

100 Green ‘Monster’ Tips: Ethical And Eco-friendly Cost-Saving Ideas For Business

by [Elish Bul-Godley](#) on November 27th, 2012

*It's The Environment Stupid! A No Brainer Guide to staying on the Green and Narrow. No longer the domain of sandal wearing crusties; green, ethical and eco-friendly business practices are a **sure** route to sustainable business, cost-savings, improving profitability, lowering carbon taxes, raising productivity and meeting eco-targets. The biggest benefit of all? It's good for everyone.*

Within this post, we're presenting 100 online and offline routes to cost-saving ideas that also grant you a green halo. This post also sums up some 'go to' blogs, communities and online resources with fine, good advice. Our sustainable business ideas range from eco to ethical, simple to not-so-simple, short term to long term investments or individual projects right up to scalable community programmes.

Just a note of caution: it may cause you to ditch your car, swim the Atlantic and make your own clothes!

How do you know if business practices are Sustainable, Eco friendly or Ethical?

Although clear industry guidelines and ISO Standards do exist. This blog introduces sustainable cost saving and profit boosting ideas as a "way of working" , not a rigid checklist with a one-size-fits-all set of criteria. Here are some definitions to give you an overview:

DO BE GOOD & GREEN

- Sustainable – Long-term renew-ability and living within our current capacity e.g. Resources lasting longer with minimal negative impact.
- Eco Friendly – Practices that are not harmful to the environment e.g. Recycling, Reusable resources, non pollutive behavior
- Ethical – Socially Responsible practices with minimal impact on the environment and surrounding community on a global or social level e.g. Fair Trade, No animal testing, Vegan products.

DON'T BE BAD

Business-Level 'Costs' for Non-Green Support:

Apart from financial costs worth saving, consider the other costs your business may incur through its operations :

- Bad workplace productivity and absenteeism impact on your bottom line
- Social costs of being wasteful, harmful to your environment and community versus a CSR dividend
- PR Fail if caught engaging in unethical behaviour

100 Eco friendly business ideas, tips, green choices and ways to save money

Consume less

Use Renewable resources

Recycle and Re-use

Collaborate more

Green Your Office Environment with Simple Quick wins

Lighting & Electrical Appliances

1. Start on the right note: **understand your energy bills** and consult your supplier to understand any penalty charges and how they can be reduced or avoided e.g. spotting how much electricity is used at night may reveal areas for saving.
2. **Regular Cleaning and Maintenance** of electrical units, heating appliances and lighting fixtures start you off on the right note and improve the efficiency of your plant and machinery.
3. Ensure **switches are labelled** so staff are aware of switches that are relevant for use and won't be switching on too many appliances or too much lighting.
4. Charge appliances or heating units **overnight** for cheaper rates of electricity.
5. Install **Light Dimmers**, so you can adjust for varying levels of natural light in the room.
6. **Display lighting** should only be installed for spot-lighting selected displays and not as general illumination. If you are in retail or hospitality, keep lighting on a reduced level and only switch on display lighting just before opening time.
7. **Vending machines** carrying non-perishable items can be set on a timer or switched off during off work hours or on weekends when the building is closed.
8. **Energy light bulbs** – invest in CFL, halogens and LED light bulbs to capitalize substantial long-term financial savings that should compensate for their higher prices. If in Europe this makes even more sense. A phased EU ban on incandescent bulbs has just been completed.
9. **Install motion sensor** lighting especially for storage cupboards, plant room lighting and other rarely used rooms are switched off by default.
10. **Install Timers and Smart Control Systems** that switch off devices when you are not using them. These work better with lighting devices, kitchen and heating appliances.

Greener IT Equipment & Infrastructure

This is where you can reduce the amount of Standby power consumed bearing in mind, that electrical equipment can be plugged in for a minimum of 128 hours in an average office. Think "Vampire".



CleanTech gadget saves money with Renewable Energy : [The Solar Window Charger designed by XD Design](#)

11. Intelligent Energy Monitoring shuts down peripheral devices when a computer is not in use. During sleep mode a signal is sent by USB cable to the plug board and specific sockets on the board are shut down. This applies to devices such as printers, scanners, monitors, external speaker systems etc.

