

BRE

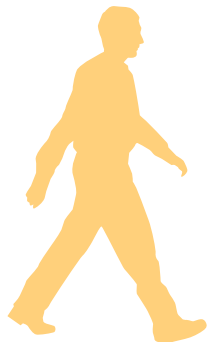
thinking business space

benefiting from more socially responsible decisions



foreword

It is good business to be a good business



The IoD's view is that business is about sustainable success. This is only achievable if you make responsible decisions. Responsible decisions extend beyond short-term profitability, particularly when the decision is one you will literally have to live with for many years. You want the best performance from your staff, and for them to stay with you. You want the lifetime costs of your premises to be as low as possible. You want your energy costs to be reduced. You want your business to have a high reputation. These all contribute to sustainable success and they are all elements of socially responsible decision-making. The two are inextricably linked.

You spend your life making business decisions and are used to assessing all of the factors that affect the outcome of the decisions of your core business. But some decisions you only face occasionally. For most businesses, decisions about premises are like that. Usually this is a big decision with high costs if you get it wrong.

This guide has succeeded in bringing together the factors you should consider and advice on how to address them in a way that is relevant to all sizes and types of organisation. Use it to help you get the best outcome. It is good business to be a good business.

A stylized, handwritten signature in orange ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Peter', located below the text of Patricia Peter.

Patricia Peter

Head of Corporate Governance
Institute of Directors

Buildings have responsibilities. They have relationships with the people that use them, drive past them and clean them. They impact on the ecological environment and form the bulk of our built environment. They represent still, after thousands of years, man's biggest creative activity on this planet - and are now one of the biggest polluters.

When architects, owners and builders make a building, they are willing into existence a structure which will have power to change people and affect the world. If you build, or plan to, this booklet has one clear message: build with care and thought and respect for that power.

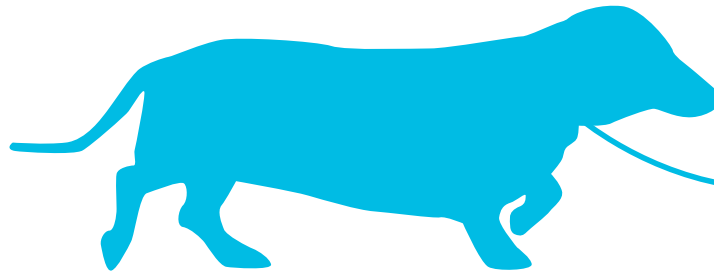
A handwritten signature in orange ink, appearing to read 'Kevin McCloud', located below the text of Kevin McCloud.

Kevin McCloud

Designer, author and presenter
of Grand Designs and the Stirling
Prize for Channel 4

new premises:
your impact on people
and the environment

significantly
reduce running costs,
improve staff morale
and have a positive
effect on your
company image



Social responsibility is about understanding how your decisions affect people (e.g. your staff, clients, neighbours, the wider public) and also the environment. It involves taking an open and honest approach, maximising the benefits that your choices can bring and minimising any negative impacts you may have. It involves going beyond legal requirements and accepted codes of practice.

The choices you make when considering new premises are vital. A good choice, made with social responsibility in mind, can:

- Significantly reduce future running costs.
- Lead to more effective working.
- Improve staff morale and retention.
- Have a positive effect on company image and reputation.

‘Social responsibility is about getting business benefits from good citizenship.’ (Small Business Service)

There are a great many things to consider when procuring business space, for example:

- Your real accommodation needs (are new premises needed or could you reorganise or refurbish your existing space?).
- The budget (short-term and whole life costs).
- Risks (impacts on clients, suppliers and staff; future investment).
- The workspace and facilities.
- The location.
- Local amenities/accessibility.

This booklet shows how to approach these, and other decisions in a socially responsible way, in order to achieve long-term benefits.

social responsibility is becoming increasingly important to successful businesses. Does your business take its social responsibility seriously?

Do you:

yes no

- Have an environment, human rights or social responsibility policy?**
- Have someone responsible for social responsibility or environmental issues?**
- Invest in your staff? (E.g. do you have 'Investors in People' accreditation? Do you provide a good level of training for staff, and respect their work/life balance?)**
- Minimise environmental impacts such as energy consumption and waste?**
- Donate to charity/get involved in community projects?**

If you answered 'yes' to most of these questions, this booklet will help you to think about how to reflect your company culture in your choice of premises and reap the rewards of doing so.

