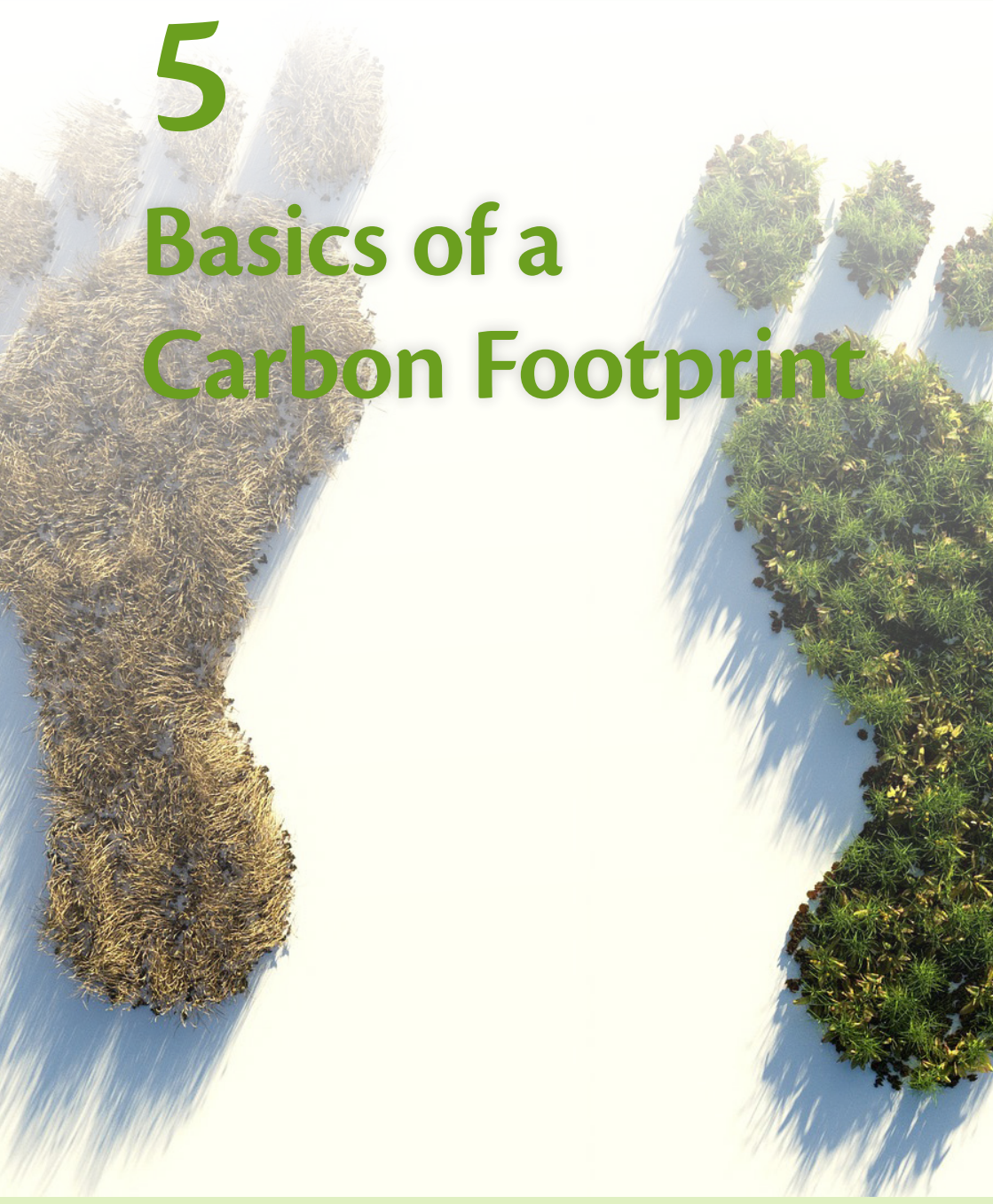
Conclusion

Whether incorporating SDGs holistically or making commitments to them public and manifest, businesses would do well to invest in this universal framework for the betterment of their value, employees and the global environment.



5

Basics of a Carbon Footprint





With climate change issues taking over government agendas, and sustainable development goals being given the topmost priority by individuals and corporates alike, the term “carbon footprint” has gained incredible traction over the past couple of years. Carbon footprints are essentially used to denote the full extent of direct or indirect carbon emissions (along with other supplemental greenhouse gases) released into the environment, which is relevant to climate change and is a result of human production and consumption activities. A carbon footprint can be calculated or estimated for an individual, an organisation, or even an entire nation. The climate change impact resulting from each activity is estimated by calculating the carbon footprint, which includes not just carbon dioxide but also methane and nitrous oxide.

Understanding carbon footprint and its impact

Though the term may be a colloquial way of understanding the impact human beings have had on environmental change,



carbon footprints are a vital part of our comprehensive and encompassing ecological footprint.

According to eminent scientists and environmental advocates seeking climate change solutions, carbon footprint can be divided broadly into two categories:

Direct Emissions or Primary Footprint

This category of carbon footprint results from activities which lead to emission of Carbon Dioxide and other supplemental greenhouse gases, through direct combustion of fossil fuels. Consequently, all activities resulting in direct emissions have an immediate impact on the environment, also adversely affecting natural resources therein. For example, CO₂ emissions from driving a car, flying an airplane, or even using electronic devices fall under this category.

Indirect Emissions or Secondary Footprint

This category of carbon footprint is used to denote emissions that are a consequence of an indirect relation with certain activities pertaining to human consumption, such as purchasing an internationally manufactured T-shirt. When an individual purchases an item, all emissions released into the environment due to manufacturing and transportation of that item would fall under the ambit of indirect emissions, also known as a secondary footprint. Additionally, this kind of emission also takes into account what happens after the said product is used, including the amount taken by the material of the product to degrade naturally, and the consequences of the breakdown process on the environmental health.



How do carbon footprints work?

A technical definition of what carbon footprint is can be described as a measurement of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, in relation to the emission of other greenhouse gases relative to one unit of carbon dioxide. A lot of factors are taken into consideration while calculating a carbon footprint. For example, driving to the mall burns a given amount of fuel, which emits greenhouse gases. This might be your carbon footprint at a given time. However, the mall you've driven to also has its own contribution to carbon footprint as a whole business. This includes electricity, equipment used, items that were shipped for selling, emissions during manufacturing processes, individual employee contribution among other reasons. All of these elements combine to lend a better understanding of carbon footprint from a certain activity.

Individuals and organisations advocating for the overall health of the environment try and reduce their carbon footprint by reducing activities that lead to greenhouse gas emission. Alternatively, some people come up with sustainable lifestyle choices like switching to renewable energy sources, conservation of water, tree planting to promote global goals for sustainable development.

You may calculate your carbon footprint by taking into account the total sum of carbon dioxide emissions induced by your activities in a given time frame. There are various charts, online calculators which may assist you in personally understanding what your carbon footprint is, thereby enabling you to re-evaluate which activities you need to refrain from, to reduce your carbon footprint while aiming for sustainable development.



Why calculate your organisation's carbon footprint?

Climate change brings untoward risks to businesses as well as economies; therefore, it is paramount to not only understand what your organisation's carbon footprint is but also to reduce it in a timely manner. The reduction of the carbon footprint is essentially an optimisation process for your organisation, which would mean that reduction in the carbon footprint of an organisation or company would streamline business and production operations to an optimal point. Additionally, it also implies cost savings for the organisation as many factors leading to an increased carbon footprint involve excessive and non-optimised energy usage. Therefore, not only does your business engage in its corporate social responsibility and foster global sustainability goals while incorporating environmental sustainability projects, but also save up on costs for the organisation, thereby increasing their profit as well. Other than minimising energy usage, organisations may also bolster their company's and provide a feasible solution to the reduction of the carbon footprint by engaging in projects such as corporate tree planting for sustainability, spreading awareness of how cutting down trees affect the climate, and implementing recycling of waste. Partnerships with reforestation companies like EcoMatcher can help your organisation to promote a more sustainable way of living. Gift or adopt a tree or walk the extra mile and plant a forest!

Why is combatting carbon footprints essential?

In order to achieve a world where our posterity can enjoy the fruits of our labour, we need to understand that minimising our carbon footprint is the way forward, or at least, the first step forward to achieving true sustainable development. Some



measures that can be taken by individuals, governments or organisations to eliminate carbon dioxide are to encourage reforestation and to inform their fellow peers of how reforestation will combat climate change as well as aid humans in preserving this planet. It stands to reason that since humans are responsible for the emission of most greenhouse gases and the adverse effect they have on the environment, they should be the ones who strive to effectively reduce, if not eliminate, their carbon footprint from the planet and preserve the environment.

Conclusion

Each and every individual is an active contributor to the carbon footprint that they leave behind on this planet, whether directly, or indirectly. Organisations and companies leave behind an even bigger carbon footprint on the planet, adversely affecting the environment we live in. The need of the hour is to actively reduce and eventually work towards completely eliminating all carbon footprint in the coming few years so as to preserve the sanctity of our environment and the world that we live in.



6

How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint as a Team





In the general global goals for sustainable development, reducing or erasing the carbon footprint of an organisation ranks high. However, that's easier said than done, when there is a panoply of factors and individuals to consider.

The carbon footprint of a company is the measurement of how much that company is contributing to the greenhouse gases that are accelerating global climate change. Every organisation, indeed every individual, has a carbon footprint—the intensity of it depends on what the company is and what they do. Enterprises and manufacturing companies can contribute directly to increasing carbon footprints, while smaller firms do so indirectly, through energy and electricity consumption, even their daily commutes.

As a smaller team or one that's not directly involved in the organisation's sustainable development goals, it's quite challenging to tackle the larger problems such as emissions, waste disposal and the footprint of franchises. However, there are quite a few environmentally sustainable work practices that can effectively snowball into broader climate change solutions.



Measure Your Carbon Footprint First

The springboard to adopting the right sustainable environmental practices is to measure your firm's carbon footprint first. Use a free emissions calculator or a government-approved generator to find out what level your footprint is at. Once done, you can strategize accordingly and decide to do something about it. This is also a good benchmark to come back to later, when your carbon-cutting strategy is in full swing and you want to see if it's effective enough.

Make Energy-Saving Habits Compulsory

There are plenty of energy-saving behaviours that are simple to put in place yet positively impact carbon-cutting in the long run. Make these a compulsory practice to maintain environmental sustainability in the workplace. If you find employees doing this of their own accord, that's well and good, but if they're being implemented in a lax manner, consider attaching some rewards or recognition factors to up the ante.

Something as simple as shutting down office computers, instead of leaving them on standby, can have a positive impact—a lone computer running for 24 hours can produce 1,500 pounds of CO₂ emissions in a year. Turn off all lights when a space is not in use and consider motion-sensitive lighting for rarely used corridors and hallways. Enable timers on photocopy machines and other hefty equipment so they turn off automatically when not in use.

Bring In Green Employee Engagement Programs

Employee engagement programs are used to motivate and encourage employees to perform their best, as well as reward



them for successful milestones. For an interesting, sustainable twist, consider revamping old-school points and money programs into ones that involve helping the environment and being a part of something bigger.

Consider initiating a ‘plant a tree’ program, or partnering with a firm like EcoMatcher that makes corporate tree planting for sustainability seamless and fully digital. If you have the funds and the motivation, consider planting an entire forest and encouraging your employees to virtually look after one or two. Successful employee engagement strategies can be a massive boost in morale, both on the individual as well as the corporate front.