12. Switches (central hub for computers) using **Green Ethernet**. If there is a period of network inactivity, the switch powers down the ports to a reduced speed. Transfers to an 'idle' state.

13. **PC Sleep mode** for laptops on Operating systems for singular machines.

14. **Timer Options** on servers and software that monitor all computers on the network. You can set the PCs to either shut down or safely shut down at a particular time i.e. 7pm.

15. Avoid buying a Fax machine – upgrade to **Scanners and eFax**. You only print what you want using normal printers thus saving you that very expensive toner replacement cost. Block junk faxes if you are using a Fax Machine or nip them in the bud by contacting the guilty party and take yourself off the list.

16. **Use The Cloud** – Decrease printing and use (cloud) online document sharing applications such as Google Docs, DropBox, Box.net

17. Source **energy efficient models** or servers that exist under major computer brands such as Apple, Lenovo or Dell for example.

Simple Quick wins with Heating:

18. Bleed Radiators at the start of the cold season. This maintenance exercise eliminates air that has accidentally gotten into the radiator's coils and ensures your radiator heats up evenly and operates more efficiently in winter.

19. **Power Flushing** your central heating system can reduce fuel wastage by a third as it can remove undesirable corrosion residues, replace aggressive water, quickly restoring circulation, efficiency, and increase the lifespan of your system

Online Energy Saving Resources For The Workplace

20. Robin Waters lists [The Top Ten Apps To Make You More Green in Techcrunch](#)

21. Green Cam: [Energy-saving app turns off PC monitor when users walk away](#)

22. [Greenbusiness.ie](#) is a site that provides on-line audit tools for measuring resource use and identifying where green savings can be made. If in Ireland you can request a site visit, where a Green Business Advisor will visit your premises and identify actual "no" and low cost measures that will save businesses real money.

Saving on Water charges via Water Conservation & Capture

If you are facing high water charges or are being metered for water consumption then look into these environmentally friendly ideas and devices to help your bottom line.

24. Cistern Displacement Devices – fill them with water and lay inside the toilet cistern to reduce the flush volume. You can also source dyes that check if your cistern's are leaking

25. Rainwater Harvesting – with the right fittings, rainwater tanks and devices you can recycle grey rainwater for toilets, mechanical wash-down, landscaping or process water. (Example is the Eden Project in Bodmin, UK)

26. Install **Motion sensor taps** in washrooms and canteens to prevent running water when not in use.

27. Instant Electric Hot Water Taps . One frequently overlooked expense is hot water that uses standard heating systems. If you are waiting up to 10-15 seconds for your running tap to generate hot water, in the course of a year, you could be wasting literally thousands of litres of water. There are [devices](#) that connect directly to cold water pipes replacing your existing tap and can generate hot water instantly.

Recycle and Save on Waste Disposal Costs

Good recycling habits should be transferred from the household to the office or business environment, especially if it costs you less or nothing to recycle waste in the face of municipal bin and landfill charges for all that waste your business generates.

Recycling a No-Brainer?

- **More awareness** of recycling and of the environment exists amongst workers and customers. It's worth being seen encouraging your clients or customers to do the same, driving a positive association between your brand and responsible business.
- A **polluter pays principle** exists on most municipal services with the introduction of bin charges. Higher landfill levies exist in some jurisdictions to support alternatives to landfill. Environmental Legislation may exist in your locale requiring recycling quotes with penalties in place
- **Improved recycling and recovery options** are being introduced by most authorities.

Recycling In the Workplace

28. **Local municipal bodies** can assist in setting up better recycling awareness in your business and direct you to relevant businesses. For example : Recyclemore.ie is a helpful site assisting with recycling tips

29. **Empty Ink cartridges** can be sold back to recycling agencies. Folamh.ie is an example of an organisation that delivers collection bins and collects them, then sends you a cheque.

30. **Mobile Phones** can also be returned to businesses who will buy them back at rates commensurate with the Phone model. For example Envirofone recycle phones across Europe and pay for used or damaged phones in exchange.