If you answered 'no' to most of the questions, does this truly reflect your business aspirations? Companies often take the opportunity of moving to new premises to review their approach to business; this booklet will help you to think about what could be achieved from your new business space.

decision-making

more socially
responsible
decision-making:
how to get started



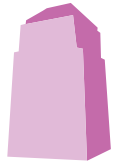
Investing time and resources early on in the decision-making process will pay dividends:

- It has been estimated that the cost of operating business premises over a 20-year period (heating, lighting, repairs, etc) is likely to be 50 times higher than the cost of planning a move and the design of new premises.
- More significant than this are the salary costs over the same period, which some estimate can be up to 2,000¹ times the cost of initial planning and design.

When placed in this context, the benefits of good design, and choosing premises that are efficient to run are clear. Taking a socially responsible approach to your decisions will help you to maximise benefits in the long term.

On the next page are listed some of the things you should consider when planning for future business accommodation needs. Different businesses have differing issues to consider – add to the table any additional considerations that are particularly relevant to your business.

¹ The long-term costs of owning and using buildings, Evans, Haryott, Royal Academy of Engineering (1998), and Richard Saxon, Be Chairman, Povey Lecture (2003)



relocate, refurbish or new building?

Which option would provide:

- The best value for money in terms of whole life costs?
- The most efficient working environment?
- The least disruption to staff, clients and your business?
- The most sustainable environmental option?
-
-
-
-



deciding on a location

Which option would:

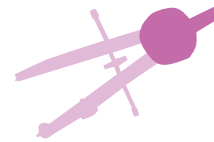
- Cause least upheaval for staff (e.g. avoiding relocation, enabling the shortest journey to work, or enabling staff to live locally)?
- Provide the best opportunity to support the local economy, community and environment?
- Be most easily accessible with good public transport links?
-
-
-



choosing a team

Which potential advisors/construction team/property agent:

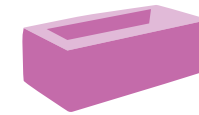
- Is registered with/nominated by their professional institution?
- Has demonstrable experience of considering social and environmental issues?
- Is impartial and you feel you can trust?
-
-
-



building design

Which option would:

- Provide an environment most appropriate to your business needs?
- Provide a healthy indoor environment?
- Be most energy efficient?
- Include 'green' building materials and internal finishes and furniture?
- Be most accessible (e.g. for people with disabilities)?
-
-
-



during construction/refurbishment

Which construction/refurbishment team would:

- Cause the least disruption (e.g. noise, dust)?
- Help maintain a good relationship with the local community?
- Have a good health and safety record?
- Support effective commissioning of the building?
- Minimise time and material wastage, and deliver on time and to budget?
-
-
-



during occupation

Will you:

- Ensure that systems (e.g. heating, lighting) are operating as intended to ensure optimum performance and efficiency?
- Carry out a post-occupancy evaluation to identify areas for improvement?
- Act on the findings of the post-occupancy evaluation², which can lead to further benefits?
-
-
-

² A post occupancy evaluation involves gathering feedback on the building from users, 6–12 months after moving in

who to involve

who to involve in your
decision-making and
how this can benefit
your business



When choosing new premises there are many social and environmental issues to consider. Be clear from the start what you wish to achieve and which issues are the most important for your business to address. In order to do this, think about where your activities will have the biggest impact.

Consider the people that are likely to be most affected by your choice of premises and which environmental and social issues are likely to be of most concern to them. You may find it useful to use the following list as a starting point, and rank the people listed in order of importance to your business. This will help you to decide where to focus attention, particularly where there are conflicting interests.



people who may be affected by your business space decisions include:

rank

- Your staff
- Your clients
- Your suppliers
- Your investors

rank

- The local community (including groups such as schools, pensioners, groups, special interest groups)
- Other local businesses
- Your construction team

rank

- The local planning authority
- The wider public
-
-

the benefits of involving some of these people:



Staff

Staff are a key group to consider. Any major changes to people's working environment will affect how well they perform. If staff are involved in decision-making at an early stage, they are more likely to be positive about the change, and can provide useful input.

- Major office refurbishments can increase staff productivity by up to 70%; smaller changes, such as changing lighting installations, can improve productivity by over 20%³. Spending time to ensure you have the best design will bring long-term benefits.
- 78% of employees would prefer to work for an ethical company than to receive a higher salary⁴. Businesses are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the workplace in attracting and retaining high-calibre staff.
- Experience has shown that involving the person responsible for the operation and maintenance of business premises in decision-making can help avoid expensive mistakes.