This is easily extendable to corporate gifting programs. If your team is hosting VIPs or is leading a conference, consider gifting plants, saplings or fully-grown trees to them, by purchasing them on EcoMatcher’s TreeShop.

Maintain Optimum Thermostat Or Air-Conditioning Temperatures

Air conditioning temperatures are a point of disagreement in almost every office. There’s one way to find a middle ground, and a sustainable one at that—maintaining temperatures between 24°C and 27°C depending on the weather. This makes the system more energy-efficient, thereby reducing electricity consumption and expenditure. In the longer run, lowering energy consumption on such a scale can reduce a company’s carbon footprint multi-fold, especially when implemented by other teams.

The same tips apply for heating systems in colder regions. Maintaining a level temperature throughout the year and



encouraging employees to dress accordingly instead will reduce energy consumptions by a significant amount.

Establish Carpool And Shared Transport Systems

One of the fastest ways to drop your carbon emissions is to reduce travel. Teams must encourage employees to carpool based on location if possible. On a larger scale, companies can establish shared transport systems—buses or shared cars—that service specific routes and pick up and drop off employees. The benefits of shared transport are multi-fold, because it reduces carbon emissions and allows employees to network beyond their teams, which could lead to more innovation and cohesiveness.

On a smaller scale, teams can endeavour to reduce trips by vehicles outside the office. This could be meetings with clients or by working remotely; by using video call and web conference platforms, you can easily avoid unnecessary trips while getting work done in a collaborative atmosphere. Tie this in with employee engagement programs if required—say, the more an employee cuts down on trips, the higher their incentive, or the more trees they have to their name in an adopted forest.

Reduce Waste In The Workplace

This standard sustainability tip can go a long way when implemented in an organisation regularly. It's also sound business-wise because the team's contribution to overall expenses drops significantly. Consider recycling old or outdated documents instead of just trashing them. In the pantry, swap out single-use supplies for more sustainable steel or wood counterparts. Buy organic or Fair-Trade edibles and partner with a company to compost wet waste from the larger kitchens.



Run Employee Education Programs

Most programs will come to a standstill if employees don't want to follow through, aren't encouraged to do so, or simply don't know what difference it's going to make. Top-down programs fare far worse, as employees see it as a compulsory involvement, not one that personally benefits them. This is why team efforts count! To make bigger changes at the top rungs, it starts from the bottom. Consider setting up programs that make employees understand just how important their contribution is and ensure they're all equally informed.

Despite sustainability being a hot topic in today's world, quite a few seminars on it turn out to be boring, a repetition of what's already been said. To make programs more interactive, consider adding milestones, rewards like trees and recognitions for those who do their bit and those who go above and beyond. Doing this on an individual basis within a team, or team-wise in a larger organisation, can make employees feel like a part of something bigger than themselves or the company—the planet!

Conclusion

Sustainable practices at the workplace needn't be expensive, time-consuming or taking ages to implement. On a team-by-team basis, a firm can reduce its carbon footprint and significantly contribute to global sustainability goals.



7

What is Environmental Economics?





It's the science and social science of the environment. But that's not all.

Environmental economics has become a wildly popular topic in recent times. In simple words, environmental economics is a sub-field of economics, which is related to environmental issues. Due to the fast-growing impacts of climate change and other environmental concerns, it is imperative for the business, corporate and entrepreneurs to help in the field of sustainable development goals and targets by taking apt measures like tree planting, working towards environmental sustainability projects, mobilising climate action and more.

In the following post, we shall be discussing environment economics in detail and also throw light on various associated aspects too!

What is environmental economics?

When talking about the financial aspects of the environment, this science under the purview of the branch of economics that has come to be called environmental economics. Various environmental economists are working day in and day out



to undertake research, study and determine the impact of environmental policies on the economy front. This field of study is an excellent tool in establishing useful and apt environmental policies and also analysing their merits and effects on the proposed or existing environmental economics principles and application.

However, one major environmental economics impact factor is the environmental cost that may sometimes go unaccounted in the present market model. Therefore, environmental economists usually run studies and tests on probable environmental degradation and economic consequences to assess their benefits on particular economic policies.

What is environmental about environmental economics?

Economics, in the broadest sense of the academic term, covers distributing or allocating limited or scarce resources to the competing uses. However, when it comes to environmental economics, it deals with the tools and values of macro and microeconomics to allocate the environmental resources more efficiently.

It is important to understand that both economy and environment are interdependent and environmental economics and economic growth are influenced by each other. The environmental aspect of economics looks into the fact of how some policies and activities can impact the environment we live in. The scope of environmental economics is far-reaching because this field is interdisciplinary, which means it has a long-range that covers topics such as climate change, biodiversity, invasive species, and energy.



Why is environmental economics important today?

It is pertinent to understand that environmental economics and sustainable development go hand in hand. This area of study is essential because it is imperative that all human activities are directly or indirectly linked with nature or the environment. The environment not only provides us with all the resources but it also acts as our disposal system.

In order to achieve better economic growth and development, it is important that the environment system is valued and acknowledged. This way, we will not only have the supply of renewable and non-renewable resources, but we will also be able to maintain the fragile natural environmental equilibrium. Environmental economics takes into consideration the human economic market and its interactions with the study of environmental science.

The importance of environmental economics has become many folds because this field of economics not only helps in adapting and responding to different challenges faced because of limited natural resources but it also helps in establishing environment as a capital asset by considering externalities, market failures, and property rights.

THE ROLE OF CORPORATE, BUSINESSES, INDIVIDUALS AND TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Businesses are affected by environmental changes

Businesses, corporate, individual and trans-national corporations also factor in policies and actions produced by environmental economics—likewise, the same parties are affected. There is no



denying the fact that environmental changes can directly or indirectly affect any business or corporate. Businesses do not function in a vacuum; instead, both internal and external factors are required to work in harmony for any business to run smoothly.

Businesses need help in adapting to environmental factors

Most business houses or corporates have direct control over their internal environment; however, when it comes to factors in the outside environment, it may not only be sometimes beyond their control, but it may also majorly impact the businesses. Therefore, it becomes utterly important for various corporate and business houses to study the impact of environmental economics on the business so that apt measures can be taken to adapt the business accordingly. Many factors that business depends upon are ever-changing and dynamic such as natural resources and raw materials. The ever-new innovations and ever-changing needs of customers also affect the business environment.

Businesses need to change to survive

Businesses must adapt to the changing business environment and makes changes in order to survive in the market. These forces that go outside the business reach have a great ability to impact the business. Some aspects that can affect the business environment also include market conditions, customers, media, government, technologies, trends and more.

ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS IN PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS

There are various environmental economics research trends and environmental restoration methods that have surfaced in recent times.



Property rights

Environment interventions and regulations, tariffs and taxes on pollution are tried-and-tested ways of keeping a check on environmental problems. Another trick in the environmental economics book is assigning property rights—a parameter that helps in reaching optimal solutions with a cap on the number of negotiating parties and minimal transactional costs. In short, avoiding a situation like ‘too many cooks spoil the broth’.

Flexibility and adaptation

Environmental economics does not stem from dogma, belief or passable opinions; instead, it offers trade-offs and fundamental choices in environmental policies. It provides flexibility in solving various environmental-related problems and issues too. Many businesses, corporate houses and individuals are making endeavours in helping achieve environmental-related issues in the broadest sense possible.

THE FINAL WORD

If you are looking for solutions to overcome environmental issues and transform into a sustainable company, an excellent place to begin with a limited budget and knowledge is tree planting. By partnering with organisations like EcoMatcher, you are making an active choice to engage your employees in the grander scheme of things and account for the role of the environment in helping, indeed sustaining your business. Handling environment change will require significant changes on a global scale, but it all starts from the grassroots.



8

5 Green CSR Ideas for Your Next Responsibility Program





Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs are not just a way to increase goodwill towards a company—they are quickly becoming a practical addition to strategic management. CSR has shown to be a necessary means of attracting and retaining employees. Perhaps more importantly, these initiatives and activities increase business for the brand and attract customers.

Studies have shown that one of the main areas of concern for millennials is sustainability. In fact, over 60% of surveyed millennials do not bring their business to brands that are known to have unsustainable practices¹. Customers are more aware of environmentally sustainable practices, especially with the advent of the sheer information available through the internet or social media.

While sustainability goals should not be driven by a need to be marketable, there is no denying their impact on the brand image. The UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 lists out broad initiatives for companies including Life on Land and Climate Action.

¹ Nielsen, 2015. *Consumer-goods' brands that demonstrate commitment to sustainability outperform those that don't*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/press-releases/2015/consumer-goods-brands-that-demonstrate-commitment-to-sustainability-outperform/> [Accessed 13 November 2019].



CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES THAT WORK FOR YOU

There are several initiatives that your company can get behind for your next CSR program. While it is important that you document and present your work to the public and your business partners, you must also align yourself with truly impactful climate change solutions. Here are some ideas for you to consider when following the UN goal of Climate Action.

1. Go Plastic Bottle-free

With only a fraction of plastic bottles being recycled, it has become imperative to cut down on using them entirely. An initiative in the workplace to stop using plastic bottles can go a long way in terms of reaching your CSR goals. Have a drive to collect plastic bottles and send them to a recycling plant. Encourage your employees to use non-plastic bottles and install water fountains rather conventional bubble top water dispensers.

An excellent way to push your branding is to provide everyone with non-plastic bottles that feature your company's name. The same can be used in public events, where customers are given your sustainable option over plastic bottles.

You can identify other places where plastic is used in your company and try to replace them with more sustainable options.

2. Carrot Mobbing for Increased Sales

This initiative is a great way to ramp up sales. It involves pledging a percentage of purchases made in a specific period towards a green initiative. Decide on a number that you are comfortable



with and start marketing using social media and the internet. Once customers know that a part of their money is going towards a green cause, they will flock to your business.

The time frame for this initiative can last a day, a week, or even a month. You can also consider selling a limited-edition product where a significant amount of the proceeds is given to green initiatives. This will draw customers to your company and you can use this opportunity to further educate them on your business practices.

Many makeup companies use this to improve their credentials with customers and to drive up sales. Morphe, an affordable makeup brand, formulates special makeup for Pride Month. They pledge to donate all the proceeds from the sales of that particular product to LGBTQ+-friendly initiatives. Since the makeup is only sold for a month, interest is created in customers; especially those who want to support the initiatives. This drive also helps the company win a favourable reputation.

You can use this example to tailor to your own brand's needs. Keep in mind that your marketing for this drive has to be far-reaching in order to make the most of this idea.

3. Reduce Food-Based Carbon Emissions

If your company has a cafeteria that serves or sells food to your employees, then you must consider this initiative. Rather than focusing on food that sells, use ingredients that have a low carbon footprint. This means using locally grown produce that is in season and reducing meat options. There are several resources available to calculate the footprint of ingredients. This can be used to generate a meal menu that is sustainable.



You could also introduce vegan options on the menu that completely cuts out animal-based products since these are known to be one of the most significant contributors to carbon emissions. Switching up the menu between seasons to incorporate fresh produce will also keep things interesting for your employees.

The use of sustainable ingredients can also be carried forward to anytime that your company is having a public event. If your event is catered, then serve food that has a low footprint with vegan options. Not only does this generate buzz around your brand, but it also drives home the point that your company cares for the environment.

