

## INSIDE

<b>Focus Report</b> . . . . .	1
Ten Tips for Using Social Media to Promote Corporate Social Responsibility	
<b>Perspectives</b> . . . . .	3
An Interview With Loren Steffy, Conclusion	
<b>Corporate Reporting</b> . . . . .	6
Brazil's Stock Exchange Recommends CSR Survey Shows Corporate Responsibility Rising Worldwide	
<b>Corporate Initiatives</b> . . . . .	8
Report Fishes for Best Practices in Asian Industry	
US Power Demand Falling	
Solar Power Competitive in Europe by 2013?	
<b>Product Stewardship and Takeback</b> . . . . .	10
More Consumers Get Charge From Recycling Batteries	
Metal Recovery System Creates Drinking Water	
<b>ISO Update</b> . . . . .	12
Responsible Recycling Spurs the Recycling Industry Operating Standards	
<b>Climate Change Update</b> . . . . .	15
Canada Pulls Out of Kyoto Protocol	
Tankers May Be Included in UK Carbon Emission Standards	
Australia Passes Carbon Tax	



## Focus Report

### Ten Tips for Using Social Media to Promote Corporate Social Responsibility

Social media is increasing its reach, but many businesses are unaware of how to incorporate this crucial tool into their overall marketing strategy, including corporate sustainability. According to recent research from ComScore, 82% of Internet users around the world use social networking sites. Twitter grew by 60% in 2011, and Facebook takes up one of every 7 minutes spent online globally.

In a recent Econsultancy poll, 91% of companies acknowledged the importance of social media in their marketing plans. The "State of Social 2011" report revealed that Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn were the most popular platforms for business. That said, what many companies want is some direction on how to use these sites to their best advantage. Following are some suggestions from The CarbonNeutral Company's digital marketing specialist, Paul Raybould.

1. *Create a Profile.* Decide how your company's social media campaign will be carried out. Who will manage it? Does that person or department require guidelines for appropriate representation? By following companies and brands similar to your own, you can get an idea of what you want to emulate and where your company could make improvements or changes. Follow companies you like in other industries to get inspiration. Finally, think about which social media channels work best for you. Business-to-business access may be

better on LinkedIn, while Twitter might reach more potential customers.

2. *Identify Relevant Content.* Define your target audience and decide what information your customers would like. You want them to follow you, like your content, and share it to get the biggest reward for your effort. Can you vary content across channels, such as creating a short video?
3. *Establish Your Expertise.* Forums and groups, such as the ones on LinkedIn, allow you to become known as an expert. Corporate blogs give you a forum to post environmental awards, and you can include key players by spreading authorship throughout staff. Beware the pitfall of turning LinkedIn or Twitter into a sales channel, which leads to a loss of followers and, ultimately, getting banned for spamming.
4. *Listen and Respond.* Critical to social media is the open channel of communication with your followers. Use this opportunity to find customers who love your company and industry leaders.

Engage with them whenever possible, and observe what they're saying to get a feel for their needs and interests. Would your business benefit by having a Facebook account focused on customer service?

5. *View Market Trends and Competitors.* Gain insight into your competitors by keeping an eye on their social media efforts. How are they promoting environmental sustainability? Does your own program need to advance to keep up with industry standards, or should you be broadcasting your own achievements more often or on more platforms?
6. *Use Hashtags.* Twitter can be overwhelming if you've never used it, but hashtags sort content for individuals and organizations. You can search #environment or #sustainability, for example, to find relevant content. Conversely, you should include hashtags in your tweets to increase the likelihood that others will find your content.
7. *Maximize Search Engine Optimization (SEO).* Links from social media to Web

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