

# DELIA QUIGLEY - BUSINESS CONSULTANT

## Supporting Business In A Time Of Environmental Change

### IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME TO BE THINKING ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES – OR SHOULD BUSINESSES BE THINKING ABOUT THE FINANCIAL CRISIS?

This is definitely not an ‘either/or’ situation. Of course businesses need to think carefully about their exposure to the financial situation – their indebtedness, their liquidity and their longer term investments. But they should also be thinking about saving money, being seen to be behaving responsibly and maintaining the trust of their clients and staff.

Targets for carbon reduction and incentives to switch to greener electricity are still there. Business still has a responsibility to clean up its act. Which means that entering a recession due to a crisis of confidence in the banking sector (as we are now) will put even greater pressure on businesses that are already starting to stress due to rising energy shortages and increasing pressure from clients and customers to be more environmentally responsible.

As reported in the Financial Times on 9 October 2008, *‘the next decades will see a new industrial revolution that will be Clean, Lean and Mean’*<sup>1</sup> *‘Clean, because of climate consequences, water stress and economic impacts. Lean, characterised by a low carbon economy and eco-efficiency, uncertainty around access to energy and resources, high resource prices and government regulations on resource efficiency. Mean, because we will experience transformational change and destructive innovations that will create winners and losers.’*

Global corporations that were concerned and active about sustainability (economic, social and environmental) are still concerned. We should all keep that concern. Those large companies are putting pressure on their supply chain to behave in greener and more sustainable ways – reducing their environmental impact. The general public is still (according to a recent Ipsos Mori poll) still very concerned about the environment – even in the current financial crises that hasn’t gone away. In the US, *‘7 out of 10 people think that in tough economic times it is more important for a company to behave responsibly.’*<sup>2</sup> Environmental sustainability is all about using fewer resources and saving money.

Climate change also presents opportunities – green technology businesses are growing at far faster rates than other sectors. Whether this is transport, metering (in all its forms), local production, training ‘green’ skilled workers, different construction methods, or development of new (or old) forms of renewable energy there are many opportunities in new market sectors and in new geographical markets.

Companies with long-term vision (and those who need to save money today) can, should, must think green – and build their reputation as responsible and trustworthy companies to deal with.

*(available to download from the Download section)*

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<sup>1</sup> Article by Björn Stigson, president of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

<sup>2</sup> Jenny Dawkins, research director at Ipsos Mori – quoted in the Financial Times 9 October.

**For more information, to discuss your needs, or to arrange a consultation... contact:**

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