4. Use Spaces for Urban Farming or Forestry

All buildings can be used as urban farming sites including, your own company's space. Identify areas that are not used too much like the terrace or unused balconies and convert them into spaces where you can grow herbs, fruits, and vegetables. This is also a great way to introduce employee engagement initiatives for those who actively participate in the upkeep of these miniature farms.

The produce can be used in your cafeteria or sold in a seasonal market to increase public awareness of your brand. Some initial plants you can grow are hardy and straightforward herbs. You can also try growing lemons, tomatoes, and chilli plants.

5. Encourage Responsible Clothes Shopping

Many fashion brands have been called out for their practices of pushing fast fashion. The clothing industry is the third largest in



terms of global pollution, and a big part of that number is caused by fast fashion. With this initiative, you can tie up with brands that have ethical and sustainable fashion practices and provide employee rewards for those who shop with these brands. These brands source their material ethically with sustainable work environments. They do not produce clothes *en masse* and sometimes might even make the clothing item only when the order is placed. This way, your employees get clothes that are custom made for them and are of good quality. You can also have a drive to increase awareness of the pitfalls of fast fashion with your employees and collect old clothes that can either be donated or be recycled.

Conclusion

CSR initiatives go a long way in increasing goodwill towards brands and also help create a voice in overcrowded markets. It can be what differentiates you from other brands while also giving customers a reason to bring their business to you. These initiatives also attract the younger generation entering the workforce and who want to align themselves with a company that has important sustainable development goals and targets.

An excellent way to proceed with CSR initiatives for the first time is to partner with companies whose services are tailored towards these. EcoMatcher, for example, helps companies set up tree planting as a part of their business. They help provide overarching initiatives at multiple levels to decrease or offset the negative impact businesses might have on the environment.

There is no reason to assume that successful businesses are a detriment to the environment. With the right CSR program and proper marketing, you can change this perception and help your bottom line!



9

Why Businesses Need to Support Reforestation





In 2019, climate change and the impacts of climate change fast moved from occasional news headlines to constant worry, and for a reason. This has been a highlight year for climate for all the wrong reasons, with many countries across the globe—France, Belgium and Luxembourg to name a few—hitting the highest temperatures in their history. Worldwide, water levels are rising rapidly, temperatures are reaching an almost irreversible high, and as fires in forests continue to rage, the world is losing more forest cover than ever.

It is now the need of the hour, particularly for corporates and companies, to be a part of environmental sustainability projects, and work towards sustainable development goals and targets. As global warming reaches historical new highs, both corporates and individuals to look towards concrete climate change solutions to reverse, at least to some extent, the severe damage that deforestation and pollution have wrought on the environment.

1. Manage dwindling resources

It goes without saying that tree planting is the need of the hour and an absolute necessity now given how overall climate change has been increasing exponentially across the world. While organizations may think themselves self-sufficient, what they don't realize is that a massive chunk of our resources is drawn directly from natural reservoirs of trees, water and wind.



By supporting reforestation, these firms are lending a helping hand to dwindling resources that are fast depleting in the race for economic growth and staying ahead of the competition. Ironically, planting trees can also help keep natural resources in designated spots away from the cities. Stories of floods and water-logging are not new in cities, but an effective way to tackle these communal issues and save lives is to actually allow natural resources to occupy the space they need, all the while building our cities sustainably around them.

2. Leave a positive impact on CSR goals

CSR, or corporate social responsibility goals, refer to goals that make a company responsible and answerable to its employees and investors, which self-regulate it to be socially and environmentally accountable. Adopting environmentally sustainable work practices is critical and one way to do this effectively is to take part in environmental sustainability projects—involving employees in such programs not only provides a great way to promote environmental sustainability in the workplace, but also a great employee engagement initiative that is both long-term, and special.

Internally, corporate social responsibility initiatives are crucial in terms of employee relations. For instance, involving employees in an adopt-a-tree program, particularly in terms of a reward, an employee gift, or part of an incentive, can build, or strengthen that employee's existing relationship with your company. Adopt a tree programs often also help track the progress of a tree, from planting to growth ad nauseam, and that adds to the employee's feeling of being able to nurture something and watch it grow, albeit indirectly. Employee engagement initiatives like this, which are long-term, will contribute to employee morale too, making



them more likely to stay on with the company too, and make them overall much happier in the workplace.

There is concrete data today to show that an employee who feels good about his or her company's corporate social responsibility initiatives feels more engaged with their firm. Higher employee engagement and happiness means that your employee is more likely to perform better at a consistent rate. That means employees will be able to better fulfill personal goals, and across a company level, that will mean a better company performance overall. Win-win!

3. Use as PR and social media gold

Revenues are, and have always been crucial to the functioning of a firm. In 2019, social media is one of the biggest forms of currency that a company can be involved in. Leading, or even participating in programs that promote afforestation and tree planting promise to garner your company brownie points on social media, which in this day are almost certain to result in directly magnified and increased sales, interest in your company, and be great for promoting your company's image and standing among the public. Being part of such an initiative is worth its weight in marketing as well as benefiting the environment.

Posting to social media about your company's sustainability initiatives will not only show your followers your company's sensitivity to the pressing issues of today, but also proof that your company is holding itself accountable to the environment, and doing something about it. In addition to engaging with your employees regarding these initiatives, it also helps employees engage more with your company outside the workplace, and on social media; not only does this help enhance your company's



image to the public, but also helps build its image as one where employee satisfaction and fulfillment are high. Companies like EcoMatcher do exactly that: connect your employees with the trees they have “adopted”, allowing them not only to virtually view their ‘adopted’ trees, but also to track their progress in real-time, and ‘visit’ them from time to time.

4. Enhance company image to potential investors and consumers

Investors are the most important part of any business; without them, firms would not be able to run, pay employees, or indeed, exist. A company with a great overall standing, not just in terms of its work ethic and productivity, but one that fulfills all its responsibilities to the world and environment, is one that investors are more likely to be a part of, invest in, and nurture.

That image, particularly if done right, helps your company fulfill its duty to the environment and build a better world. A company focused solely on revenues may be raking in the money, but if it is shirking its responsibility to the planet and the environment, investors and those potentially interested in buying that business, may not regard it as a good investment.

We have already discussed how being part of effective CSR initiatives is great for building employee engagement and morale, but it is also great in enhancing your company’s image to the world. There is also data to show extensively that consumers seriously consider a company’s CSR initiative before engaging with it, and with a brand.



5. Deliver measurable effects

Today, as metrics become more advanced and sophisticated, it is easier than ever before to calculate the impact one's initiatives have had on the environment with regard to tree planting. Measuring the impact of initiatives such as this can be tough but it no longer needs to be. Particularly with companies like EcoMatcher pioneering the field today, the number of trees planted, can actively show just how much impact that tree planting has had.

For example, each tree planted can be visited, its growth tracked and measured in terms of how it has positively impacted the environment. For example, every tree planted on behalf of your company by EcoMatcher has offset X amount of vehicular travel emissions, or corporate pollution, or more.

Measuring those metrics is key to engage, and contribute to your company as a whole. Consumers who are able to see these metrics will be more likely to engage with your firm, your product(s), and contribute to your firm overall.

Conclusion

Businesses participating consciously in reforestation efforts not only engage with their employees and investors, but also use and display a strong ethical backbone to their corporate entity—something that goes a long way for a business and its image. With EcoMatcher, businesses can partner up to sponsor large-scale tree planting programs in areas in need around the world. Aside from providing local employment and maintaining a clean brand image, this process contributes to the world's larger drive towards climate action and environmental change before it's too late.



10

How Tree-Planting Can Increase Revenues





Tree planting has for long been heralded as one of the most feasible large-scale climate change solutions. But the business viability of the process is just about coming to light now, with private firms taking just as much interest as responsible government entities across the world.

According to the World Resources Institute, global governments have committed to restoring 160 million hectares of deforested land alone¹. Imagine, then, if private firms, for-profit and not-for-profit organisations got together to work towards the same goals? We'd have an environmental revolution, led by tree planting, in the bag.

But environmentally sustainable business practices are also negatively looked upon as resource draining and time-consuming. Time-consuming it may be, but research has found that environmental sustainability projects have the power to drive sales and revenue regardless of the industry, target audience or product. And if sustainability will secure the future of humans and all other life on Earth, then perhaps there is no other moral alternative.

1 Nature.org. (2019). [online] Available at: https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Business_of_Planting_Trees_Report.pdf [Accessed 5 Nov. 2019].



Here's the lowdown on some ways tree planting can increase revenue:

Provides Returns on Investments

By investing in tree planting and through this, in the restoration economy, businesses become part of the larger network of firms investing in environmental change in hopes of returns. The returns aren't just financial—they're also futuristic. By investing in the environment's growth, businesses are making life in the future more and more sustainable, which by default means their name is tagged alongside the restoration of the environment for future generations.

Opens Up New Avenues for Collaborations and Partnerships

When governments and private organisations pledge to support reforestation and climate change, chances are they have a big vision and money to invest but don't know how to go about it. This is a golden chance for companies whose services are design, direction, management and implementation of these projects. This not only feeds the sustainability engine, but also allows willing participants to execute their vision through expert partnerships rather than fumble around on their own and waste potential.

It's on a similar note that EcoMatcher was founded—to allow private firms and businesses to scale their tree planting vision as a partner organisation. Similar growth pathways are available for other firms willing to tap into this reservoir of potential.

Cross-Sell with Related Products

Cross selling is touted as a very profitable avenue of sales for consumer-oriented firms. It involves offering products to



customers that are similar or related to what they're buying or what's in their browser history. This is a gold mine for companies whose products are somewhat related to the environment—re-usable water bottles, trekking gear, travel products, even diary or grocery goods.

However, cross selling in this case doesn't need to have a connection, if the way tree planting is marketed is as a sustainable measure or just a little addition to an already-filled basket. EcoMatcher offers a WooCommerce plugin that allows customers to click on 'Plant a Tree' in the check out section, where buyers are already prepared to pull the trigger on the purchase. A tree gets added to their order at USD 3.49—the same price as a medium-sized Frappuccino in a chain café (there's a marketing tip for you!).

Tap Into Sustainable-Minded Customers

88% of surveyed consumers wanted brands and businesses to help them make a difference—a golden ticket, if anything². Sustainable brands can bag more square feet on retail or e-retail shelves, and are more in demand than mass-produced or unethical counterparts. This is a burgeoning market, one that shouldn't be taken for granted or passed off as a fad. Consumers increasingly drift towards brands that are sustainable and are open about their path towards sustainable development goals and targets.

Mistaking the market for being gullible enough to believe 'greenwashing', however, can be a grave error. Consumers consistently do their own research before committing to a brand,

² Townsend, S. (2019). *88% Of Consumers Want You To Help Them Make A Difference*. [online] Forbes.com. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/solitairerownsend/2018/11/21/consumers-want-you-to-help-them-make-a-difference/#1d1ee0536954> [Accessed 5 Nov. 2019].



so if there's a loophole in a business' environmental sustainability projects, chances are it'll do more harm than good. This is a market that is ready to turn loyal, as long as businesses are equally willing to do good and be transparent about the extent of their projects³.

On a final note, tree planting is also a harbinger of technological innovations and advancements. More and more companies are turning to technology to quicken the pace of tree planting—for some, it's a personal moral conviction while for others, it's a business-oriented strategy that can ramp up revenue or returns on investments.

