

SAMPLE CHAPTER

ECO FRIENDLY IS ECO-NOMIC

Of course, you knew that-didn't you?

Let's be frank. Most businesses don't simply implement better environmental practices because they just want to be a 'do-gooder'-but increasingly think of doing good for the environment to boost their bottom line.

Don't just take my word for it. Here's a short excerpt from the 2007 Harvard Business Review in an article by Charles Lockwood, titled 'Building the Green Way':

'Just 5 or 6 years ago, the term green building evoked visions of tie dyed granola munching denizens walking around barefoot on straw mats as wind chimes dangled near open windows. Today the term suggests lower overhead costs, greater employee productivity, less absenteeism and stronger employee attraction and retention....green is not simply getting respect; it is rapidly becoming a necessity.'

He goes on to claim that green buildings can also boost employee productivity up to 15% because they use materials that don't emit toxins.

The Qantas in flight magazine of February 2010 announced awards for excellence in sustainable tourism; consideration was given to more than just the buzz words of 'being green' or 'carbon neutral'. It is not the intent of this book to explore those obviously important aspects-although of course, the book is indeed printed on recycled paper! What was relevant about these awards in the context of value and cost were many of the initiatives being introduced that reduced cost without reducing value to the client.

The South Australian winner was the Hilton Hotel in Adelaide which had impressive major reductions in water, gas and electricity use despite an increase in hotel numbers. They engaged guests by donating \$5 to Trees for Life every time a room was not serviced. It's a great initiative but I suspect that if they also offered a \$5 reduction to the actual guest, they'd have even further savings on servicing fewer rooms each day. Hilton also recycled food with a local shelter and sourced 97% of the hotel's produce from South Australia.

The Victorian winner was the Alto Hotel which used 100 per cent wind-generated electricity and rain water for some cisterns, gardening and cleaning. They eliminated plastic bottles for toiletries and promoted seasonal foods. Yes, all of which makes them a good corporate citizen but also boosts their bottom line long term. The article goes on to quote one of Alto's directors who claims occupancy has been in excess of 90% during the height of the Global Financial Crisis-and that their fastest growth market is in corporate and government organisations with 'green procurement' policies; closely followed by environmentally conscious European leisure travellers.

Many hotels have now replaced small bottles of shampoo and lotions with dispensers; saving money and reducing waste. One establishment apparently saved nearly \$370,000 per year after installing dispensers at a cost of \$91,000

Eco-friendly makes long term eco-nomic sense. As someone who invested a considerable amount of money building an eco friendly home, my motive was not just philosophical to contribute in a small way to save the planet but to ultimately save on costs when I become a pensioner on a fixed income!