31. **Recycle your WEEE** (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) using social enterprises and Environmental bodies in your locale. For example, The European Recycling Platform (ERP) helps you locate recycling centers and holds free recycling days where you can return anything with a plug or battery. Visit local recycling centers that help you reduce business waste disposal costs or social enterprises that re-purpose electronic goods for the developing world such as cameras, also allowing you to donate computers.

32. Source or **Encourage Suppliers to take back packaging** for recycling as a prerequisite for doing business.

33. **Commercial Food Waste Disposal & Recycling Systems** – Relevant if your organisation engages in hospitality and catering. These commercial appliances can reduce waste volumes, landfill and bin charges whilst also recycling biodegradable waste. Some systems generate desiccated organic food waste, dry by-products for use as compost or biomass heating fuel.

34. Shwopping – Create a “**Buy and Give Back Culture**” amongst your customers or by encouraging them to recycle used products whilst also drawing repeat business and customer loyalty. Swap offers and vouchers in exchange for returned items.



Shwopping – A Buy and Give back Recycling culture. [M&S to Sell First “Shwop Coat” Made From Customers’ Unwanted Woollens](#)

M&S is a perfect example as they work in tandem with Oxfam to encourage clothes exchanges for vouchers. The vouchers have a minimum purchase value attached thus encourage a higher spend. Taking it one step further they have announced the first recycled product from this project: M&S unveils first ‘shopped’ product made from unwanted clothes.

Reduce Consumption in the First place and Green your office

Here are some tips that also reduce consumption in the first place:

- 35. Office paper:** Use both sides of your paper when photocopying or faxing and also use the back of discarded documents as note-paper instead of buying fresh notepads. Caveat: do make sure no sensitive client or business info is located on any of these.
- 36. Save and reuse packaging** and postal package envelopes rather than buy new ones.
- 37. Avoid Paper or Plastic Cups** and go back to using your office mugs or glasses at the water cooler. Get Re-usable portable coffee mugs while you’re at it to reduce disposable coffee cups.

Re-Using Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment

38. Salvage pre-owned furniture by sourcing them at architectural salvage companies, liquidation sales and auctioneers.

39. Re-store and Up-cycle – old discarded furniture & fixtures. Visit up-cycling centers that reclaim unwanted battered furniture from you and others. Custom design restored furniture and equipment using their up-cycling skills and create new branding opportunities in the process. Examples in our locale include Busy Bees Furniture, The Rediscovery Centre, and CRNI.ie.

40. Use Second Hand Goods Portals – Online classifieds papers & portals in your locale help you buy and sell used items. Craigslist or Freecycle.org are perfect global examples. Use portals that facilitate the free local exchange of used goods. In our locale we have: www.buyandsell.ie. For example [Free Trade Ireland](http://www.free-trade-ireland.com) is a unique public service allowing you to pass on and pick-up items free of charge. Sell 2nd hand uniforms and textiles to www.clearout.ie.



[Busybees Furniture](http://www.busybeesfurniture.com) up-cycled these office Chairs found in a Skip and resold them to retailers and other businesses at the Irish Furniture & Home Accessories Trade Fair

Greening the Hospitality Sector



The Cliff House Hotel, Ardmore – their General Manager [gives an interview on their Eco Friendly Policy](#)

41. If you are in Hospitality and have access to grounds for cultivation you should seriously consider a **Grow Your Own** policy. Reduce the costs of buying in from distributors and create backup stocks during emergencies. It allows you to pass on lower costs to your customers. [Grow your Own Ireland](#) is an example of local organizations that exist to provide helpful advice and tips.

42. **Source Local** and you might find yourself with more reliable suppliers given the proximity, lower transport & delivery costs. This becomes another selling point and marketing feature point when creating menus.