Either way, the environment will greatly benefit from collaborations between visionary organisations and results-driven partner organisations when it comes to reforestation.

3 Nielsen.com. (2018). Sustainability Sells: Linking Sustainability Claims to Sales. [online] Available at: <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2018/sustainability-sells-linking-sustainability-claims-to-sales/> [Accessed 5 Nov. 2019].



11

Why Tree Gifting is the Next Cool Trend





Gifts hold great sentimental and emotional value and thus, when gifts are given, careful thought must be invested. The ideal gift is one that not only expresses sentiments of the giver but also has great significance attached to it. Small wonder, then, that for those in search of a gift that is unique and also sends across a great message, a sapling or tree is ideal.

Trees hold just as much value for corporates as they do for individuals. When on the hunt for eco-friendly corporate gifts, gifting a tree is a quick and easy way around it. Individual tree planting or corporate tree planting is a great way of raising awareness about saving the environment while maintaining profits and increasing customer loyalty and shareholder value. It makes for an excellent CSR initiative and can be extended within the company as well, through an 'adopt a tree' program to increase employee engagement.



Here's why trees are cool:

Reduce Packaging Waste and Shipping Costs Across Borders

Traditional gifts are not only overused, but they also contribute tonnes to the world's already burgeoning packaging waste problem. With international orders, the process of delivery becomes that much more unsustainable as transport and air travel can be involved, despite being one of the fastest-growing sources of greenhouse gases in the world today.

Trees, however, are physical but not tangible, per se. They can't be shipped in boxes or packaged in turtle-strangling bubble wrap. Today's technological revolution is even allowing the digital gifting of trees. Online platforms such as EcoMatcher champion the efforts to cut packaging waste and costs by offering trees digitally or by TreeCards—a gift card linked to a tree. EcoMatcher's TreeTracker app allows virtual visits to the gifted tree from anywhere in the world.

Reduce CO₂ Emissions and Toxic Greenhouse Gases in the Air

The environmental change due to the destruction of this life force may increase the number of harmful gases in the atmosphere, making the planet increasingly unfit for living. However, by planting more trees, we can ensure a reduction in these harmful gases. Trees are natural cleaners of the atmosphere and environment. They reduce toxic gases and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, letting out breathable oxygen in return. Even a single tree is impactful—one massive tree can produce enough oxygen for four people for a day!

Tree planting has a lot of scope for effectively wiping out 100 years of carbon emissions. Reforestation and climate change



action go hand in hand, not least because tree planting is possibly the best climate change solution there is today.

Restore Habitats for Wildlife

Just the way we humans depend and dwell on our environment, so does our wildlife. Our wildlife and environment are dependent on each other. The destruction or harm to the environment endangers wildlife and disturbs the ecosystem. One of the more significant threats to wildlife is deforestation. Gifting trees is an excellent way of getting people to help the environment and also educating people about the advantages of trees in our lives. More trees mean protection, protected wildlife means a symbiotic ecosystem. On an organisational level, companies can initiate corporate tree planting for sustainability or introduce sustainable employee engagement initiatives to continue meeting business targets and, holistically, sustainable goals.

Increase Emotional and Mental Health

Many studies present a resoundingly positive case for trees contributing to the mental and emotional health of humans. In fact, one discovered that increasing the number of trees in a city block by 10 can invoke emotional and psychological changes in ways similar to getting \$10,000 extra a year or being 7 years younger!

Exposure to nature or spending time in tree-lined areas can considerably bring down the symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety. This co-relates to why those who live in urban settings or away from nature tend to see a spike in symptoms compared to those in tree-covered areas. Gifting a tree only makes measurable happiness more accessible and affordable to those without the means or wherewithal to settle in suburban or green spaces.



The reasons for these observations are many, the most agreed-upon being the ability of trees to purify the air and produce more oxygen. Tree planting also reduces stress, which in turn delivers physical benefits. But the psychological ‘placebo’ effect of trees is perhaps the most intense, yet the most unexplainable.

Conclusion

And there you have it—reasons, running the gamut from environmental change to increase in happiness, that make tree planting and tree gifting the next cool trend and one that you should definitely be in on as individuals or corporates. Trees make for excellent eco-friendly corporate gifts, employee rewards and milestone markers in a firm. There’s a positive business element in tree gifting too, as can be used to contribute towards CSR initiatives, fulfil sustainable development goals and targets or simply make the world a better place for your employees and clients!



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5 Reasons to Include Tree Planting for Employee Rewards





Even in our own cities every day, we see trees cut down more and more, and temperatures rise quickly. Many, if not most, are feeling the manifest impact of the cutting of trees first-hand. It's just that little bit warmer, a little less breathable, and we can all feel first-hand the impacts of climate change from cutting more trees.

Today, more and more conversations are being had about how important it is to adopt more environmentally sustainable business practices; these practices will not only offset the carbon footprint humans have been generating, and help more people understand the magnitude of environmental change.

Corporate tree planting encourages both firms and individuals to be part of that initiative, from the bottom up. It's both a unique gifting idea and a successful employee engagement strategy, making them feel personally involved in the process.

Being part of an adopt-a-tree or a tree planting campaign is mentally enriching, and a long-term reward for employer and employee. Rather than cliché, everyday gift sets, eco-friendly corporate gifts are indeed the way to go in 2019!



Planting a tree is theoretically its own reward, as trees result in cleaner air, a purer atmosphere, lower chances of flooding and lower temperatures. But the lack of an immediate result might cause many not to consider these factors, and that is where issuing rewards come in. These encourage employees and private citizens to do their bit for themselves and public life, with such employee engagement initiatives.

Strategically planted, trees can noticeably lead to lowered temperatures, creating an environment not only more pleasant but one significantly more conducive to productivity. Those lower temperatures lead to profitability for your business—at the ‘cost’ of rewards or remuneration to encourage those behaviours. Here is why tree planting or adoption drives make for the ideal employee rewards:

1. Save money on unsustainable gifts

Corporate gifting can be a tedious task on the best of days, and standard corporate gifts often are generic, repetitive and not always useful. Most significantly, however, corporate gifts—particularly due to their packaging—are often unsustainable, and create large amounts of waste that are unrecyclable, likely to end up in a landfill, and non-biodegradable. Personalisation for corporate gifts can also run costs up to a degree. Instead, gifting tree adoption, or planting a tree in the name of an employee enriches the environment, and the employee’s experience in the company.

2. Fulfil CSR Objectives

Corporate social responsibility ensures that a business stays accountable and responsible, whether that is to itself, the



public, or to its investors. A significant part of corporate social responsibility is ensuring that a firm operates in ways that are not only beneficial to its economic and organisational goals but also does not actively take away from the environment but rather, benefit it.

Part of those objectives means that the company must be conscious of the kind of impact they are having on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental.

CSR entails that a company fulfil its responsibilities to society by not negatively impacting the environment, and society, but instead enhancing them.

Fulfilling CSR objectives can positively enhance not only the public image of the company, but boost employee—and investor morale, thereby not only meeting the company's CSR goals but improving its public image too.

3. Contribute to UN SDGs

The United Nations instituted Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, in 2016. These are goals meant to reach the final aim of sustainable development, on the principle of 'leaving no one behind', and aiming for sustainable development worldwide.

Part of those SDGs is to 'ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns', meaning the sustainable use of the world's limited supply of natural resources, and aiming, within 15 years, to substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. Focusing corporate gifting and rewards on nature, rather than consumption, would achieve a large part of that goal.



It would also achieve other UN SDGs—for one, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Planting more trees, here done as a reward, would help build towards self-sustaining cities providing their inhabitants with a high quality of life and living and sustain its residents. Reducing waste—by simply doing away with consumption in the form of corporate gifting—would also achieve the goal of ensuring sustainable use and production patterns.

Finally, instituting tree planting for rewards would achieve perhaps the most critical SDG of all—climate action. Planting a significant number of trees actively combats the issue while also adding to raising awareness and increasing human and institutional capacity towards climate change solutions.

4. Raise awareness about the firm's sustainable moves

In pursuing their sustainable causes publicly and lending tangible support to those causes, companies promote those issues among the general public audiences. This brings more attention and awareness to their positive involvement in matters of climate change, the greenhouse effect, landslides, the many other issues deforestation can cause—and how tree planting can help mitigate them.

On the stakeholder front, a sustainable strategy is sure to go down well—investors are increasingly putting their money into firms that are sustainably driven, while consumers equal that in trust and purchases. By actively instating tree planting as employee rewards, firms are publicly taking a stand in favour of the environment—this in term makes consumers (and employees) more likely to align with them, trust them and spread the word.



In a hopeful ripple effect, this could also encourage rival or counterpart firms to take a stand—this is an establishment of thought leadership but more importantly, allow more influential organisations to uphold this common cause.

5. Reward employees in a unique manner

Cash and incentives are the go-to rewards in traditional companies, but slowly, firms are beginning to recognise the importance of unique gifts. It makes the firm seem more personally invested in individual employees' lives. It's also positive reinforcement, which means employees are that much more likely to perform better and reach their next goal faster. Tree planting is a double-duty unique reward because it not only sits well in organisational reward structures but also makes the receiver feel, indeed be a part of something bigger than the firm itself.

Conclusion

Just as people are waking up to the stark, ever-growing realities of climate change and its impact, more people should also be made aware of their participatory role, in helping to combat that climate change. It is often said that the “best way to learn, is to do” and truly, there is perhaps no better way to get started on a journey towards offsetting that carbon footprint than to encourage people to plant more trees themselves, rather than wait for third parties to step up.

It may sound simplistic, but the manifest, wide-spread effects of planting trees are anything but. Planting trees is one of the easiest and most sustainable ways to positively affect the environment, and instituting that as a reward is sure to mobilize the workforce towards the planet's greater good. EcoMatcher offers companies incredible easy ways to use tree planting for rewards.

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**A Zero-Waste
Gifting Idea that
is Out of the Box**





Zero waste lifestyles are more than a passing trend—they are the need of the hour.

With most people, especially corporates, understanding the impacts of climate change, the demand for climate change solutions in almost every market—much like global warming itself—has gone from non-existent to red hot.

Of course, the journey to a completely sustainable lifestyle is a challenge that most find overwhelming. Businesses asked to integrate environmentally sustainable work practices are thrown off by the sheer investment they imagine it would take even to begin. However, taking the first step is actually more straightforward than it seems.

As is with anything, it is the smallest steps that make the most significant impact, and one way to start is gifting. Zero-waste gifting ideas are the groundbreaking avenue corporates never knew they needed to make their way into more environmentally conscious business practices.

For unique corporate gifts to employee engagement initiatives, eco-friendly practices like tree planting and adopting a tree are the gifts that keep giving, quite literally.



Imagine a world where every coffee mug, desk calendar or other generic corporate gift is replaced with a tree- one that you can adopt, own, and be sure is contributing to the restoration of forests around the globe. That future is well within reach when you partner with tree-planting firms such as EcoMatcher.

If you're thinking about how tree planting can benefit your company, here's how:

Offsetting Your Carbon Footprint By Planting A Forest

Corporates on the path to eco-consciousness are increasingly trying new ways to offset their carbon footprint. CSR is one way to go, but the ratio of expense to impact is a concern for businesses big and small. So how do you make a lasting impact without bearing unaffordable costs? Corporate tree planting for sustainability.

