

BUSINESS GETTING TO GRIPS WITH REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINT

Increasing energy efficiency is top of the agenda for businesses seeking to reduce their carbon footprint.

That is one of the findings from the latest Goldblatt McGuigan Business Survey. Of the 111 companies from across the manufacturing, service and construction sectors surveyed last month, 82% of respondents have actively undertaken energy efficiency measures to offset their carbon footprint while 69% have encouraged their workforce to reduce their carbon impact and 53% have sought to reduce carbon emissions from their vehicles and generators. Only 5% of companies surveyed have yet to take action on carbon footprint reduction.

And the level of interest and activity amongst the businesses in reducing their environmental impact is encouraging with 79% of respondents stating that they were either Very Active (26%) or Quite Active (53%). Looking specifically at where reducing their organisation's carbon footprint rated in importance within their business objectives 22% of companies said it was Very High 22% whilst 29% said it was Quite High.

Of the specific actions taken to encourage their employees to reduce their environmental impact, tuning off electronics and appliances at the plug was the most common measure with 89% of respondents now doing this, followed closely by the provision of recycling facilities in the workplace by 88%. The use of teleconferencing to reduce travel has been used by 56% of companies while encouraging the use of car-pooling (38%) and home-working where possible (20%) highlights the significant impact that businesses recognise reducing car travel can have on their carbon footprint.

Commenting on the findings of the Survey, Michael Clarke, Director, Management Consultancy, Goldblatt McGuigan said that it was clear that the need to reduce the environmental impact of their activities was an increasingly important issue for businesses locally and that the key areas of energy consumption, waste management and road transport were the paramount in their considerations.

"It is interesting to see the importance that companies have placed on reducing car and other road vehicle journeys. Initiatives such as teleconferencing, car-sharing and home working are obviously making a difference to the way companies do business and the way in which their employees commute to and from work.

Responsible and sustainable environmental management is of paramount importance to every business person and the fact that 72% of the companies surveyed state that they have a documented Environmental Management Policy

in place should give encouragement to the Government and the environmental NGO Sector that the environmental responsibility messages that they are promoting are getting through to the coal face” said Michael Clarke.

The Goldblatt McGuigan Business Survey sample comprises larger businesses typically employing well in excess of 10 from across the manufacturing, services and construction sectors. The Survey was conducted by telephone by Perceptive Insight Market Research.

What The Companies Said:

William McCall, Director, J & W McCalls Supplies (NI) Ltd:

“In today’s changing world the issue of carbon footprint emissions is more prevalent than ever. At McCalls we have in place an environmental policy which states our commitment to improve our own carbon footprint. We are doing this through a number of initiatives including the collection of waste wood, metal, cardboard and plastic for recycling via suitable balers on site. We have also considered our energy usage and have introduced a ‘switch off’ policy on lights when not in use, complemented with more energy efficient light bulbs. As a business we have already seen the financial benefits, plus we know we are making a contribution to the care of the environment.”

Neil Rea, Environment Manager, Nicholson & Bass Ltd:

“The effects of climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions are becoming increasingly visible. Recent localised flooding and intensifying storms are just some of the weather phenomena that remind us how our climate is changing. At Nicholson and Bass we are aware of the impact our activities have upon the environment. By reducing our own carbon footprint we are setting an example to our customers, and our suppliers. By pulling together, we can make a difference.”

John Woods, Managing Director, Linwoods:

"In today's business environment we cannot continue to consume fossil fuels at the current rate, especially due to their harmful polluting effect. Business leaders definitely need to take into consideration and combat the sharp rise in Carbon Dioxide emissions in order to build a sustainable future."

Tom Bell, Managing Director, TNT UK & Ireland:

"Global warming is the biggest issue the world is facing today. As a transportation company TNT contributes to this problem. That is why we are constantly looking for ways in which to minimise our CO2 emissions. Our new global environmental initiative - Planet Me - is designed to cut our carbon footprint and encourage our employees, customers and suppliers to adopt green 'best practice' in all that they do.

"We've already trialled the world's largest zero emission electric vehicle in London and we're hopeful there will be dozens of similar vehicles on the streets of every urban area of Northern Ireland in the not too distant future. Our goal is to become the cleanest, greenest express delivery company on the planet."