43. Want to see how a Green business policy can work in the Hospitality sector and pick up some of their best practices? Take a look at: [The Eco Friendly Policy at The Cliff House Hotel, Ardmore.](#)

44. More Environmentally conscious **hospitality tips** are available at this local site [Greenhospitality.ie](#)

Sustainable Interior Design

45. **Surface Design** – paint your work areas in lighter colors and use brighter surface design materials to maximize the effect of natural lighting.
46. Use **Non Toxic** Finishes and Eco paints.
47. **Position desks** closer to natural light to reduce the onset of SAD.
48. Make sure **heaters and radiators are unobstructed** by office furniture and **reduce the thermostat** in unoccupied rooms or in busy concourse spaces and corridors where people move quickly through anyway.
49. Maximise use of natural light sources with Retrofitted **lighting fixtures** such as [Solar Tunnel Lights](#) for example.

Green your Building with Retrofit Techniques

50. There are **work-place & retrofit grants** to convert buildings into more energy efficient properties. Make it your business to contact your local municipal authority or environmental body to find out more. Here are some retrofit techniques to consider:

Insulation

51. **Building Insulation** techniques use synthetic or natural products to create more energy efficient buildings whilst also protecting against damp and the formation of mould thus avoiding sick building syndrome. It can be installed during new-build construction or retrofit of your property.
52. **Cavity Wall Insulation** is installed in the spaces or cavities between two walls and may be a relevant retrofitting exercise in an older property that consists of masonry or block walls with a gap of at least 50mm between them. Different types of materials can be used to fill the gap ranging from Foam to sheep wool to recycled Eco friendly natural products.
53. Consider Dry Lining; a form of **Internal Wall insulation** that involves fixing insulation to the inner surfaces of your external walls and covering it with a vapor barrier layer and plasterboard.
54. **Outsulation**, (AKA ETICS = External Thermal Insulation Composite System) is a form of an external thermal insulation to the exterior walls of a building. It can be cost effective, durable against all weather, versatile aesthetically and energy efficient at the same time.
55. **Glazing**: Install Doubled or Triple glazed windows to keep buildings warmer and reduce heat loss.
56. Installing **Air-Tightness** products lower heat loss and therefore energy costs in your building, whilst improving air quality by preventing warm air from escaping or cold air to seep through. Air tightness systems involve creating an internal envelope around the complete building thus sealing all gaps and cracks.

Ventilation, Heating & Plumbing

Avoid one of the hidden costs of a business- i.e. absenteeism and low productivity by avoiding sick building syndrome. Ventilation and heating are key factors when designing or retrofitting your workplace.

57. Choose an environmentally responsible **Renewable Energy Utilities supplier** like [Airtricity](#) or [Green Energy UK](#) Chances are, they cost less too.

58. Retrofit an environmentally responsible **Renewable Energy heating system**

59. Engage in a **micro-generation system** that uses natural recycled fuel or Renewable energy. Micro-generation done right is a route to owning your own renewable energy sources and may result in you feeding back into the Energy Grid. IMAGINE sending the utilities company a Bill for a change!

Examples include:

- Retrofitting **Solar panels**
- Micro-generating Electricity with your own **Wind Turbine**
- **Geothermal Heat Pumps.**

60. Biomass Boilers – relevant if your business is rural based and focused on farming, forestry/timber or even involved in the processing of organic material. Your waste products can be recycled into biomass fuel.

61. Pool Renewable energy investment in your industrial park, small town or office block. Pool your resources to form a CO-OP that invests in a wind turbine, heat pump or solar panelling depending on which are more suitable for your locale and start making money once you feed back into the grid. This is a long term investment but pays off sooner if resources are pooled and increases the value of your property.

62. Retrofitting **Heat Recovery Ventilation** allows your building to provide continuous or timed ventilation throughout and recovers the heat carried in the exhausted stale air. In short it delivers better climate control, fresh air and more energy efficiency. If your property is already well insulated and airtight, you will be better off refreshing the air and controlling humidity this way rather than opening the windows.

63. **Under-floor heating** is especially relevant if you are moving into new premises and have to install a new floor anyway. It can deliver a rapid and uniform distribution of heat, which helps optimize your energy costs. Aesthetically it helps you to do away with radiators and improves the decor of your property.

Location and Sustainable Architecture

64. If it's a new build, select offices with plenty of **natural sunlight** so you can work longer before turning on lights. Create more sources of natural light via larger windows and atriums in your building design. This also alleviates Seasonal Depression aka SAD.