Business clients and customers

Taking account of your clients' interests will improve your corporate image and will help to attract and retain business.

- 44% of the British public believe that it is very important to their purchasing decisions that a company shows a high degree of social responsibility⁵. 58% of the public across Europe feel that industry and commerce do not currently pay enough attention to their social and environmental responsibilities. Clients are therefore likely to be interested in the social and environmental considerations you make when procuring your new premises.
- Designing an appropriate indoor environment can be of great benefit, e.g. increases of up to 40% in retail sales have been achieved by increasing natural daylighting in shops⁶.



Local community

Any building work can cause short-term noise, dust and dirt, and it is beneficial to get your neighbours on side before any disputes occur. Moving to an existing building may still cause concern amongst local residents and businesses, e.g. is your move likely to increase traffic, parking or noise in the area? Think about creating opportunities for the local economy through employment and sourcing local suppliers and services.

A community is made up of many disparate groups and it may be worthwhile to get involved with high-profile groups such as schoolchildren or local wildlife groups. People sometimes feel threatened by change in their area and often need to be reassured.

- Involving the local community, taking account of their concerns and keeping them informed of progress can enhance your company's reputation, result in fewer complaints, lead to a smoother planning process and improved long-term relationships.
- The RIBA Community Architecture Group suggests that, as a guideline, 1% of the total cost of any development should be allocated to community involvement in design and development.

³ Franklin and Andrews, www.franklinandrews.com ⁴ Cherson Group, 2001, www.cherenson.com

⁵ Annual CSR survey, MORI, 2002, and MORI European study on CSR ⁶ California Board of Energy Efficiency, 1999

good practice example: Bennetts Associates

Bennetts Associates reconstructed and extended an old print-works to create their new office (accommodating 45 people) in London. This contributed towards the social and economic fabric of the area, which had deteriorated over a number of years.

What they did

- Staff were kept involved through a series of workshops at the briefing stage to identify the working environment they needed.
- The local community was kept informed of the company's plans, and any changes that were made.
- The company was considerate towards neighbours during construction by ensuring the construction team kept noise and light pollution to a minimum.
- A post-occupancy evaluation was carried out after the building had been occupied for a year, where staff identified areas for improvement.

Benefits

- The indoor environment facilitates effective working, and staff enjoy working in the building.
- It pays dividends to have the local community on side – local residents call the police if there is any suspicious activity when the office is closed.

'We made sure everyone in the company was involved in decisions relating to our new office – if social responsibility and environmental issues had been left to one person they would have become a side-issue.'

Architect, Bennetts Associates

**More information is available from: www.bennettsassociates.com; Tel 020 7520 3300;
E-Mail peter.runacres@bennettsassociates.com**

choosing the right advisors

choosing the right advisors is of key importance to ensure that you get the space that is best for your business and for the people your business impacts on

Whether you are building new premises, carrying out a refurbishment, or choosing space in an existing building, the following questions will help you to choose the right advisors. It is important to choose advisors you will be able to trust, with whom you can build a good working relationship, and who understand your requirements, as well as providing impartial advice. The right advisors can provide valuable advice to aid socially responsible decision-making.

if you are building new premises, or carrying out a major refurbishment

Questions to help you choose the right advisors, consultants or contractors:

- How have they taken social and environmental considerations into account on past projects? (Can they provide a range of examples?)
- Can they supply the contact details of past clients as references? (Ask for several local names, and contact these people to find out what they thought about the service they were given and the premises they achieved.)
- Do they have a social or environmental policy that informs their approach to work?
- Do they have ISO14001 (Environmental Management System), ISO9001 (Quality Management System) or Investors in People accreditations? Do contractors register their sites with the Considerate Constructors Scheme? Have designers used BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) or Design Quality Indicators?