Ciaran Murtagh, Deputy General Manager, Slieve Donard Resort and Spa:

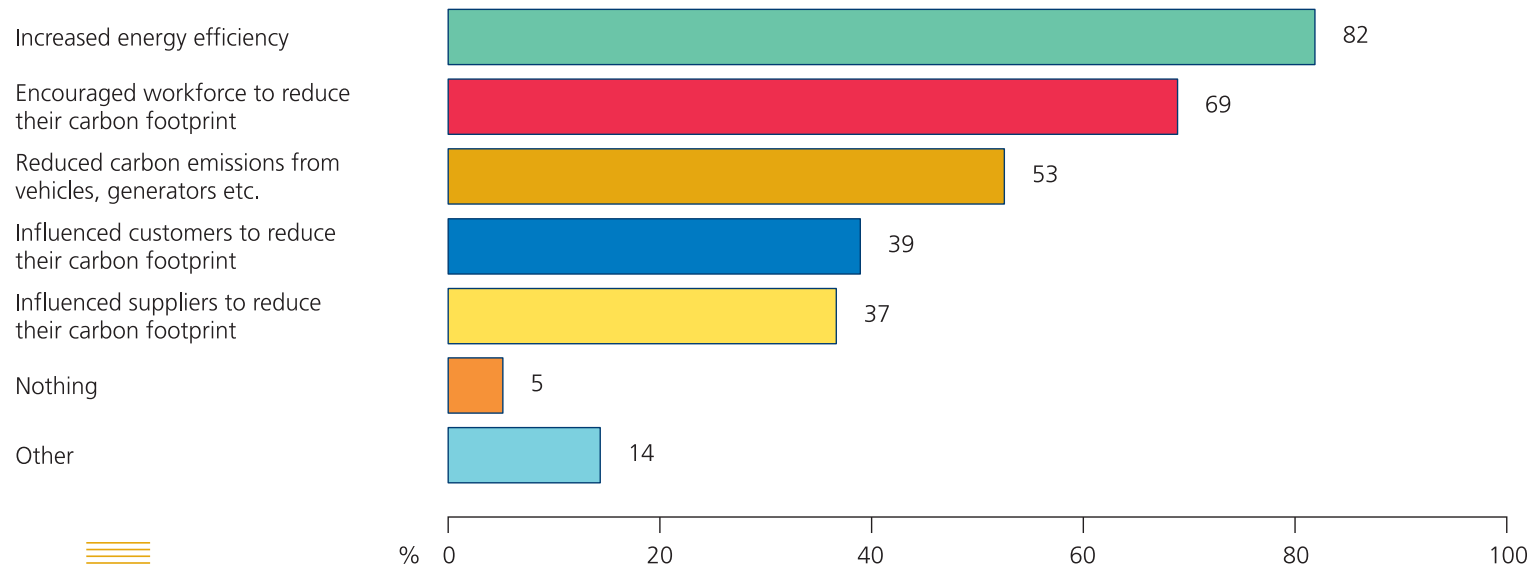
"At the Slieve Donard Resort & Spa are aware that Tourism can place heavy additional stresses on an already seriously overstretched environment by its greater consumption, waste production and pollution. Thus there is a very urgent need for responsible and sustainable use of resources to reduce, recycle and reuse within the tourism industry. We are currently bailing all plastics, cardboard and paper, composting all food waste to make compost and crushing all glass thus trying to ensure that as a major employer we are creating an ethos of awareness amongst both staff and customers. With this in mind we are aiming to reach our target of 95% recyclable waste within the next three months"

Dr Brian Gregory, Sustainability Director, RPS Consulting Engineers:

"Climate change is underway. For us it is a business imperative to reduce our carbon footprint - directly through our own activities and indirectly through the professional services we provide. Why? Because our staff expect it and our clients expect it. Carbon intensive practices are no longer an option".

Goldblatt McGuigan Business Sector Survey

Which of the following activities, if any, has your company undertaken in the last three years to offset its carbon footprint?



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Do you do any of the following to actively encourage your employees to reduce their carbon footprint?