65. When looking for premises, consider retrofitting an old **derelict** property also known as engaging in **Slack Architecture** instead of occupying new office blocks.

66. **Civic intelligence – Locate** in a district that puts you closer to the suppliers, customers and partners you work with to minimize transport costs.

67. Don't forget there's this cool new trend in **Re-Purpose Shipping Containers** what with the global recession and all. Great if you have a vacant space on your property and need to build an extension or more storage space. Your local portacabin supplier will probably put you in touch with the right models. Also great if you need to build a Home office in your back garden.

Starbucks opens store made from recycled shipping containers



Starbucks' brand new reclaimed shipping container coffee shop. [Starbucks Opens New Reclamation Drive Thru Made From Recycled Shipping Containers turned into Starbucks Drive Thru](#). (Taken from – Inhabitat Blog on Sustainable Design Innovation, Eco Architecture & Green Building)

A Greener Urban, Architectural and Civic Business Environment

These portals help you tap into the cool trends, great ideas and civic discussions emanating from around the globe. If you are part of a city council, town hall, business chamber or high street business network, why not tap into these conversations and ideas and see if you can create a Beta Project with your community.

68. **Sustainable Cities Collective** – Comprehensive series of blogs covering sustainable living and business practice in an urban context. Based in the US but with a Global focus.

69. **Green Building News US** provides energy efficiency and sustainable building information targeting commercial and industrial facilities.

70. **GreenBuildingAdvisor.com** provides useful, accurate, and complete information about designing, building, and remodelling in an energy-efficient, sustainable manner. A US based one-stop source for builders, re-modellers, architects & home owners looking for expert advice on green products & strategies.

71. [Inhabitat | Design For a Better World!](#) – a Global online guide to the best green design ideas, devoted to the future of design, tracking the innovations in technology, practices and materials that are pushing architecture and home design towards a smarter and more sustainable future.

The Green Line from A to B

Cool Green Eco-Transport Tips

Old War poster asks the Question: Is your Trip necessary. from the Treehugger blog: [13 Great Posters From When Driving Was Considered To Be Almost A War Crime](#)

72. Facilitate **Car-pooling** in your business with workmates that live nearby. Just drive a short journey or walk to each other's house. Doubles up as fantastic social banter time and possible team building?

73. **Electric Car and shared car programmes.** Is there a city-wide shared car or Electric car programme with electric charge points in your city? For example, [Go Car.ie](#) is a car sharing initiative in Ireland, offering short term car rental to members on a hourly basis.

74. Use the **Right Graded Tyres.** As tyres account for 20% to 30% of the fuel consumption of vehicles, choosing a tyre rated 'A' for its energy efficiency can help you make fuel cost savings in the range of €170-€230 per year. Consumers in Europe will be able to tell straight away which tyres will help them to save fuel. Every new tyre has to come with a new easy-to-read label displaying information on three essential aspects of the performance of a tyre: fuel efficiency, wet grip and external rolling noise. The new requirements are laid down in a new EU regulation on labelling of tyres.

75. Is there a **Cycle to Work Grant** scheme in your locale? in Ireland the use of bicycles purchased by employers will be free of Benefit In Kind (BIK) tax and will be fully tax deductible by employees that avail of the scheme.

76 . **Work from home** or allow employees who live far away to take turns working from home one day a week if you are not sure about going the whole hog.

77. Use **Electronic Banking** as much as possible or online payments systems to avoid unnecessary trips to the bank, delays in cashing cheques or postal costs.

78. The big switch happening in the retail industry is **Zero Carbon**. As air travel increases food miles, the most logical choice is to use road, rail and sea. It's no secret that air transport accounts for over 70% of carbon emissions. Taxing carriers and customers has done nothing to stall the flow of air transport, but engineers have found a better way – changing the fuel. Have you considered using Bio-fuel and Ethanol Fuel?

Squeaky 'Green' Marketing and Event Ideas

Here's a taster but there's way more ways to do this and some sites are great global resources on this topic.