Although formal policies and systems indicate that a company takes social and/or environmental concerns seriously, examples of past work and references are often the most important thing to consider.

if you are planning to move to new rented accommodation

Questions to help you choose the right agent:

- Do they hold details of environmental features or environmental performance of the business space? (For example, energy efficiency, water-efficient features and whether the building has been BREEAM-assessed.)
- Can they provide details of whether the landlord has responsibility for paying utility bills or whether the tenant will pay these directly?
- Can they provide details of what typical utility bills cost?
- Can they provide details of whether the landlord has a social or environmental policy, and if so, what these include?
- Can they supply the contact details of other tenants in the building? (Contact these people to find out what they think about the social responsibility performance of the premises and landlord, e.g. energy and water efficiency, green transport plan for the building, facilities for staff, etc.)
- Are they able to advise you on any other aspects of social responsibility relating to your choice of premises?
- Association of Environment Conscious Building (AECB): www.aecb.net

more information on choosing advisors

- Association of Wildlife Trust Consultancies (AWTC): www.awtc.co.uk; Tel 01905 754 909
- BREEAM: www.breeam.org.uk; Tel 01923 664 462
- Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB): www.ciob.org.uk; Tel 01344 630 700 (see in particular the Chartered Building Company Scheme)
- Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE): www.cibse.org; Tel 020 8675 5211
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA): www.architecture.com; Tel 020 7580 5533
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS): www.rics.org; Tel 0870 333 1600

good practice example: Renewable Energy Systems (RES)

Renewable Energy Systems (RES) redeveloped an existing building for their new head office (accommodating 100 people) in Hertfordshire.

What they did

- The building was designed to minimise energy through natural daylighting, efficient solar orientation and insulation.
- It has 170m² of solar panels for electricity and water heating. There is also a wind turbine on site.
- RES consulted widely with local groups before applying for planning permission for the wind turbine: they spent time explaining the plans to individual householders and kept key groups (such as the residents' committee and parish council) informed of the plans. They also talked to the planning officer to find out what they would like to see, and gave the council planning committee a tour around the site.
- RES involved the local community, inviting them to take part in a competition to name the new building.

Benefits

- The renewable technologies on site produce enough electricity to provide all of the offices' heat, power and cooling needs. Excess electricity is sent to the national grid.
- Local communities and other groups were keen to learn about the plans for the site. Because they were kept well informed, there was no opposition to features such as the wind turbine.
- RES did not encounter any problems in gaining planning permission for the turbine, despite the site being overlooked by housing and being close to the motorway.

'It is important to choose your design and construction team carefully – we learnt a lot about sustainable buildings from our architect and mechanical and electrical engineer. There is a lot that can be done to make a building more sustainable that doesn't cost extra, and can save money in the long term.'

Project Manager, Renewable Energy Systems

More information is available from: www.res-ltd.com;
Tel 01923 299 242; E-mail nick.bristow@res-ltd.com

what to consider

which issues to
consider and how
to address them

keep all key people informed of your plans and involve them in decisions

involving people

Keep all key people informed of your plans. Talking to people and involving them in your decisions encourages their buy-in and may raise issues that you would not otherwise have considered until it was too late. This will help to avoid problems later on. The way in which you involve people will be dependant on the type of premises you are procuring and the type of impacts you expect to have.

Ask your advisors about:

- How to involve people in your decision-making; this may include:
 - Giving information – keeping people informed (newsletters, public notices, staff notice boards, meetings, etc).
 - Gathering information – finding out people's concerns and ideas (focus groups, questionnaires, a comments box or e-mail address, etc).
 - Consultation – a two-way discussion, aiming for a win:win outcome (interactive workshops or meetings, information leaflets with space for recipients to respond, etc).
- The time needed for effective consultation and information-gathering (for the process to be as beneficial as possible, it should not be rushed).
- Responding to feedback.

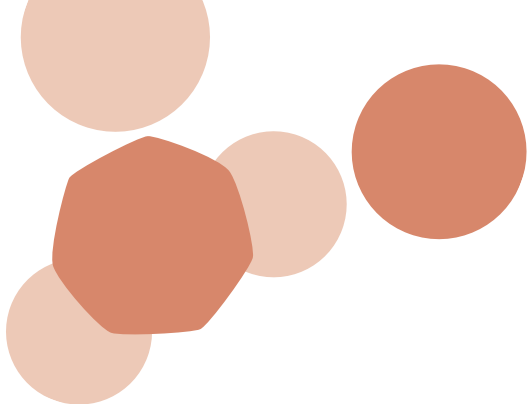
Who will benefit?

- Your business and the people you involve: increased trust, improved relationships and avoidance of uncertainty, conflict and problems.
- Your business, staff and customers: better, more appropriate premises.

