

## Strengthen your environmental, economic performance

In Canada, commercial, institutional and industrial operations currently represent nearly 50 per cent of Canada's contribution to climate change, but as the biggest contributor, therein exist the greatest opportunities to reduce emissions and reap benefits.

### Identify opportunities to reduce energy costs

Three significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions for your business are onsite energy use, electricity consumption, and the fuel required to run any company-owned vehicles. Not coincidentally, managing your carbon footprint in these three impact categories can also reduce your operational costs as well.

By installing programmable thermostats, for example, you can potentially reduce unnecessarily heating areas that are vacant, thereby reducing your consumption and your energy bill. Switching to fluorescent bulbs from incandescent bulbs, or from regular fluorescent tubes to super-efficient tubes, will reduce your electricity consumption and your power bill. Using route-planning software to eliminate unnecessary mileage on your vehicles will reduce the fuel needed to run your fleet, along with your fuel costs as well as extra wear and tear.

### Engage employees, suppliers and customers in environmental initiatives

In September of 2007, the world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart, announced that it would begin to request carbon footprint information from its network of roughly 60,000 suppliers, many of which would be classified as small- and medium-sized enterprises. Also that year, a poll conducted by Toronto-based

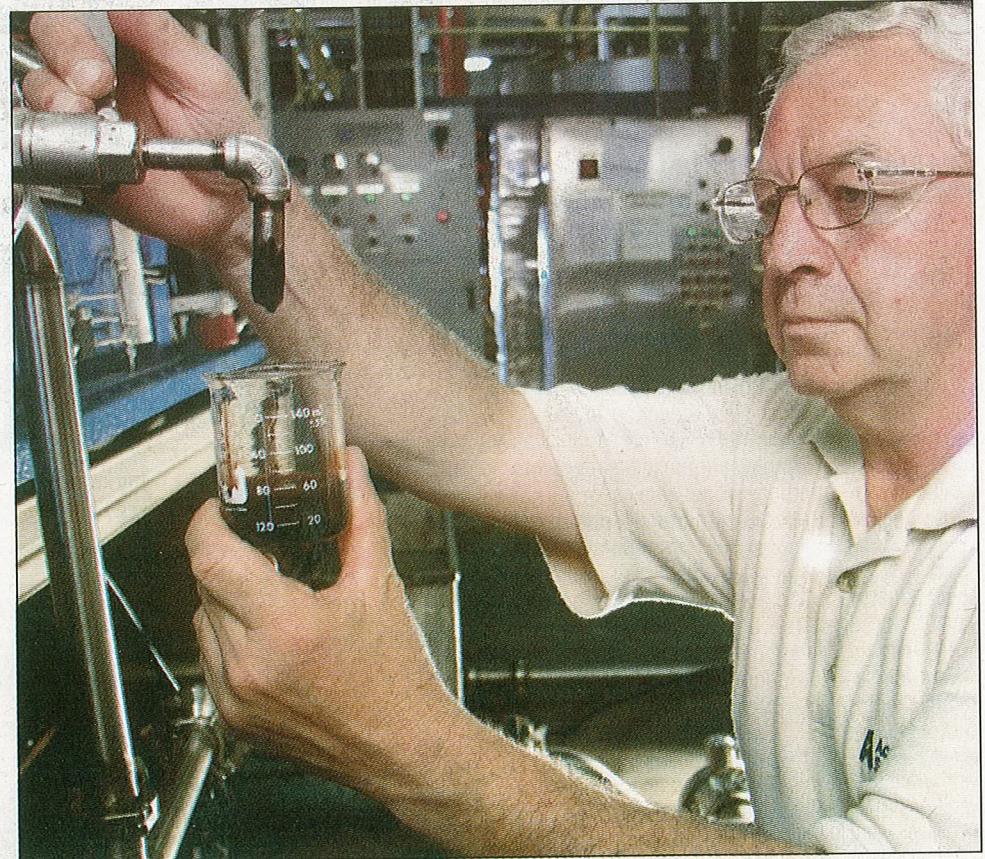
Environics determined that 75 per cent of Canadians polled stated that they would pay a premium price for products with green attributes. Additionally, in July 2008, advertising agency Bensimon Byrne found that 80 per cent of Canadians incorporate environmental considerations into purchasing decisions. The evidence is becoming increasingly irrefutable that going green is simply good for business.

Be it for customers asking about environmental policies or suppliers requesting environmental information for procurement decisions, it has become sound business practice to understand your organization's environmental impact and, more importantly, what you are doing to reduce it. Understanding how your business is contributing to climate change can give you an advantage over less-engaged competitors.

### Be proactive in risk management

No less an authority than the well-recognized auditing and accounting firm Ernst & Young has called climate change the "greatest strategic threat facing the insurance industry". As climate change is predicted to result in a higher frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, the rising cost of climate change for insurers has become a prominent concern for business today. We're now hearing terms like carbon tax, a tax on corporate greenhouse gas emissions, and cap and trade, programs where businesses are assigned a fixed volume of emissions which are traded in turn by more efficient companies to less. It is widely believed that regardless of which policy is ultimately implemented, it has become more of a question of "when" as opposed to "if".