Tree planting is the transplantation of tree seedlings and the best way to contribute to the global reforestation movement. Not only is tree planting more economical, but it is also a tangible way to fulfil sustainability goals as a company.

While tree planting seems like such an impactful cause, you're probably wondering how these trees are planted in the first place- do you do it yourself? Where do you even begin? It is simple- when you partner with certified tree-planting firms like EcoMatcher, you contribute to vetted, established foundations that plant the trees for you. The app allows you to track your tree's location, progress and even see the professional farmer who planted it so that you know exactly where your contribution is going and the impact it is making.



Whether you are celebrating a milestone, rewarding your employees, giving back to your community, or joining hands with your consumers to create environmental change, corporate tree planting or adopting a tree is the perfect starting point towards a more conscious business and a more sustainable future.

For instance, if every milestone your company reached was celebrated with the planting of trees, your success directly affects the increase in your environmental impact, making that success that much more meaningful. A company forest with EcoMatcher is a minimum of 1000 trees and the more milestones your company reaches, the more your company forest can grow!

Growing With Your Employees

Of course, adopting sustainability on a corporate scale is only a success when it is integrated at every level down to the roots. As a company, you want every part of your business to now participate in this cause and that starts with your employees. Getting your employees on board with eco-friendly practices opens up a host of new ways to engage with them.

Taking up sustainability as a responsibility shows your employees you care about a future beyond your business', and giving them an opportunity to be part of the initiative helps them contribute to and feel part of a larger cause that they may have wanted to already, but didn't know how to or have the means to be a part of before.

Tree planting is a fun, easy and exciting new way to celebrate an internal event, amp up an employee engagement initiative, or to reward employees and show them appreciation. Gone are the days of template gifts—employees these days want to feel like



they are a part of the company, and expect meaning and intent behind every corporate interaction.

With EcoMatcher, you can give your employees the opportunity to not only be a part of your cause but to also have their own story of contributing to environmental sustainability. Each tree they plant allows them to have a tangible token of the good they are doing for the planet and it aligns them more closely to a cause they already believe in.

Championing Gifts That Keep Giving

When it comes to appreciating your employees, stakeholders or peers, coming up with unique corporate gifts that outdo the last one is always a challenge. Switching to zero-waste gifts shows that you, as a company, are not only keeping up with trends and being creative but also that your gifts go beyond superficial pleasantries and actually have meaning.

In the gifting space, there's always an answer to the problem "I can't decide what to get"—the gift card. Gift cards allow the receiver to have some autonomy over their gift and choose what they like. If you have spent days searching for corporate gifts online and gift cards from unique sustainable brands and come up short, the TreeCard is a gift card that might just do the trick for you. TreeCards come with no storage, packaging or wastage issues.

The best part about the TreeCard, other than the trees, is that they can be designed according to your brand guidelines to make them more personal! All EcoMatcher does is add their own QR code to help track and manage your tree.



Eco-friendly corporate gifts are great, but when they are personal and tailor-made, they are even better.

Corporate tree-planting is a great way to show that your company cares about the environment and that this ideology is not just for the press or a passing phase- it trickles down to everything, even gifting.

With more companies steering towards eco-gifting, choosing trees is a present for the present and a gift for the future.



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Festival Gifts that are Good for the Planet





With the festive season just around the corner, choosing eco-friendly corporate gifts for your employees not only act as a gesture of goodwill but also help towards achieving sustainable development goals and targets for your business. Additionally, making a valuable contribution towards protecting the environment, regardless of how small or large the gesture is, is also equally valued and leads to a kind of a win-win situation for everyone! More and more corporate houses and businesses understand the need for environmentally sustainable business practices. This changing mindset has gradually led to a substantial increase in various environmental practices in the workplace and opened the doorway to eco-friendly gift options.

Gifts are one of the best ways of expressing feelings of gratitude. When it comes to giving something special to employees to keep them in good spirits for the festival season, well, it may actually seem like a herculean task. Unique corporate gifts go a long way in helping employees feel valued and appreciated.



With increasing awareness about environment conservation, multiple corporate houses and businesses are taking deliberate measures in pledging their commitment to the environment and thus opting for eco-friendlier work culture. Therefore, going green has not only become the need of the hour but has also become the next best thing to do. As a business, if you are on a lookout for corporate gifts that are environment-friendly and in sync with nature, try sustainable, eco-friendly options.

Here is a list of some innovative and interesting festival gift options for employees that are not only good for the planet but also go a long way as a gesture of goodwill!

Jute Bags

Whether it is about getting groceries from the store, veggies from the market, or simply carrying lunch to office, a jute bag can come handy anywhere and anytime. Gift your employees personalised jute bags to make them more aware of climate change solutions. You can also initiate a drive that bans the use of poly bags by distributing or gifting jute bags to your employees this festive season. These bags come in trendy designs in a variety of shapes and colours and can be procured online from many websites that sell corporate gifts online.

Bamboo Toothbrushes

A pack of bamboo toothbrushes are an excellent option for employee gifting. Not only does it give out a strong message against the use of plastics but also the fact that they are renewable and biodegradable tells us that switching to a more recyclable way of life is the need of the hour.



Solar Lamps and Lights

With no batteries or plugs required for charging these devices, solar lamps and lights are the next big things that are super safe for the environment. With the help of some sunlight, these lamps can shine bright and light up any personal corner or workspace. For a little personal touch and to cherish the association with the employees, you can also get your company logo imprinted on the lights. A unique and futuristic option, solar lights are the kind of creative corporate gifts that will definitely make a good gesture.

Reusable Drinking Straws

To tackle the present scenario of environment conservation, looking for alternatives to anything and everything plastic has become the need of the hour. As an organisation, you can shun the usage of excessive plastic but providing alternatives to plastic straws. Gift your employees a set of metal, bamboo or glass straws. Reusable, environment-friendly, and free from any kind of chemicals, these are durable, easy to use and make for an impressive gift option while also sending out a strong message.

Gift a tree

When we say green, well, the first thing that pops in our minds is plants and trees. Gifting a tree or a plant is goes a long way in promoting sustainability and is perhaps one of the best employee engagement initiatives you can promote. Get a potted plant to grace the work desks of your employees; you can get online and offline stores to cater to the bulk orders for plants and saplings.



Adopt a tree gift

Among other successful employee engagement strategies, you can also gift a tree to your employees. EcoMatcher is an online platform that caters to large-scale corporate tree planting needs. This online platform offers innovative ways that lead to ecological sustainability solutions. EcoMatcher offers solutions to various companies and organisations to improve their businesses by initiating corporate tree planting or gifting trees to their employees and even customers as a gesture of goodwill. So, if you wish to gift a plant or adopt a tree gift for employees this festive season, try EcoMatcher.

Conclusion

With global concerns regarding the ecological conversation, climate change and promoting a sustainable way of living, what is better than eco-friendly gifting options this festive season! Not only do you get to give something worthwhile and meaningful when it comes to buying gifts but also contribute to sustainability and securing the environment to have a better future. The biggest takeaway here is eco-friendly products can be easily disposed of. These are all biodegradable options that do not pollute the environment in any way and are absolutely safe to use. The resources that go into manufacturing eco-friendly gifts are recycled, recyclable or chemical-free. Additionally, eco-friendly gift options can help you send a loud and clear message regarding your stance for environment conservation.



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5 Experiential Conference or Event Gift Ideas Your Guests Will Love





Planning an event is part of every company's purview, but how do you make that event unique? Particularly for corporates who attend a multitude of interviews day in and day out, one can simply melt into the next one. Corporate event gift boxes and hampers, given to all attendees after these conferences, also end up being similar; customized stationary, chocolates, confectionery and the ilk can only go so far. As a company, you want to gift event attendees not just an item with your brand name on it, but something they will remember, rather than just throw away. One great way to do that is by participating in tree planting.

In the past few years, many others have gone down the technological route, often gifting USB sticks, cables and more; but now is the time for unique gifting. But there are so many other creative corporate gifts that are perfect when it comes to developing (and maintaining) brand images and keeping your business at the forefront of everyone's minds.

Here are some innovative gifts that are sure to make your business—and your event—memorable!



1. The Gift of Fitness

Fitness is one of the key aspects of everyday life today, and with ever-rising prices for devices, memberships and more, this is sure to be a gift that will be remembered. Health is one of the most important factors anyone could wish upon another, and with more and more people today becoming more cognizant of and focusing on their health increasingly more, fitness makes for an excellent gift.

Gifting fitness could be in the form of a gym membership to a chain, which means that the receiver can choose a branch of the gym that is most convenient and accessible to them. There are a lot of innovative fitness classes today as well that are not necessarily gym-focused, such as CrossFit, kickboxing and more, which many may have wanted to try out but for a multitude of reasons were not able to. For many others, that first push or initiation into a healthy lifestyle needs to come from an external source, and gifting a gym or fitness class membership is a great way to do precisely that!

Another way to give a unique gift that helps with lifestyle and fitness is by gifting a fitness tracker. Many brands today make fitness bands and trackers at a variety of different price points, many of which are affordable enough even to provide as an en-mass corporate gift. For example, mi Fitness bands are at an affordable price point, as are some Fitbit models. These could well provide the impetus or push that someone considering fitness seriously could use, and a great starting point for the Gift of Fitness!

2. The Gift of Trees

It goes without saying that the environment, and the state of it today, is one of the world's most pressing issues. The impacts of



climate change are no longer theoretical, and today they can be felt, seen and heard around the globe. It is now crucial for both individuals and businesses to focus on climate change solutions as an integral part of functioning, and gifting a tree is also an environmentally friendly corporate gift.

And what better, more creative corporate gift than an “adopt a tree” program on behalf of your attendee? Eco-friendly corporate gifts promise not only to be a gift that is remembered, but one that genuinely combats the pressing issue of environmental change.

One such business that can help with corporate tree gifting is EcoMatcher. Matching businesses with tree gifting, whether corporate or as employee rewards, EcoMatcher can help you find the perfect tree to gift, nurture, and grow! With EcoMatcher, visit your tree virtually from time to time to monitor its progress, watch it grow, and follow its progress as if you were there.

Through an EcoMatcher TreeCard, personalize a gift card for employee(s), or corporate ‘giftees’, with a QR code they may scan to be able to access the tree they have been gifted. There are so many more benefits—no costs for expensive tooling, shipping, packaging, and storage.

With the TreeManager application, firms can give out trees from their forest to attendees or employees quickly and efficiently. The TreeTracker web app lets receivers monitor their tree’s details, the farmer and organization involved as well as take note of its carbon sequestration rates.

This gives the receiver valuable, all-round insights on their eco-friendly, sustainable present—a creative corporate gift that



also promotes environmentally sustainable work practices, and engages the employees or giftees with their present.

3. Gift of donations

Many today want to donate to charities, and there is a wide range of charities and causes, but being spoilt for choice also makes it difficult to choose. Companies can choose charities on behalf of their giftees, which could be vetted in advance by sustainability professionals. This also means that receivers do not have to worry about the authenticity of charities. An excellent way to engage your attendees well before actually carrying out a donation is to conduct a survey to be aware of which charity or cause they would most like to support, be it eradication of poverty, climate action, women empowerment or others.

At the same time, initiatives like this will not only help those who are being benefited by the charity, but also help employees and gift receivers do their part for the world, with all the “difficult” part of finding a charity. That also could encourage future, consistent donations—while adding to the company’s CSR initiatives as well.

