

Environment Leaders of 2009

Business Commitment to the Environment (BCE) Environmental Leadership Awards scheme aims to reward just that - leadership. We search for, and celebrate, initiatives that go beyond just good practice. We seek to identify companies that are doing today what others will be doing tomorrow.

This was so in 1975 when Sir Peter Parker launched the BCE Awards and is still the case today. He was ahead of his time - founding the BCE Awards when few others in industry and commerce were paying attention to the environment. And, just as then, we mark activities that produce business benefits as well as environmental improvements, because only then are they sustainable.

So, to what future did this year's leaders point? Well, comparing with, say, 5 years ago, leaders are tackling environmental performance more comprehensively within, and beyond, their businesses. They do this with clear and challenging quantitative targets, in many cases sharing these publicly, as they reach out to influence the behaviours of customers and suppliers.

For example, Bovis Lend Lease, which won the top Sir Peter Parker Award, has declared challenging targets for waste and carbon in its construction operations, set minimum life-cycle standards in its building designs for clients, and sources from sustainable products. BaxterStorey uses local products in its outsourced catering business, and reduces the environmental effects in its offices, transport fleet, supply chain and in its customers' waste streams. Through its 'Mission Zero' programme, InterfaceFLOR, manufacturers of environmentally responsible modular flooring, aims to eliminate any negative impact on the environment as a result of its operations by 2020.

Of course, strong innovators, even in a single area of activity, will also always be part of the BCE Awards. They can be striking in their novelty and often in their simplicity. This year we have seen Toyota using targeted R&D to reduce steam use by a huge 40% in its paint shops. Pfizer introduced its 'green chemistry' concept. River Dart Country Park introduced the first hydro dynamic screw to generate its own electricity, but in a way that is 'fish-friendly'. And Sainsbury's will reduce checkout receipt use by 40% by introducing NCR double-sided receipt printers (saving enough paper in a year to go four times around the world, just from its 7,000 pilot checkouts).

These, and other winners that we haven't been able to mention here, are demonstrating how to improve the bottom line while significantly improving the environment. And it looks as though a key trend in future will be companies setting transparent, comprehensive and challenging quantitative targets, and reaching out as well to the activities of customers and suppliers. We hope the 2009 BCE Award winners are showing the way.



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BCE
Awards
Founded 1975

The BCE Environmental Leadership Awards scheme seeks to recognise and celebrate leadership in environmental excellence. It is a feeder scheme for the European Environmental Awards.

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Sir Peter Parker KBE LVO

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