79. Networking – use online resources to network from home. Here is a useful post summing up online networking resources by [Corpnet](#) – handy from a small business point of view – [Start Your Business Networking Easily From Your Sofa](#)

80. Use Email advertising instead of Direct mail or Email invites instead of Flyers and other promotional material when it comes to your regular client base and regular customers. These are people who you know will pay attention to your email-shot. Caveat: not so good with new business as you need to get their attention in more ways than one.

81. Use CD's or Branded Data Keys instead of large paper catalogues where possible or **PDFs** when sending out product information to your clients. Safer when you are dealing loyal customers or returning clients who are already familiar with your business.

82. Reduce printed material at events by producing PDFs and providing **WIFI** for attendees who wish to view their brochures and programme planners on their laptops, net books or tablets.



[Design Grass by Curb Media](#) – an example of environmental friendly Media and surface design

83. Digital ticketing instead of posting out badges and tickets pre-event – now more executable with the plethora of Event apps and badges are easily reproduced at the front door with registration software.

84. Here's a handy Blog we found on [Simple Innovative Tips to Greening your Conference by US company CRE Rentals.](#)

85. Here a cool new trend: Ambient Advertising using environmental friendly Techniques. [Design Grass by Curb Media](#) is a living grass surface design material for indoor environments that allows you to create branded designs and indoor green spaces vertically or horizontally without landscaping. It is also hypo-allergenic and a natural sound-proofer whilst being rigid or durable if re-purposed as a soil-less living carpet or flooring for events.

Put on your Green Beret and Go Guerrilla

Low Impact Advertising & Ambient marketing as an alternative to conventional media & printed advertising

86. **Green Graffiti** – Uses grass, nature and moss to get the message across. Great if you want to show how green you are in the first place. Here are [20 masterpieces](#)

87. **Cleanvertising** – This format uses the natural environment in an aesthetic manner to grab attention. Examples include logrow turf cutting advertising and sand sculptures



An Eco Friendly way to advertise

88. [Reverse Graffiti](#) or **Clean Graffiti** involves no spray paint- just a steam-cleaner and a stencil. Linked to this is **Rain activated Graffiti** that only generates an image when in contact with water.

89. **Urban Art, Hacktivism and Urbanism as Marketing** – add some color and inspiration to your urban community with street art and create a good association with your brand by engaging local design collectives, art students and community groups. Don't just advertise via conventional media channels. Improve your municipal environment by hacking it and gain some social credits with your local catchment area.

Re-Purposing Vacant and Derelict space in Marketing

90. Events can be made edgy especially with a Secret tour or Occupy theme using **Derelict space** such as abandoned warehouses, abandoned office blocks, un-used retail units.

91. Use your own excess space or under utilised properties as **Sponsorship opportunities** by making them available venues for Community / Trade events.

92. **Pop-up Shops restaurants & retail** revitalize derelict space in your high street whilst using a lower cost alternative to long term lets by choosing targeted short term leases for a month or two months at a time – source these using local municipal authorities or Estate agents who may be encouraging pop-up activity and who will have a list of sites ready and waiting.

Collaboration – Seeing the Woods not the Trees

Collaborate, Cooperate and form a collective with Resource Exchange Networks

93. Setting up a resource exchange network allows you to save money and resources whilst reducing waste going to landfill. It also encourages networking and new business development opportunities within your community and binds you closer together.

Examples of Resource Exchange Networks in our locale:

- **SMILE Resource Exchange** (Saving Money through Industry Links and Exchanges) is a free service for businesses that encourages the exchanging of resources between its members. Potential exchanges are identified through networking events, an online exchange facility and a support team to assist throughout.
- **A Favour Exchange** is a skills and labor exchange system. It is open, voluntary and does not involve the making or spending of money. It is at heart “an economy of goodwill” with its own currency, the favour. Examples from our locale include a community that describes itself as “an economy of goodwill” with its own currency, the *favour*.: [Clonakilty Favour Exchange](#)

Publicity & PR

Turn your halo on and paint it green

94. So now you’ve got your business super energy efficient. You are lean and not at all mean, given all that Fair-Trade and Ethical work you do collaborating with the Community. What next? Why broadcast it course!