From the business point of view, it’s always a good idea for firms to be associated with projects such as these, as it improves brand image and posits the firm as one that is aware, conscious and actively using their influence to make a change.

4. The gift of experience

Some people are thrill-seekers, but not sure which thrill to seek. Thrills could be anything from a rock-climbing class to a parasailing adventure, or even a cooking class. Experiences may



cost some money that dissuades them from doing it, or people may need just that extra impetus to try new things.

Corporate gifting experiences promise something new to a receiver that they may not have tried before, and could well mean the start of a new hobby or passion they might choose to pursue. Helping someone find and unlock that purpose is an invaluable gift, and one they are sure to remember for a long time to come.

5. Gift of craft

Rather than gifting mass-produced goods, presents that have been handmade and handcrafted are more personal, fuller of life, and have a story behind them. Especially great are local handicrafts from artisans from that region, which have a backstory, and simultaneously help provide for local artisans, giving them a livelihood. Promoting those local arts and handicrafts could also be a big boost to local industries, which also supports local communities in multiple ways. A handmade gift, particularly one from local artisans, is far more meaningful than one that is mass-produced, and also benefits real-life situations, environments, and artisans rather than only corporations.

Conclusion

Gifts can range from the small, tangible items to experiences, to those that can be seen, to those that are felt from within. Gifting trees, classes, and experiences are more original, memorable, and not only builds brand value, but fulfills companies' duty to the environment, to their employees, and building goodwill that will remain for a long time to come.



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Tree Planting for e-Commerce 101





It's true—money does grow on trees.

Trees fall under the ambit of natural capital, which is defined as the world's repository of natural assets, including air, soil water and all living beings. In today's conversations around climate change and global warming, deforestation and tree planting are inevitably brought up, and environmental sustainability is on the minds of corporations big and small.

E-commerce and online retail have changed the way the world does business, but more and more challenges have cropped up in the area of sustainability. Packaging used by retailers and changing purchasing habits of consumers have been driving forces in e-commerce stores veering off the wrong end.

However, many believe that retailers must take active steps to make global shopping, delivery, consumption and production



more sustainable—some, like Canada’s Loblaws and China’s JD, have already begun the process. This is where Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), sustainable business goals and the restoration economy come into the picture.

Today, the restoration economy is booming, and more and more firms are seeing massive growth opportunities in tree planting.

But every business decision must be profitable, so is there money in offering tree planting or tree planting services to customers on your e-commerce store? Short answer, there is. *And here’s how to do it:*

Place Tree Planting Plugins at Checkout

Checkout is the final stage in a buyer cycle, where customers have all they need in their cart, have made purchase decisions and will follow through with the payment. By placing tree planting services at checkout, like with EcoMatcher’s WooCommerce plugin, you’ve already got your customer in a state of mind where they’re willing to pay, and that’s half the battle won. The costs of a tree (or trees) are probably even lower than shipping prices on some sites!

Reduce Expenses on Corporate Social Responsibility by Planting Forests

CSR is an undertaking that most organisations carry out today, not least to engage with customers more and come off as environmentally aware. However, most CSR programmes can cost an arm and a leg, especially when done at an organisational level. That said, private e-commerce companies can not sit back and watch as governments pull the load. Partnering with firms



like EcoMatcher is a much more cost-effective way to play this out responsibly. By offering tree planting and tree adoption services to customers, e-commerce stores will not only tick a few CSR boxes, but also make some profits off the sales.

Tailor Your Tree Planting Pitch and Branding to the Target Audience

Aside from the fact that they're beautiful, trees have a lot more benefits that impact humans on individual levels. Planting trees increases the number of jobs, protects biodiversity and last but not least limits global climate change. Plug these benefits in when you're branding your tree-planting offer, so that you make an impact and generate more sales.

This sales tactic will extend the scope of the offer far beyond profit—it generates an emotional response in the customer, leading them to feel like they are a part of something bigger, just by adding a few dollars to their order.

The More You Invest in Tree Planting, the More Returns

At EcoMatcher, the more you invest, the better your margins. Our new WooCommerce plugin allows e-commerce stores to install a simple 'Plant a Tree' at checkout. Trees will be assigned to customers based on the 'stock' of trees you've purchased—you can buy a handful or even plant a complete forest with a minimum of 1000 trees!

Cross-Sell Tree Planting with Other Products

Cross selling means pitching products to customers that are similar to what they've bought or are currently buying. If you're



selling anything remotely sustainable, like reusable water bottles or cloth bags, then you've hit the jackpot. All you need to do is pitch tree planting to the customer as they add the main product to cart or at checkout.

If you're selling other products, cross-selling a tree may be a challenge, but not one that you can't rise to. Consider pairing it with a positive, inspiring message to convince the customer that they're making a change while going about their regular shopping.

Come Off as Transparent to Customers with Tree Planting

As a turnkey solution, tree planting services can be integrated into existing business systems with nary a hiccup. What's most beneficial is that an e-commerce store looking to plant trees more often than not comes off as environmentally aware and sustainably active. With the entire scramble to offset climate change, customers are more than willing to participate in campaigns such as these, which come at a smaller cost. The trust that is forged between customers and these e-commerce stores will drive engagement, brand loyalty and sales in the long run.

Customised and personalised trees are a great way to involve customers directly in the process other than paying a few dollars extra. Partnering with companies like EcoMatcher, that use technology and apps to virtually transport customers to the tree they bought, is a foolproof way to fuel engagement from other repeat and first-time customers.

It's also a call-to-action for other hesitant small and medium businesses to take decisive steps towards actioning climate change and global warming while being profitable.



Conclusion

There's no reason why capitalism can't drive and deliver social and environmental change. However, natural capital has always been highly undervalued as investment or profit-making avenues that bloom directly off of giving back to the environment.

The magnitude of the win-win situation is not apparent enough; however, if e-commerce stores take the first step towards planting trees and reaping some profits, then there's more to go around.

There are big profits in the restoration economy, and investing time and effort in saving the planet is naturally the done thing.

By offering trees for sale and championing environmental sustainability through an e-commerce platform, businesses will not just make headway on sustainable development goals, but also make it profitable.



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Cities and Forests: How They Co-Exist





Cities and forests are often perceived as two separate entities, but the fact of the matter is that the two are interlinked, even co-dependent. Cities may be self-sufficient on the surface, but a massive amount of their resources (think cool wind, water supply, rainfall) directly take root from forests nearby. The city of the future (and the future of the city) is one that co-exists with forests, involving trees planted in predominantly urban areas and thick forest cover surrounding them.

Co-existence and environmental change are the needs of the hour, not least because over the last five years, the surfaces that don't absorb rainwater have shot up while green surfaces within urban areas has dwindled at alarming rates. Cities will continue to expand, but to be considered sustainable, they will need to evolve.

DEPENDENCE OF CITIES ON TREES

Before talking about forests, it's important to talk about trees within cityscapes and urban forestry. Only then will the context (and the importance) of large-scale forests be thoroughly understood.



1. Improves air quality

The quality of air in urban areas is no joke. Individual citizens have long taken to precautionary measures to save themselves from the pains of fine dust, smog and general pollution. In South Korea and Japan, it's not uncommon to see people wearing surgical or filter masks on the streets—the number only increases when the governments send out fine dust alerts.

Urban vegetation absorbs gases in the air. This improves air quality and improves the respiratory health of inhabitants. While standard removal rates differ based on the tree species, larger healthy trees have the potential to remove 70 times more air pollution than smaller trees or sapling¹. This also makes a case for conservation of current urban vegetation, as tree planting take years to mature and reach their full pollution removal potential.

2. Reduce temperatures

Tree planting can invariably bring down temperatures in urban areas, especially in summers. By offsetting the CO₂ content in the air, tree covers reduce the 'greenhouse effect' and bring in cooling winds that bring down temperatures. Naturally, the shade and moisture provided aids in further reducing degrees on the thermostat, so it's win-win. As temperatures drop, noxious gases are less likely to hover in the air, which decreases the effect on the ozone layer.

Scientifically speaking, there's so much that trees can do for cities by virtue of just being planted and allowed to grow to full size and in good health.

¹ Nowak, D. J., 2002. *The Effects of Urban Trees on Air Quality*, New York: USDA Forest Service, Syracuse.



Multiply these positive effects two-fold, maybe ten-fold, and it's not hard to see why forests are considered the lungs of the planet.

DEPENDENCE OF CITIES ON FORESTS

Making a case for the co-existence of forests and cities warrants an explanation of how cities depend on forests, despite how independent they seem at face value. For some, this may be a throwback to elementary school science classes—but going back to the basics may well help the world realise that naïveté when it comes to understanding just how much cities depend on forests will not sustain for very long.

1. Regulate water flow and filtering

The greenery of a city's surrounding area directly impacts the city's water supply. Forests regulate the natural supply of clean water as the canopy triggers the release of water vapour that in turn maintains precipitation. Since roots of forest trees are largely strong and healthy, they shelter the soil from heavy erosion and this also facilitates an increase in groundwater. The same strong roots filter sediments and chemicals, making for a higher-quality supply of water.

2. Bolsters food and nutrition security

Humankind has long been dependent on forests for naturally available food and nutrition. Although our attempts at food gathering are miles more advanced than they were in the crude ages, there's no doubt that one of the ultimate sources of this food is forests, the other being water. Food, in this case, could mean wildlife, fruits, nuts, berries and bark.



3. Reduces the chances of floods and landslides

As storm management goes, trees are by far the most critical natural managers of storm water. Strong trees effectively waylay runoff at least temporarily, taking the load off human-made storm water systems that aren't built for intense flood situations. The logic behind this is simple—forests require a lot of water to grow. Naturally, that in itself thwarts the flow of water, giving it enough and more time to be soaked up by roots or bleed into the soil to become groundwater.

Deforesting on a massive scale and cutting down swathes of trees can only result in disastrous consequences, including flooding. No part of the world has had it as bad as Indonesia or Peru, where watershed was converted into agricultural land, causing overflowing river water to inundate cities and wreck homes in its wake.

4. Regulate oxygen content while absorbing CO₂

Climate change is largely caused by the unrestricted emissions of CO₂ into the atmosphere—the very element that trees absorb to produce more oxygen. It's easy enough to make the correlation here. Global reforestation and current forest cover conservation are the only quickest, most plausible ways to reduce the effect of CO₂ emissions and slow down the impact of climate change. Tree planting and conservation is a buyer of time—the world still needs quicker, faster, more scalable solutions to climate change. But protecting forest cover around cities can offset their carbon emissions, bringing into the picture some semblance of balance, however fragile.

Cities will continue to expand as population increases and more and more people move from rural to urban areas. The 'big city syndrome', a feature of which is uneven ecosystems, is a high risk



at this point. Cities are increasingly becoming concrete jungles while the real jungles make way for agricultural production to feed their population.

THE NEED FOR FUTURISTIC, SUSTAINABLE CITIES

By 2030, the world will have 43 megacities, each with 10 million inhabitants². This rapid rate of growth only spells danger for these inhabitants if sustainable measures aren't taken to balance out resources and demand. In line with this are the rapid rates of deforestation for agribusiness or of natural causes—decreasing forests could result in catastrophic effects on the cities of today.

