



## Sustainability, back on the agenda

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All IABM members sign up to the "IABM Business Standard", providing reassurance to customers that they are dealing with reputable and professional companies. An important part is the "Environmental Standard" declaring each member's corporate obligation to minimize their environmental footprint. In this article Nigel Burt focuses on one of the current "hot topics": Sustainability.



The environment, sustainable development and "green" concerns in general are no longer matters of minority interest. All the issues involved are now aired regularly by the mainstream global media. The industry which IABM and its members serve is chiefly an enabling conduit for distributing that media. That is, it is an industry that delivers the creative output of writers, journalists, musicians, comedians, actors, film-makers, computer game designers and suchlike to consumers.

### Media campaigns and publicity

According to estimates, we spend more than 28 hours a week consuming media. Therefore it's no surprise that many entertainment industry artists have embraced the so-called "green agenda". Back in 1982 movie "Koyaanisqatsi: Life out of Balance" and its sequels, had a very strong environmental message. More recently, movies tackling similar topics have been released: "An Inconvenient Truth" (about the campaign to raise climate change awareness by former US Vice-President Al Gore);

"The 11th Hour" by Leonardo DiCaprio and "The Age of Stupid" by campaigning film director Franny Armstrong. There are even online movies with persuasive messages; "Home" by Yann Arthus-Bertrand and "The Story of Stuff" by Annie Leonard, accessing a huge global audience.

Governments worldwide are swayed by this media output. For example, when the UK's coalition came to power in May 2010, one of the first actions was to sign up to Franny Armstrong's initiated "10:10" campaign to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by 10% over the next 12 months. Even if later decisions didn't match that intent, reports suggest they will shortly claim to have achieved the target (with government austerity measures, some cynically observe it's an easy target.)

### Broadcasters taking the initiative



Sky's new broadcast facility in the UK "Harlequin 1" is already winning awards for sustainability. It consists of 5 HD studios, 45 edit, 14 voice-over and 4

audio suites. Extensive environmental measures include:

- A combined cooling & heating power plant burning renewable waste for electricity, chilled and hot water
- A wind turbine
- Energy efficient, solar and motion sensor lighting
- Outside air cooling for equipment rooms

- Natural ventilation to cool studios, reduced use of air conditioning, cutting the building's overall energy use by 7.5%
- Office spaces ventilated by opening windows
- Low energy heating and air conditioning systems
- Rainwater harvesting to irrigate green spaces and flush toilets

Customers like Sky will increasingly question the sustainability credentials of their suppliers.



#### **Sustainability at NAB**

Solar powered energy also featured at NAB 2011 with a demonstration from Solargy; "Sun rays to radio waves. The world's first zero-carbon footprint TV broadcasting system." An exhibit claimed to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability.

#### **No longer voluntary**

Major governments, no longer content to rely upon voluntary measures driven by concepts of social responsibility, are seeking to change the mind-set of businesses and individuals. There is no choice about whether or not to take a moral or ethical stand, the changes must be embraced and viewed as a necessary activity and budgeted accordingly. Governments are increasingly minded to introduce further legislative and regulatory burdens, if they deem insufficient progress is made by the private sector. However, despite drastic government cut-backs after the global financial crisis,

various funding initiatives are still available to encourage investment in green technologies. The lesson here is that businesses need to look at both the carrot and the stick!

#### **Limited resources**

Much of the sustainability debate is centred on the topics of energy usage, greenhouse gas reduction and climate change. However, resource conservation is also important. Much of our electronic technology industry relies upon dwindling sources of raw materials, with demand significantly increasing the price of these commodities. For example, the main constituent of electronic solder, tin, has almost doubled in price over the past year and gold, used in many electronic components, recently hit a record price of \$1500 per ounce.

Rare earth metals have been cited as a major cause for alarm, particularly as these elements are crucial components in some new low-carbon technologies. Global demand for these materials is said to have tripled over the past decade from 40,000 to 120,000 tonnes and expected to hit 200,000 by 2014. There is pressure to ensure responsible extraction methods are utilised when new sources are found or older sites re-opened. It also adds to the demands for our society to recycle and re-use more. Resulting from major concerns about the geo-political power held by China as the source of around 97% of the world's rare earth material, waste electronic equipment is already being actively "mined" in Japan for rare earth content by recyclers.

Sustainability is a topic that our industry can no longer afford to ignore... □