'The feedback we receive from groups such as local communities is generally positive and can provide ideas that we incorporate into our projects. It is important to get the most detailed input that you can, and be ready to change your plans if necessary based on the feedback you receive.' (Development Manager, Grosvenor)

More information:

- Community Development Foundation: www.cdf.org.uk; Tel 020 7226 5375
- Economic and Social Research Council: www.esrc.ac.uk (particularly the communications toolkit); Tel 01793 413 000
- Neighbourhoods Initiative: www.nifonline.org.uk; Tel 0870 7700 339
- Working with the community, a best practice guide: www.brebookshop.com



consider how you can
contribute to the economy
and social fabric of the area
you are moving to

provide a healthy indoor
environment and facilitate
more effective working
through appropriate
design and layout

the area you are moving to

Consider how you can contribute to the economy and social fabric of the area you are moving to.

Ask your advisors about:

- Areas identified for regeneration and whether you could benefit from available grants.
- The measures you can take to increase security and reduce the opportunity for crime.
- Choosing a previously developed or contaminated site to build on, rather than an area of green space.

Who will benefit?

- Your business: reduced costs.
- The local community: increased investment into the area.

More information

- BRE: www.bre.co.uk
- English Partnerships: www.englishpartnerships.gov.uk; Tel 020 7881 1600
- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides details of regeneration programmes: www.odpm.gov.uk; Tel 020 7944 4400
- Your Regional Development Agency.

the indoor working environment

Provide a healthy indoor environment and facilitate more effective working through appropriate design and layout.

Ask your advisors about:

- Layout options (consider what would facilitate the best communication and productivity).
- Temperature (including temperature controls to provide comfortable and variable conditions).
- Adequate daylight (and minimisation of glare).
- Noise levels.
- Air quality inside the building (including humidity, ventilation and pollutants).

Who will benefit?

- Staff: a pleasant and healthier working environment.
- Your business: greater productivity of workers and a more suitable environment for clients.
 - Sick Building Syndrome has been identified in 30% of non-domestic buildings, and leads to sick leave, higher staff turnover, and lower productivity: avoiding this will bring real benefits.

More information

- BRE: www.bre.co.uk; Tel 01923 664 000
- BSRIA: www.bsria.co.uk; Tel 01344 465 526
- CIBSE: www.cibse.org; Tel 020 8675 5211

good practice example: Creekside Education Centre

Creekside Education Centre was built for Creekside Education Trust (a private, independent charity) in Deptford.

What they did

- The building is on a brown-field site.
- It was designed with a southerly orientation, plus thick wool insulation (a natural and sustainable material) and double glazing.
- Locally sourced recycled materials were used (including railway sleepers and crushed brick and concrete landscaping provided by a crusher on site).
- Rainwater collected from the roof is used to flush toilets.

Benefits

- Heating costs were kept down.
- Money was saved on purchasing and disposal of materials.
- Treated water consumption was minimised.
- The project has regenerated an area of disused, brownfield land.

'The area has been changed from an unattractive area, disliked by local communities to one that they can use and learn in'

Project Manager, Creekside Education Centre



**More information is available from: <http://ecs.lewisham.gov.uk/cet>;
Tel 020 8692 9922; E-mail creeksidecentre@yahoo.co.uk**

accessibility and transport

ensure that your premises have good access for all, minimise congestion and pollution from business travel



Ensure that your premises have good access for all. Maximise the opportunity to use public transport for travelling to/from your premises and minimise unnecessary commuting or business journeys (thus reducing congestion, noise, local air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions).

Ask your advisors about:

- Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Choosing a location that staff and clients can travel to easily, ideally by public transport.
- Choosing a location that has a range of amenities within walking distance (e.g. shops, a bank, etc).
- Facilities for cyclists (cycle storage, showers, changing rooms, lockers, etc).
- Green transport plans for the area/development/your company.

It may also be appropriate to consider options for flexible working hours and home-working.

Who will benefit?

- Local community: quieter, less polluted and congested local environment.
- Staff: easier journey to work, improved accessibility.
- Clients, suppliers and other building users: easier journey to the building, improved accessibility.
- The wider environment.