Both the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda acknowledge the role of cities in sustainable development³. It only makes sense that they spearhead local action, considering they are responsible for more than 70% of greenhouse gases⁴. A significant number, for a setup that occupies only 2% of the world's total land⁵.

The need for a new game plan is entirely obvious—as people crowd cities, air quality drops, green spaces shrink, roads become dangerous, housing prices rise and public transport is overwhelmed. As if in retaliation, neighbourhoods across the

2 United Nations, 2016. *SDG 11: Sustainable Cities And Communities*. [Online] Available at: <https://in.one.un.org/page/sustainable-development-goals/sdg-11/> [Accessed 30 October 2019].

3 United Nations, 2016. *Sustainable Development Goals*. [Online] Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300> [Accessed 30 October 2019].

4 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2018. *Forests and Sustainable Cities*, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

5 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2018. *Rethinking the future of cities*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1106849/> [Accessed 30 October 2019].



globe are being wiped out in a flash due to floods, lightning strikes and wildfires of disastrous proportions.

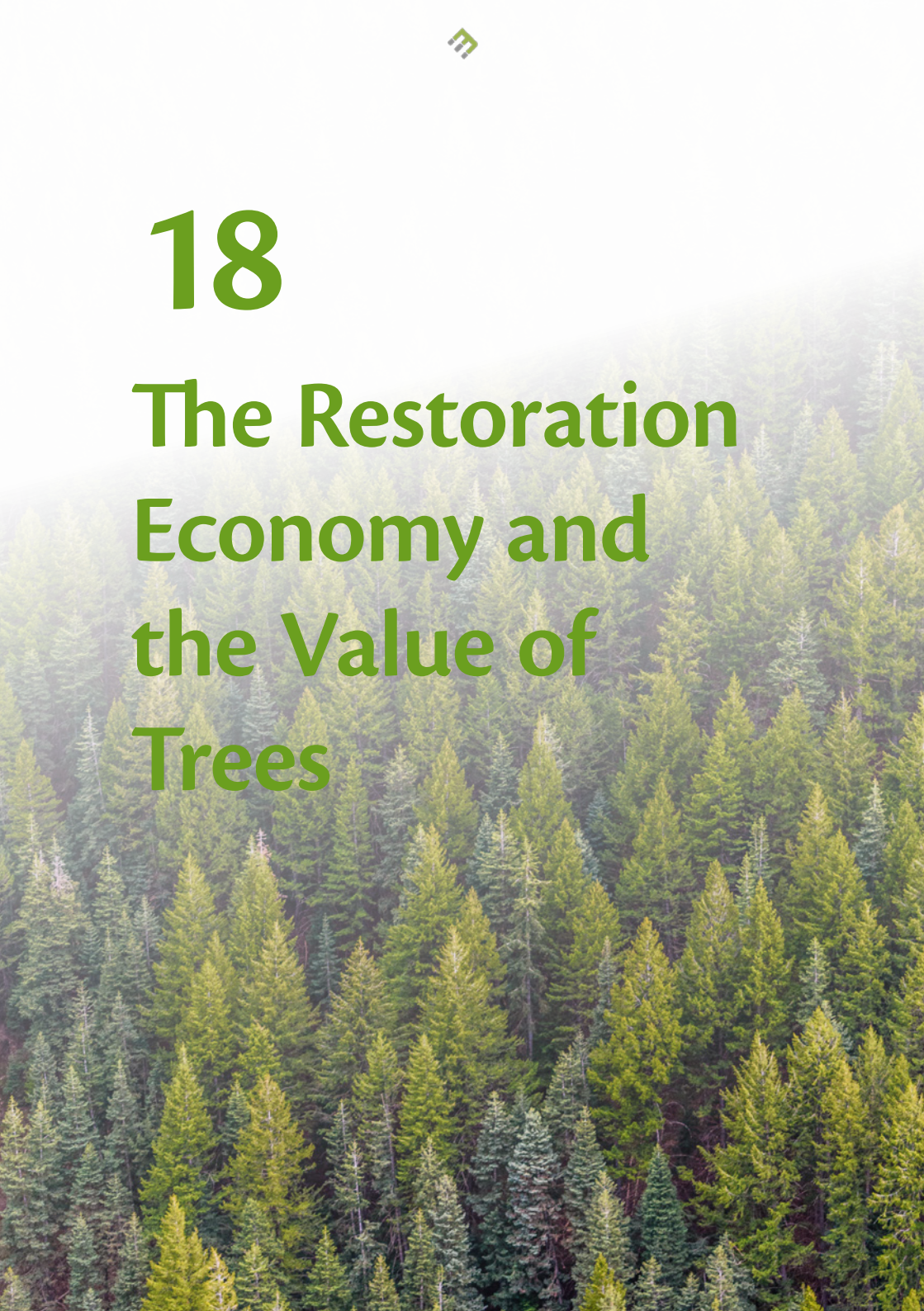
Sustainable cities also open up massive economic avenues. In London alone, urban forestry has helped save a whopping GBP 260 million in energy costs. Singapore's late founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew said years ago that pushing for biodiversity conservation and 'greening' was the most 'cost-effective project' he'd backed.

Governments and private organisations are pledging to work towards afforestation and restoring forest cover, and tree planting firms, including EcoMatcher, are efficiently helping these entities reach their sustainable development goals without having to instate in-house teams or bring economic progress to a halt. EcoMatcher does this by collaborating with vetted partner organisations who not only plant trees and forests, but ensure they're looked after and allowed to grow to their full potential. Similar stories emerge from other corners of the world, too—a testament to how economically viable it is to adapt and transform cities into sustainable entities, and to allow natural forests to remain as is for posterity.



18

The Restoration Economy and the Value of Trees





The idea of restoration economy has been around for a few years, but is only now being recognized for its value. In the face of recent natural disasters and climate change, scientists and researchers have put forth the idea that natural barriers are the best way to combat overall destruction and provide environmental stability. Governments have realized that these ecosystems work better, and are less expensive than humanmade solutions made from concrete and steel. The restoring of ecosystems to create better air and water quality, the reduction of carbon, and creating more jobs and wealth is known as the restoration economy.

Government projects can enjoy the many benefits of the restoration economy, such as the creation of thousands of jobs in sustainable industries while also improving food security. While most restoration projects and climate change solutions are carried out by the government, there has been a recent uptake in the number of corporate-driven projects as well.



Well-designed activities and models are fuelling business enterprises and can employ financial mechanisms to ensure good returns.

Understanding the Restoration Economy and its impact

The restoration economy is still in its infancy, but its impact on the environment and local economies cannot be denied. There have been too many instances where sustainable development goals come into effect to deny its positive impact on the community at large.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the City of Hoboken in New Jersey decided to invest in creating a resiliency park to counter the impacts of climate change. Essentially, this was an effort to convert vacant land into marshes while also restoring existing marshes. On the climate front, this effort is capable of holding a million gallons of floodwater. The economies are also equally exciting. The project is part of a 25-billion-dollar economy and employs over 125 thousand workers and many more in supporting jobs.

Many more cities all across the world have been using funds to create projects that simultaneously invigorate the job market and help reverse environmental change. The city of Chicago has been combating the rise of urban heat by planting and maintaining millions of trees. This action of tree planting also helps to soak up gallons of storm-water to prevent flooding and reduce the burden on existing storm-water channels.

Delivering environmental returns through restoration

Several case studies of restoration projects have been published which showcases their positive effect on the environment. Many



studies have also shown that a reduction in carbon will result in long term benefits and will increase resilience in terms of climate risks. With new ideas and plenty of work to be done, the prospects of the restoration economy include creating local employment opportunities over the world. Here, we are not talking about solar or wind energy; instead, we want to address natural ecosystems and create natural solutions to environmental challenges. The restoration economy can be a boundless industry, with many big and small actions to create real businesses.

Alaska has been seeing serious and worrying effects melting of permafrost on the environment. Apart from upsetting the local ecology, the melting snow also wreaks havoc on the transportation infrastructure and threatens roadways. To combat both issues, the transportation department has been layering insulation between layers of roadwork. This protects the permafrost against heating caused by roadways, which in turn protects the same roadways.

Florida, which has borne the brunt of many hurricanes in recent years, has seen several counties coming together to create a climate change compact. Each of the four counties in the South-East chapter has invested in different restoration projects with the overall aim of reducing the burden on the environment. While the compact has taken up 110 action items, a few have already been completed and the results have been very encouraging. Some cities have acted to prevent the backflow of seawater into their drainage systems and fight frequent tidal flooding. Most of the action items are geared towards maintaining the water balance of the region.

In the Asia-Pacific region, too, firms are stepping up in favor of the restoration economy. Green investments, growing natural



assets, tackling climate change and introducing urban and peri-urban forestry are often on the agenda of many summits held in these countries. The APEC Forest Cover Goal 2020 has instituted goals to align nations in contributing to the environment in the APEC region—‘20 million hectares by 2020’.

How cutting down trees affect the climate and how businesses can use restoration economy to change that

The cost of reforestation requires much more capital than what governments and philanthropic organizations can provide when it comes to restoring forests and trees on a large scale, and this where the public and corporate sector steps in. Unfortunately, up until now, the assumption has been that restoration of trees does not provide for creating an attractive business model.

There are several areas in which the corporate sector can get involved in a way where both income and capital gains are generated. There are three main ways in which to tap into the economy of restoring trees. The first one is where enterprises themselves plant and maintain trees. Then, there are other companies that provide consultation or technology for restoration. The last is tying up with restoration indirectly in order to draw in customers.

One of the most successful businesses in the first category is Better Globe Forestry. They work with small farmers all across Kenya to plant and maintain native trees. They provide seedlings, training, and even microfinancing options to the farmers. Their gains come in when the trees mature. The company buys the tree of the farmer and then utilizes them as high-quality timber.



In the second category of restoration of trees, a Dutch company has created the technology where trees can be grown in arid and semi-arid regions with a fraction of the water required for a normal tree. The technology can become proprietary or the company can consult on individual projects. However, there is no denying that converting previously untenable regions into lush forests will help trap more carbon and create a vibrant ecosystem.

EcoMatcher is one of the best reforestation companies that help companies set up corporate tree planting as a part of their business in order to promote tree conservation and highlight sustainable living. The aim is to decrease the negative impact businesses might have on the environment. While tree gifting is one of their eco-friendly corporate gift ideas, they also use them as initiatives to increase employee engagement.

The last category can seem the easiest with businesses simply pledging to donate a portion of their profits towards the restoration of trees. However, with customers having more knowledge, it is imperative that the right type of program is supported and one where the local community is benefitted.

Conclusion

The restoration economy is one of the best ways to combat climate change. It also has a whole host of other benefits, running the gamut from local employment to the prevention of water-logging and absorbing carbon emissions.

By partnering with organizations that specialize in these services, like EcoMatcher, eager firms can successfully divert their funds into programs that work as well as maintain their brand image while contributing to sustainable development goals and targets.



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Innovations That are Changing the Face of Forests and Ecology



With all the recent and often disastrous developments in the natural world, we have reached a juncture in time where it is imperative for everyone to actively work towards conserving the environment. Leading scientists have been highlighting the delicate condition of the environment and stressing the requirement for a large and concentrated effort, which might be the only way to control the impacts of climate change.

Industries are working alongside scientists and researchers alike to find ways to help mitigate environmental changes and maybe, in some cases, reverse the effects of humans on the environment to a certain extent. One of the most significant ways to combat climate change and reduce carbon footprint is to have more trees and also conserve existing forests.

