

Eventia CSR Case Study - Eurostar

Which aspect(s) of CSR does this case study address?

Environmental

- Carbon footprint reduction
- Waste management
- Energy and water consumption management
- Reuse, recycle, repair
- Responsible marketing

Suppliers

- Suppliers' standards
- Fair trade / ethical sourcing
- Business ethics policy and practices

Company profile

- Eurostar is the high-speed rail service directly linking the UK to France and Belgium via the Channel Tunnel. It started operating in 1994, providing city centre to city centre services.
- Eurostar launched services from its new London station, St. Pancras International, on 14th November 2007 with the completion of the second section of the UK's first high-speed line. Following the move Eurostar's fastest journey times have fallen with London-Paris taking 2 hours 15 minutes, London-Brussels 1 hour 51 minutes and London-Lille just 1 hour 20 minutes.
- Eurostar runs up to 17 services to Paris and ten to Brussels daily. In addition, up to nine trains stop at Lille in northern France, and up to three services stop at Calais Frethun en route. There is also a direct daily service to Disneyland Paris.

Challenge/objective

In early 2006, we commissioned research to understand how green Eurostar was, knowing that we already had a competitive advantage, but wanting to be green rather than just greener. By the autumn of 2006, the first environmental announcement was made; that research showed journeys on Eurostar emit 10 times less CO₂ than the equivalent plane journey. This announcement was made amid the rising tide of news and media coverage – everyone was talking about what needed to be done and we continue to believe that actions speak louder than words. Eurostar were the first train company to do this, and have been seen as pioneers as a result.

The research was carried out by an independent consortium of Paul Watkiss Associates and AEA Technology Environment. It used detailed data on electricity supplies, power station emissions and transmission losses; Eurostar and airline load factors; and the range of aircraft and engine types and emissions. We felt it initially important to publish the results of the study, as it would offer travellers the opportunity to make informed decisions about their carbon footprint when choosing their mode of transport.

Following on from this, it was recognised by the Chief Executive that more needed to be done, so it became a business imperative that a sound competitive and environmental policy needed to be developed, and one that helped to lead the way when it comes to travel and transport in the environmental debate. This led to the development of the 'Tread Lightly' programme – a 10-point plan to reduce our environmental impact that was announced in April '07, and followed up by all journeys becoming carbon neutral on November 14th 2007.

Tread Lightly has set out our plans to reduce our impact on the environment and further increase our energy efficiency. As part of this we made a commitment to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions by 25% per traveller journey by 2012 which will be achieved through the 10-point plan, and:

- Reducing usage wherever possible
- Sourcing supplies responsibly
- Recycling what is used or produced.

Solution

For a number of years, Eurostar has been working to reduce its environmental impact, with the introduction of successful initiatives including:

- recycling schemes in our offices and terminals
- reduced water wastage at Waterloo terminal by introducing new water extraction machines
- sourcing of paper for all our literature from sustainable sources (FSC)
- use of biodegradable disposable items for onboard catering in the buffet car
- introduction of energy efficient lighting at Ashford Terminal
- Zero Landfill trials at our UK depot (on-going)
- mugs to replace plastic cups at our Ashford Call Centre
- a new train washing system at our depot to reduce water wastage.

These steps were the pre-cursor to Tread Lightly as a company-wide initiative and every idea, big or small, continues to be encouraged.

From 14 November 2007, all our journeys became carbon neutral, which means we calculate and offset each journey's actual CO₂ emissions with specially chosen projects from our selected suppliers, at no extra cost to our passengers.

To compensate for the emissions we have not been able to reduce ourselves, we are investing in projects from around the world which reduce an equivalent amount of CO₂ giving us a net balance of zero.

We believe that offsetting can form a positive part of a much wider plan, but it isn't the ultimate answer. Our main commitment is to reduce our emissions per traveller journey.

We have looked carefully at the projects we have chosen to support and have decided to only purchase those credits where the emissions reductions have been verified as being real and as having already taken place. This means travellers can be confident by the time they travel with us that their journey is already carbon neutral.

We have also made changes across the business, including setting up a new Environment and Energy team to make sure we deliver on our promises, and appointing 34 Tread Lightly champions across all departments of the business to really drive this forward. We're also working closely with Friends of the Earth to make sure that we are up-to-date with the latest environmental and climate change thinking.

Results

Financially, the impact of Tread Lightly isn't quantified. However, an independent YouGov survey suggests that society's views about how they travel are shifting. More than half the UK public (57%) now has concerns about environmental impact when planning a journey of 300 – 400 miles. A third (33%) say that environmental concerns about a short-haul journey are more or much more important to them than a year ago, compared to just 3% who say environmental concerns are less or much less important than before.