- There’s no better cost effective method for advertising than using **Social Media**. We found a great small business focused blog for leveraging your Halo: [Using Social Media to Convey You’re Eco-Friendly](#)
- Don’t forget your activity in adopting these sustainable measures are great **Content** for all your advertising campaigns and open up PR or publicity opportunities.

Resources– Sustainability, Ethical and Eco

Global

95. **Treehugger**– a Global one stop shop for green news, solutions and product information.

Here's a sample blog that highlights new ways to go green: [ShopGreen Lets Online Retailers Incorporate Carbon Offsets into Purchases](#)

96. **Small Business Trends** has a green Business Segment with helpful Sustainable business blogs – here's one: [100 Green Business Tips crowd sourced from their small business community.](#)

97. [The Sustainable Business Blog](#) – By 'The Guardian' Publication is useful for sustainable technology and industry updates alongside the Guardian Environmental Supplement.

Greening in Ireland

98. Events and portals available in our locale are worth a look for universal green tips and resources for a more sustainable business:-

- [Local Switch blog](#) – A very useful blog curated by the Irish [Cloughjordan Eco Village](#) community full of practical down to earth ideas for small business.
- [Cultivate.ie](#) is an Irish Organisation that posts useful information on their site. They also host a range of events, workshops and networking gatherings that give you the right information, notably their recent:
- [Better Building Conference](#) done in conjunction with [The Sustainable Building & Retrofit Show](#) which also hosts free to attend seminars on issues like green materials, retrofit and passive house building.
- The [Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland](#) Business support section is an excellent resource for any business looking for resources tips, advice and grant info.
- We got some great advice from [Energy Efficient Ireland](#)
- The free to attend [Autumn BeGreen Roadshow](#) helps businesses discover ways to reduce costs through better Resource Efficiency – targeting Energy, Waste and Water costs.

Leading by Example

Learn from green & sustainable business practice in the Retail Sector

Bloomberg Magazine Cover – [Its Global Warming Stupid – Time to take Green Sustainable Business seriously](#)

99. **Tesco** are proving themselves to be [Green Grocers in more ways than one](#). Their strategy involves:-

- a £100 million fund for investment in sustainable environmental technology such as wind turbines, solar panels, combined heat and power and gasification. Cutting energy use per square foot by one-half by 2010 against a baseline of 2000.

- Customers are encouraged to help save energy in their homes as Tesco gives clubcard points to promote its green products.
- It has invested considerably in electrical recycling and pushes free home insulation and inexpensive wireless energy monitors.
- Tesco has also spent £millions on opening new-concept eco-stores (which are carbon neutral) and on carbon-rating many of its products.
- Tesco's have made notable changes to achieve a low carbon rate like using rotten food for transport fuel and lowering transport (food miles) costs by using barge and train for transportation
- [Tesco's subway virtual store](#) has made it to marketing blogs – Tesco's Virtual shop front at Gatwick Airport and subway virtual shops in Korea are making headlines and servicing time poor customers at the same time.

100. M&S aims to be at zero carbon by 2015 with their now famous [PLAN A campaign](#) (because there is no Plan B), which details the steps they have taken.

- Their Plan A programme is an example to other businesses for a coherent sustainable business programme.
- It was also advertised widely providing a green marketing halo and super CSR credits

Taking the Green Bug Home

Sustainable Projects in [Masdar in Dubai](#) show us how it is possible to apply this way of thinking city wide.

Key Takeaway

Companies like [M & S](#) or [Tesco](#) maximize the full profit boosting and cost saving benefits of being Green and Sustainable. They have strategic coherent programmes of ethical and sustainable business practices, work hard at providing a holistic approach and re-educate both customers and their workforce. They also leverage their behavior as social marketing content via PR, Advertising and Branding campaigns.

This post is by no means a comprehensive list but hopefully it explores the many faceted approaches to saving money with sustainable Business practices and points your thinking in the right direction.

Authenticity, accountability and consistency are key in any campaign that seeks to exploit the CSR dividend these sustainable practices can bring. Anything else reeks of Greenwash and lip service.