Technology has come a long way with helping in identifying and verifying the right type of tree conservation for maximum impact while also reaching development goals. From drones to consumer incentives, to responsibly sourced ingredients, there are multiple avenues in which technology is making an impact on ecological conservation.

5 TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS FOR ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

Historically, technology has not always been on the side of nature conservation. From strip-mining to oilrigs to fracking, there have been numerous instances or innovations that have



led to the direct destruction of the environment. However, in recent years, research units have begun to employ the use of technology to stop the advent of environmental ruin and be an integral part of climate change solutions. Here are some technological innovations that have proven their mettle in the fight against climate change.

1. Drones for trees

According to the World Wildlife fund, the planet is losing around 18.3 million acres of forests every year. The importance of trees in keeping the temperature stable and reduce carbon is a well-established fact already. All of us have seen conservationists organise extensive tree planting drives in order to combat this (often) mass destruction of forests. Unfortunately, as significant as individual initiatives of tree planting by hand may be, it is no match for the rampant industrial deforestation taking place.

This is where drones come in. A Britain-born organisation has created and tested software that uses drones to plant new trees at high speeds. The drones first map the overhead region that has been ravaged, and the planting drones then embed the seeds in the right place based on the data collected.

This technology can be actively used by reforestation companies to make an effective change to the status of green cover on the planet.

2. GMO products

Genetically modified crops have been around for a while but have unfortunately had a less than stellar reputation. However, with increasing vagrancies in the weather caused by climate change, regular crops have been failing. With an imbalance in



the overall ecosystem, even natural ecosystems like forests are facing threats from pests, parasites, and diseases. Genetically modified plant species can be created to be hardy in the face of environmental and ecological changes and reach the objectives of sustainable development.

While this solution does help with creating hardy forests and crops, this solution cannot be one of the only objectives of sustainable development. This step can be used for disaster management, but if we are serious about having a habitable environment, then we must focus on the larger picture of reversing the effects of climate change.

3. Using arid regions for tree growth

The planet has natural pockets of rich ecological diversity, which are highly conducive to the growth of trees. These regions typically enjoy high rainfall and fertile land. However, these natural pockets are being seriously threatened by human development and encroachment.

A newer system that is being tried and tested involves growing trees in arid and semi-arid regions by using new innovations in technology. Land life company, located in the Netherlands, has come up with a system where trees can be grown with only a fraction of the water required usually. In fact, the number they provide is 25L during a tree's entire lifetime. This naturally gives new trees a higher chance of survival than with conventional growing methods.

4. Data and remote sensing

Those steeped in conservation are now employing a combination of data sets and remote sensing in order to keep track of



ecosystems. The data collected is then plugged into existing data sets, which allows other bio-researchers and conservationists to access. Remote sensing comes in useful in remotely located regions or rugged terrains and even in areas where human resources are hard to train and organise.

Reforestation exercises use remote sensing to keep track of newly-planted trees and collect data from the region. If they discover that a particular species of pests are destroying the habitat, then the right steps can be taken to ensure its survival.

A region that has pre-recorded data concerning the number of trees, density, types and numbers of animals, access to natural water through the year, and more, can help other researchers to assess the region for new conservation actions. If they deem that a recently reforested area makes for an ideal habitat for an endangered species, then they can proceed to test their theory.

5. Apps for the public

Global environmental conservation is now in a place where any effort will be successful only with the support and cooperation of individuals. Specially designed apps can help in understanding the exact conditions of the environment and how they can contribute their own.

Data sets that are being updated continuously in real-time, existing laws, new policies, the effects of corporate actions, and more, can be accessed easily by regular people. This knowledge can help them realise the work that is happening on the ground and what is required. More aware citizens' results in a government that is more invested in creating actual change and work with the aim of sustainable development.



Conclusion

Technology has been working hand in hand with conservationists in the fight to reverse environmental change. With advancements in water consumption of trees and the use of existing technology like remote sensing and drone technology, there are several ways in which technology is already proving to be useful in nature conservation. More philanthropic organisations are teaming up with tech giants to develop effective ground-level environmental sustainability projects. One of the most notable names in this segment is the Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation, who have been putting to use their accessibility and knowledge of tech to environmental causes.

EcoMatcher is also one of the top reforestation companies that help companies set up corporate tree planting as a part of their business in order to bolster tree conservation. They help provide overarching initiatives at multiple levels in order to decrease or offset the negative impact businesses might have on the environment. Some of their services include gifting trees to customers, setting up a tree for employees in the company's forest, and using trees as reward and loyalty programs. They allow businesses to track and monitor tree planting or adoption, which creates more education and awareness.

There is no reason to assume that successful technologies are only a detriment to the environment. By spearheading innovation and targeting it towards sustainability and environmental change, there's no stopping the progress towards climate action and sustainable development goals and targets.



20

Feel-Good Environmental News in 2019





With sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg's call for action by the world's governments to protect and preserve the planet not just for us but also for the future generations, no other time in history has had as much discourse, or action, on developing climate change solutions. Even in today's burning situation, a large majority of people consists of climate change deniers. However, the tide has definitely turned towards making climate change a priority. All the Democrat candidates for the 2020 election in the US have a plan to work effectively towards reducing carbon emissions, reversing environmental change, protecting and increasing green cover, and establishing green solutions for energy needs. Regular folks, too, are doing their bit in every way possible, whether it is reducing the use of plastic bags, or doing away with plastic straws, or choosing public transport over their cars. While there is a long way to go to ensure sustainable development goals and targets, there are plenty of environmentally sustainable practices that are making the headlines.



Here's looking back at the most feel-good environment news of this year.

Single-use Plastics Ban in the EU

One of the biggest steps taken towards reaching the global sustainability goals of the Paris Accord is the ban of single-use plastics like bags, cups, plates, spoons, and more by the European Union. With such a large market making a big commitment like this, other nations are sure to follow suit sooner or later. Apart from reducing the load of landfills, this effort will also help the EU save almost \$25 billion in terms of environmental damage.

#TeamTrees Initiative

A great example of how social media can be leveraged into becoming a champion for reversing climate change is the #TeamTrees initiative. Started by YouTuber Mr. Beast, this simple fundraising effort has gone and taken a life of its own. The effort asks viewers to donate money in order to raise \$20 million by the end of the year to plant 20 million trees with the help of the Arbor Day Foundation, which is one of the largest non-profit organisations who believe that reforestation and climate change are interconnected and are committed to tree plantation in order to increase the green cover. This initiative has seen many big YouTubers like PewDiePie, Jeffrey Star, and Mark Rober pledging big sums of money to the cause. The biggest news? Elon Musk has committed to pledging \$1 million.

Protecting the Fish

It's no secret that our oceans and its creatures are under severe threat by human actions. In light of dwindling sea life, Canada



has now declared that any and all industrial activities, like gas and oil production, mining, and dumping waste, in protected marine areas around the Canadian coast as illegal. This will allow entire ecosystems to flourish, giving a boost to marine life in these regions.

Don't break the Law in NYC

New York City is one of the first major cities of the world to pass legislation which puts sustainable development goals at the centre of the city's growth trajectory. NYC is looking to create a system where large cities are no longer a detriment to the environment. The legislation is a collection of 7 bills, collectively known as the Climate Mobilisation Act. One of the biggest mandates requires buildings that are bigger than 25,000 sq. ft. to cut down their emissions by 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. Other aspects of the legislation include green roofs and alternate energy options like wind turbines.

Saving the Elephants

Zambia is home to these beautiful, gentle giants who have faced years of poaching that seemed to have no end in sight. However, this year, with efforts from the Zambian government and local authorities, the region has seen elephant poaching fall down by half. This celebratory news was made possible by several local initiatives to educate the populations living around the elephants' habitat and providing other financial alternatives to poaching. Saving the elephants in Zambia has shown us how much we can achieve when we all work together.



Yay for the Parrots!

The Kakapo parrot is a flightless parrot native to New Zealand. This parrot species is different from the types more common in other parts of the world: it is cute and chubby! Unfortunately, this once common bird has had its numbers dwindle drastically due to hunting. Currently, only 147 adults remain. However, this year, the species has had a bumper breeding season, with more than 60 chicks expected to join the ranks of adulthood. These birds will live in a predator-free environment, giving this wonderful species more than a fight chance of survival.

Shelling out on Trees

The large oil and gas company Shell might not be the most obvious choice for a natural environment protector. However, this company is trying to do precisely that. The company has pledged to use \$300 million on corporate tree planting with one of the largest projects located in Spain and The Netherlands. This initiative is an interesting take on environmentally sustainable business practices since there is a global push towards developing and incorporating sustainable and renewable sources of energy. However, any effort towards mass tree plantation is appreciated on this list.

Meat-free Burgers

One of the biggest contributors to environmental change is the meat industry. Studies have shown that rearing animals meant for food consumption requires more water than any other type of food category. Here is the good news. McDonald's is now testing out a plant-based meat alternative that lets meat lovers enjoy the taste of a regular burger entirely guilt-free.



Green Burials

Paris has become one of the first cities to open a cemetery that is dedicated entirely to green burials. This option gives people peace of mind that their final resting place will not contribute to pollution. The cemetery does not allow stone headstones and will have wooden markers instead, which will be replaced every ten years. Caskets and urns will have to be made from biodegradable material, and bodies will have to be wrapped in natural fibres.

No more Gas?

This year, Honda has made a big promise to all its customers. The Japanese car manufacturing company has pledged to stop making gas-only vehicles in Europe by 2022, giving people a sustainable option for their gas-guzzling cars.

Conclusion

There are many companies and government agencies that are dedicated to preserving the environment. Initiatives like EcoMatcher allow companies to integrate tree planting with their CSR. People have the choice of opting for the trees for sale or for replenishing a tree plantation. With so many options, we can all work together to stop climate change in its tracks.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bas Fransen is a former Vice President of IBM and ASML and currently is a serial entrepreneur and the founder of EcoMatcher. Bas is passionate about using technologies and creative business models to combat the climate crisis. He looks at the climate crisis (and the fight against it) as a business opportunity and an avenue for innovation. Bas has a Master's degree from the Delft University of Technology and was a former officer of the Royal Dutch Navy. He lives with his wife, Karming, in Hong Kong.

His LinkedIn profile is [linkedin.com/in/basfransenhk/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/basfransenhk/).

You can contact Bas Fransen directly at bas@ecomatcher.com.

ABOUT ECOMATCHER

EcoMatcher plants trees and complete forests with vetted foundations from around the world that specialize in tree planting. Through technology, EcoMatcher knows everything of every tree planted, offering full transparency. One can virtually travel to every tree and companies can integrate transparent tree planting into their businesses.

Here's what you can do with EcoMatcher:

- Rewards: use trees as a reward for finishing a market survey;
- Gifting: use trees as a meaningful corporate gift;
- Employee engagement: gift every employee a tree from the company forest;



- Transparent carbon offsetting: offset your carbon footprint with a precise number of trees of which you know everything;
- E-commerce plugins: Offer trees at check-out of any e-commerce platform enabling customers to offset the carbon footprint of their online purchase;
- In-App Purchases: Offer trees as an 'in-app' purchase in games, giving the gamer digital game benefits, as well contributing to a greener world.

EcoMatcher is a certified B corporation based in Hong Kong and Bandung.

For more information on EcoMatcher visit
www.ecomatcher.com