More information

- Department for Transport: www.dft.gov.uk
- Disability: Making Buildings Accessible – Special Report, 2nd Edition, Bright, K (2004) ISBN: 1-900648-84-9 (priced publication).
- Environment Agency (type 'green travel' into the site search engine): www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- Transport and Buildings: the environmental impact, BRE (1999) (a priced publication including case studies and useful background information): www.brebookshop.com; Tel 020 7505 6622
- www.sustrans.org.uk – free website, see 'press & information' and 'info & policy sheets' sections.

use materials that
have the least impact
on the environment,
minimise waste



choosing 'green' materials and reducing waste

Choose materials that will have least impact on the environment. This includes materials used in construction or refurbishment, furniture, paint, floor coverings, etc. Minimise the amount of waste produced, both during construction/refurbishment and once you have moved in.

Ask your advisors about:

- Minimising the amount of materials used (this includes thinking about alternatives to completely refitting a new premises when you move in, and designing for adaptability to reduce the need for future changes).
- Choosing materials with a low environmental impact.
- Choosing suppliers with good environmental credentials.
- Reusing materials.
- Using recycled materials.
- Sourcing materials locally.
- Providing space for recycling bins in the finished building.
- Reducing and recycling waste during construction (e.g. through separation of waste on site, which can reduce landfill costs).

Who will benefit?

- Your business: improved reputation, cost-saving through greater efficiency.
- Local suppliers: if materials are sourced locally.
- The wider environment.

More information

- Envirowise (help on improving profitability through reducing waste): www.envirowise.gov.uk
- Green Guide to Specification, ENVEST2 and Environmental Profiles (for help in specifying sustainable building materials): www.bre.co.uk/sustainable; Tel 01923 664 300
- SMARTWaste (waste management tools for use during construction): www.smartwaste.co.uk
- WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme): www.wrap.org.uk
- www.salvomie.co.uk (free materials information exchange).



impacts on the local environment

minimise noise
and pollution, protect
and enhance areas of
plant life and wildlife

Ask your advisors about:

- Minimising noise, dust and other pollution from your operations and during construction – ensure your contractor registers your site with the Considerate Constructors Scheme.
- Avoiding damage and disturbance to local wildlife and plant life.
- Managing/enhancing areas of wildlife and plant life on your site and creating new areas for wildlife (consider obtaining the advice of an ecological consultant).

Who will benefit?

- Your business: improved reputation; reduced risk of fines and bad publicity.
- Local community and environmental groups: a more pleasant local environment (leading to a better relationship with your company).
- Staff: pleasant surroundings; feel-good factor.

More information

- Association of Wildlife Trust Consultancies: www.awtc.co.uk
- Business and Biodiversity: www.businessandbiodiversity.org, or contact the Earthwatch Institute, Tel 01865 318 800, for a copy of their Business and Biodiversity booklet (2002).
- Considerate Constructors Scheme: www.ccscheme.org.uk
- Environment Agency: www.environment-agency.gov.uk; Tel 0845 933 3111
- UK Biodiversity: www.ukbap.org.uk



minimise the energy and water your building will consume when you move in

energy efficiency and saving water

Minimise the energy your building will consume when you move in. This will reduce running costs and cut your CO₂ emissions. Reduce the amount of treated water used in the building.

If you are moving to rented premises, find out whether you or your landlord will pay the utility bills. If you pay them directly, you will achieve much higher returns on your investment in energy and water efficiency, and there is a higher incentive for you to improve your performance in these areas.

Ask your advisors about:

- Energy:
 - landlord/tenant agreements.
 - improved insulation (especially in the loft/roof space.)
 - draught-proofing (especially around doors and windows). ‘Leaky’ buildings can cost 50% more to run than more air tight buildings; consider having an air-tightness test.
 - double or triple glazing.
 - efficient heating and cooling systems (including controls and zoning to allow more responsive systems.)
 - natural ventilation (instead of air-conditioning.)
 - energy-efficient lighting (including lighting controls and zoning); for example, replacing standard tungsten light bulbs with energy-saving bulbs will reduce energy use for lighting by 75%.
 - maximising natural light (which can reduce lighting costs by around 15%.)

– using a green tariff to supply your electricity.

- Water:

- water-efficient taps, showers and toilets.
- leak-detection.
- water control devices (e.g. proximity sensors).
- grey-water and rain-water recycling.

Who will benefit?

