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Pearls of Wisdom Vol 2

Extracted from 'The Green Executive'

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“Forget saving the planet as the primary driver – focus on enhancing the client’s business, helping them do what they want to do, but do it better. Use this as the route to delivering green solutions.”

Chris Jofeh, Director, ARUP

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“Most Corporate Social Responsibility efforts will only deliver incremental change, but the low carbon economy requires step changes. You need to work out what those step changes mean for you in terms of opportunities.

Then you must take it to the top for buy-in and get it into the strategic planning process. That’s the key trick – if it is not in your strategic planning process then it will never be at the centre of your business.”

Nick Coad, Group Environment Director, National Express Group

“Don’t take no for an answer and don’t ever give up.

You have to be creative, for example in joining forces with other organizations as we did with fuel cells, or by innovative financial agreements with banks.

People will often tell you that things are not possible when they actually are. You need to be a fifth columnist and get in there and shake it about a bit.”

Martin Blake, Head of Sustainability, Royal Mail

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“Senior management commitment is essential – so build your senior executive relationships.

Be passionate, balanced with a good understanding of what’s right for the business. The worst thing that you could do is push for something that is good for the environment, but not good for the business or you lose credibility.

Recognize that it is a marathon, not a sprint. You will have moments of disappointment, but you’ve got to keep moving forward. ”

Roberta Barbieri, Global Environmental Project Manager, Diageo

“You’ve really got to understand the business case as it applies to your company and deliver clear business benefits.

Too often companies have jumped in without really understanding the connection to their core business. They receive plaudits from the outside world but sustainability hasn’t become properly embedded and it will fail.”

Chris Tuppen, (then) Chief Sustainability Officer, BT

“Traditional environmental programmes are not sustainability programmes, but bolt-ons designed to control emissions. What we need to do is build in changes to the essence of the business as that’s where sustainability lives.”

Dr James Hagan, Vice President of Sustainability and Environment, GlaxoSmithKline

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“You have to be clear in your own mind what you want to achieve – what is your vision for the future.

Then start your journey and don’t be put off – you will go down dead ends and find many obstacles – but stick with it - stickability is the key.”

Nigel Stansfield, Senior Director, InterfaceFLOR

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“Have a clear sustainability strategy which has synergy with your business model – for example ours is “no trade offs”. The mainstream consumer wants performance AND value AND sustainability. If you ask them to compromise on the first two for the sake of the last, only 5-10% of consumers will do so.”

Peter White, Director of Global Sustainability, Procter & Gamble

Gareth Kane's second book, *The Green Executive*, will be published by Earthscan in May 2011. The quotes in this document have been extracted from the 18 interviews with top sustainability executives that are included in the book.

For more information, subscribe to Gareth's blog at: <http://www.terrainfirma.co.uk/blog/>