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It has become sound business practice to understand your organization's environmental impact and, more importantly, what you are doing to reduce it. Acadian Seaplants Limited took the initiative to transform its Cornwallis Extraction Facility into a zero organic waste facility. Pictured in the photo: Brian Gunn, production supervisor at the Cornwallis site. — Photo courtesy of Acadian Seaplants. [Learn more on page 19](#)

# Environmental leaders

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For example, to prevent the release of greenhouse gases from transportation. The inn's dining room has designed a menu with low food miles in mind, choosing local ingredients wherever possible and listing the distance each item has travelled. Chanterelle has also minimized unnecessary paper and plastic waste by using reusable containers instead of plastic bags on grocery shopping trips, providing guests with reusable water bottles for hikes and day trips, offering cloth napkins in the dining room and only reusable shampoo and lotion containers in the guest rooms.

Continuing its commitment to environmental and economic sustainability, the inn is working on installing a wind turbine this summer to generate electrical energy.

## **UJ Robichaud TIM-BR Mart, Meteghan Centre 2007 Winner**

U.J. Robichaud TIM-BR Mart has grown into one of the leading building supply retailers in South West Nova Scotia with the Meteghan Centre location providing a wide variety of products ranging from roofing shingles, paints, electric and plumbing materials to drywall and lumber. Celebrating more than 140 years in business, the TIM-BR Mart is continually looking for ways to have a positive impact on the environment.

In renovating its store, it installed additional wall insulation, which reduced heating costs and, two skylights, to provide natural lighting to the attic storage areas. The store

discontinued selling oil-based paints, providing only latex-based paints. In fact, it offers a large variety of eco-friendly products including non-toxic paint remover and wood treatment, insulation made from recycled newspaper, as well as cedar and arsenic-free treated lumber. The installation of compact fluorescent lights (CFL) reduced the amount of energy used and resulted in a savings of approximately \$1,400 annually. There has also been a greater effort by staff to turn off lights when not in use and several of the outdoor lights are on programmable timers or photo sensors.

Since winning its 2007 Eco-Efficiency award, U.J. Robichaud TIM-BR Mart and its green initiatives have garnered even more accolades, including an "Innovator of the Year - Green Marketing" award from the North American Retail and Hardware Association in 2009.

## **Acadian Seaplants Limited, Dartmouth 2006 Winner**

Acadian Seaplants Limited is an internationally recognized biotech company and industry leader in the production of seaweed-based products for global food and agricultural markets.

The company created a "blueprint for environmental success" by first conducting a thorough, company-wide assessment to ensure all sites were in regulatory environmental compliance. Then integrated waste reduction strategies were prepared for each operation. Acadian Seaplants also pioneered a Resource Management Program which ensures the long-term sustainability

of its licensed seaweed resources. Through participating in the Eco-Efficiency Centre's Business Assistance Program in 2005, at its Cornwallis production facility, five key opportunities for improvement were identified, involving water supply, water re-use, waste water reduction, conversion of energy supply and recycling of waste materials. Several of the opportunities were implemented by company personnel while others became the subject of an implementation assessment. Acadian Seaplants has also developed significant offshore sales for its press solids, which were previously shipped to landfill and are now being sold as a valuable agricultural product. The company has also obtained approvals for use of the product on Nova Scotia's agricultural lands and can boast that the Cornwallis facility produces zero organic waste. Continuing promotion of the company's environmental mission has resulted in staff suggestions for other ways to reduce the company's environmental footprint and improve operating costs.

Acadian Seaplants Limited's Resource Management Program has been adopted by other countries interested in the sustainable management of their marine plant resources. This Nova Scotia company is setting the standard for environmental leadership, both at home and abroad.

**\*Editor's Note:** *Be sure to watch for the July issue of the NSBJ which will feature the Eco-Efficiency Centre's Environmental Excellence in Business Awards honourees for 2010.*

# Strengthen your business

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Undertaking a preliminary carbon inventory before these programs come into effect will give your organization a head start over slower-moving competitors as you take preemptive steps to reduce emissions. Not only will this offer potential insurance cost benefits, but also reduces the risks associated with non-compliance with climate change legislation.

## **Engage in positive brand-building**

It should come as no surprise that undertaking environmental initiatives is simply good public relations. As mentioned, four in five Canadians incorporate environmental considerations into their purchasing decisions, as do a growing number of large multinationals who may encourage suppliers to conform to greener procurement strategies. As such, there is no reason why an organization that has undertaken a sincere and long-term commitment to reducing its environmental impact should not promote these initiatives. Dalhousie's Eco-Efficiency Centre, for example, has seen many of its Environmental Excellence in Business award winners benefit from tremendous positive publicity. Celebrating a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions can be a valuable promotional opportunity for any organization.

Reducing your carbon footprint, of course, is only possible by measuring it. Taking an initial estimate of your organization's greenhouse gas emissions is a critical starting point in becoming better informed of your contribution to climate change. Be it for good publicity, preempting inevitable legislation, or reducing your energy and fuel costs, or a combination of the three, managing your carbon footprint offers a number of benefits that strengthen both the environmental and economic performance of your business.

For more information about calculating and managing your carbon footprint, check out: [www.dal.ca/eco-efficiency](http://www.dal.ca/eco-efficiency)