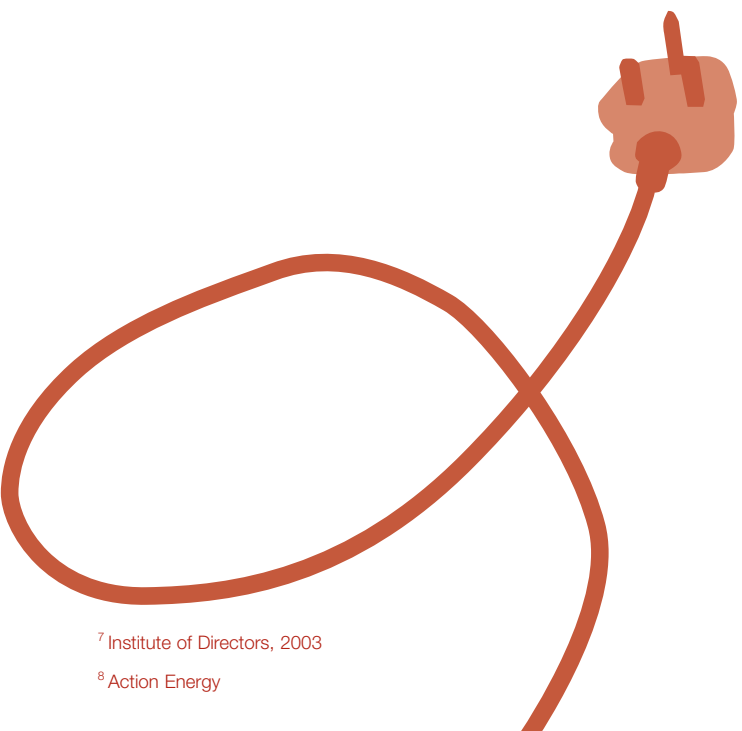
- Your business: improved reputation and benefits to your bottom line:
 - In a recent survey, 77% of IoD members agreed that they experienced business benefits from implementing policies to reduce CO₂ emissions⁷.
 - A 20% saving in energy consumption – easily achieved by many businesses – can have the same positive effect as a 5% increase in sales⁸.
- The wider environment.

More information

- Action Energy: www.actionenergy.org.uk/; Tel 0800 585 794
- BRE: www.bre.co.uk; Tel 01923 664 000
- Contact your local water company, or visit their website.
- Environment Agency: www.environment-agency.gov.uk; Tel 0845 933 3111

⁷ Institute of Directors, 2003

⁸ Action Energy



good practice example: BRE's Environmental Office building

BRE's Environmental Office Building (accommodating 100 staff) near Watford, was designed for energy efficiency and to improve working practices.

What they did

- A range of energy-efficient features was included in the building (natural ventilation rather than air-conditioning, solar shading, passive cooling and an efficient lighting system, amongst others).
- The building comprises mostly of open-plan office space (in contrast to the cellular offices previously used by occupants).
- A post-occupancy evaluation was carried out to identify areas for improvement once staff had been using the building for a year. This involved obtaining feedback from staff using questionnaires and interviews. The exercise was repeated after a further two years.

Benefits

- The office has the same level of comfort control as air-conditioned premises, but energy bills are around 70% lower.
- The low-energy design principles of the building have improved occupant comfort and productivity.
- Occupants feel that the office layout supports informal interaction and team-working.

'Build social responsibility considerations into the brief and cost plan from the start rather than adding it in later. Obtain advice up front on how to articulate your aims to the construction team'

Project Manager, BRE

More information is available from: www.bre.co.uk

additional information

key steps to
get started, and
where to find
more information



getting started

1. Decide what are your real accommodation needs.

Do you need new premises or could your current space be reorganised or refurbished? Consider which option (new-build, moving to existing premises, making changes to your existing space, etc) is likely to be the best choice for the business, the environment and the communities living near to your proposed site in the long-term.

2. Obtain appropriate and independent professional advice.

Choosing the right advisors can be key in ensuring the procurement of your business space goes smoothly and that you are happy with the result. It can be a false economy to try and do without professional advice, to choose consultants on the basis of initial cost alone, or to rely on those nominated by landlords, agents or contractors.

3. Be clear from the outset what you want to achieve in terms of social responsibility.

Build social responsibility into your accommodation requirements and into your long-term cost plans. Discuss your social responsibility requirements from the start with your advisors.

4. Speak to businesses that have recently procured new space,

particularly those with a concern for their social and environmental impacts. Ask what they did to address these issues. Ask about the benefits they achieved and any problems they encountered. Ask where they obtained professional advice and whether they were impressed with the service they received. It can also be useful to visit other business premises to get ideas on designs, layouts, etc.