The survey also signals that people are starting to act, and expecting others to do so. One in twenty (5%) says that over the next year or so, environmental concerns mean they are planning to switch from plane to train for journeys within the UK or to closer European destinations. This is an incredible shift in travel patterns that is expected to grow.

More than a third (37%) agree or strongly agree that in a few years' time, environmental concerns will have made short-haul flying socially unacceptable where there is an alternative of going by train.

A quarter (25%) of the UK public says that, having heard about the Tread Lightly initiative, they are now more likely to use Eurostar.

Feedback from business clients has been that as a result of the Tread Lightly initiative, they now choose the train over the plane. This coupled with the rapid change in public perception, will

hopefully result in even more passengers choosing Eurostar, and helping to reduce their personal carbon footprints.

Awards we've won in the last year:

Came 37th in the Sunday Times Best 50 Green Companies

Best Environmental Ambassador at the Business Travel World Awards

Network Rail Environment Awards – Efficiency Category

Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards – Best Low Carbon Transport & Technology

"Doing nothing is not an option. What Eurostar is doing is a plan for the future."

Stuart Rose, Chief Executive, Marks & Spencer

"Eurostar is leading the way by making a real reduction."

Tony Juniper, Executive Director, Friends of the Earth

"Eurostar have set a transport industry benchmark."

Stephen Joseph, Executive Director, Transport 2000

Moving forwards

'Tread Lightly' is an ambitious and demanding programme that will require close working with suppliers, contractors and partners; and will take three to five years to implement across Eurostar's three countries of operation.

Richard Brown, Chief Executive of Eurostar said:

"I am pleased that we are making progress on our Tread Lightly initiative. We don't have all the answers, but we are chipping away at reducing our environmental impact and we will keep at it, right across the business. What's great is that both our staff and our travellers are 'doing their bit' and making a difference. We all have a duty to act."

Eurostar will achieve a 25% reduction in CO2 emissions per passenger journey by 2012. We have committed to a 10-point plan to reduce all other impacts:

1. By switching to e-tickets and downloading barcodes to our customers' mobile phones we can reduce the amount of paper we use. Where we have to use it, we'll make sure it's either recycled or from sustainable sources, and then we'll recycle it.
2. We're going to recycle all the waste from our trains, including food.
3. Everything that's disposable on our trains, like cups and plates, will either be biodegradable or fully recyclable.
4. By 2008 we'll have replaced all train air conditioning refrigerants with a more environmentally-friendly alternative.
5. We're going to recycle all used staff uniforms.
6. All the food on our trains will be bought from local suppliers wherever possible. If we have to buy from overseas we'll make sure it's fair-trade.
7. We want to develop a "switch-off" culture and we're going to use electricity from sustainable sources as well as ensuring that all the lighting and heating we use in our stations, depots and offices is as energy efficient as possible.
8. By recycling the water we use to wash our trains at our new depot, and investing in rain water collection, we'll be able to reduce our overall consumption.
9. By 2009 we'll be recycling 80% of our waste. Our ultimate aim is to make this 100%.
10. In order to help our customers reduce their carbon emissions on their journey to and from Eurostar, we're going to develop new travel initiatives and partnerships.

NB. Although this is a future-facing plan, many of these initiatives are already underway. In the last year alone, we've:

- Purchased over 40,000 high-quality carbon dioxide (CO2) offset credits from renewable energy projects in China and India to offset any carbon emitted for passenger journeys.

- Installed a less environmentally damaging refrigerant on most of the train fleet, seven years before the EU deadline.
- Procured energy from lower carbon sources for the new UK head office, Temple Mills depot and Ashford International car park.
- Introduced a waste management facility at Temple Mills, helping to maximise the amount of waste that is recycled or sent to an energy recovery plant, and ensuring that close to zero goes to landfill.
- All the cups, bags and napkins in the bar-buffet are now biodegradable and, where possible, made from recycled material. The majority of our cold food is organic, locally-sourced and seasonal. And our hot drinks are now all ethically sourced too. We continue to work with our suppliers on the rest
- We refurbish and reuse all the uniforms we can and incinerate any which are unusable to provide energy for other industry.

In addition Eurostar now actively monitors actual train energy consumption using on-board metering equipment. This has established that actual train energy consumption is less than projected. Eurostar is therefore recalculating a new, lower baseline against which to report progress in reducing its CO2 emissions per traveller journey.