5. Identify peoples' concerns and ideas before key decisions have been finalised.

Your staff, local residents, businesses and your clients can often come up with useful suggestions to consider. However, they are unlikely to be positive about being involved if decisions have already been made and there is little chance of their views being listened to.

6. Make decisions based on whole life costs rather than capital costs alone.

It is important to remember that lower costs up-front can often result in problems and higher costs in the long term.

7. Ensure that everyone involved in the project understands the benefits of social responsibility.

This will include the designers, construction/refurbishment team, developer or property agent as well as members of staff and others involved in decision-making. Their buy-in and commitment will ensure that momentum is maintained throughout and that you get the result you want.

8. Keep people informed of progress, decisions and changes as much as possible.

This will help to build trust, improve relationships and avoid uncertainty, conflict and problems.

once you have moved into your new business space

9. Ensure the building is operating as intended.

Collect feedback from staff on how satisfied they are with their working environment. Build checks into the maintenance schedule to ensure that the building systems (heating, lighting, etc) are working effectively. The benefits of choosing a building carefully, or investing in a good design, can be wasted if not used effectively.

more information

procurement of premises

people issues

- **British Council For Offices publications:** in particular BCO office fit-out guide, 2003: and Best Practice in the Specification For Offices, 2000: www.bco.org.uk
- **Building success – lessons from clients who got it right:** Construction Best Practice, 2002: download free of charge from www.constructingexcellence.org.uk; Tel 0845 605 5556
- **Clientzone:** a free website providing help for construction clients www.cbpp.org.uk/clientzone
- **How to use the construction industry successfully – a client guide:** CIOB, download free of charge from www.ciob.org.uk
- **Ten top tips for a successful procurement process – a local government task force guide:** download free of charge from www.constructingexcellence.org

- **Business in the Community:** www.bitc.org.uk; Tel 0870 600 2482
- **Considerate Constructors Scheme:** a voluntary code of practice that rewards contractors who look beyond their statutory duties in site management, health and safety and environmental awareness, www.ccscheme.org.uk
- **Engage – how to deliver socially responsible construction – a clients guide:** CIRIA, 2004: www.ciria.org
- **Encouraging responsible business:** Business Link, download free of charge from www.sbs.gov.uk



sustainability, environment and whole-life-costing

- **BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method):** a scheme for assessing and certifying the environmental performance of buildings, www.breeam.org; Tel 01923 664 462
- **Constructing for sustainability – a basic guide for clients and their professional advisors:** Construction Industry Council, 2003: www.cic.org.uk; Tel 020 7399 7400
- **Demonstrations of sustainability:** Constructing Excellence, 2003: download free of charge from www.cbpp.org.uk
- **Reputation, Risk and Reward – the business case for sustainability in the UK property sector:** a report by the Sustainable Construction Task Group, 2001: download free of charge from <http://projects.bre.co.uk/rrr/>
- **Sustainable Buildings: benefits for occupiers, BRE Information Paper IP13/03 Part 1:** www.brebookshop.com
- **Sustainable Construction Factsheet for Clients, and Corporate Social Responsibility Factsheet:** Constructing Excellence, 2004: download free of charge from www.constructingexcellence.org.uk; Tel 0845 605 5556
- **Whole Life Performance:** various tools and advice on whole-life-costing: www.bre.co.uk/services/whole_life_costs.htm

high quality design

- **Celebrating innovation:** CABE, 2001: download free of charge from www.cabe.org.uk/publications/; Tel 020 7960 2400
- **Creating excellent buildings – a guide for clients:** CABE, 2003: download free of charge from www.cabe.org.uk/publications/; Tel 020 7960 2400
- **Design Quality Indicators (DQI):** a way of developing a high-quality design that meets the needs of the building users. www.dqi.org.uk; Tel 020 7399 7424.
- **The Value of Good Design:** CABE, 2002: download free of charge from www.cabe.org.uk/publications/; Tel 020 7960 2400



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**Constructing
Excellence** www.constructingexcellence.org.uk

English Partnerships www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

**Federation of Small
Businesses** www.fsb.org.uk

Gerald Eve www.geraldeve.com

Institute of Directors (IoD) www.iod.com

**Royal Institute of
British Architects (RIBA)** www.architecture.com

**Royal Institute of Chartered
Surveyors (RICS) Foundation** www.rics-foundation.org

Small Business Service (SBS) www.sbs.gov.uk

**South East England
Development Agency (SEEDA)** www.seeda.co.uk



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Designed and produced by Philosophy.

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