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## **Sustainable Development**

*Sustainable Development meets the needs of today's population without damaging the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Society has become increasingly aware of the environmental impact that many industrial activities have and now expects companies to operate in a responsible manner and to demonstrate this publicly. The company report has moved on from being a purely financial description of the activities of the company to one that includes non-financial information such as the company's approach to human resources, health and safety and more routinely now to environmental reporting. There are guidelines available to help organisations with this reporting, for example the Global Reporting Initiative Sustainability Guidelines (2002). Sustainability issues are also being given a much higher profile internationally and nationally - sustainable development was a key issue in the new ISO President message (see New ISO President news article below) and there are new requirements being placed on EU businesses.

The EU Directive known as the Accounts Modernisation Directive includes amendments to the contents of the directors report. This report used to be mainly backwards looking and financial in content, which has meant that information concerning sustainability issues was often missing indicating that directors do not think about accounting for these areas. The report must now provide an enhanced view of

the company's business and include the risks and uncertainties facing their business and include key performance indicators relevant to their particular business. The Directive says that *For company financial years starting on or after 1 January 2005, large and medium-sized (but not small) companies will be required by the Directive to provide "a balanced and comprehensive analysis of the development and performance of the company's business ...[which] shall include both financial and, where appropriate, non-financial key performance indicators ... including information relating to environmental and employee matters"*.

- There are also advantages to providing the additional information, it does not have to be seen as yet another cost for the organisation to carry. It can:
- improve your organisation's reputation
- aid communication with a wide variety of stakeholders
- play a major role in improving your management of risk, and
- help you to identify opportunities for savings in resources used and operating costs

The UK Government is to add certain of the EU Modernisation Directive requirements to its new draft regulations on the Operating and Financial Review. A full copy of the Draft Regulations on the Operating and Financial Review and Directors' Report can be obtained from DTI Publications - email

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and the star ratings published by the Healthcare Commission. For more information please see BBC News 11 January 2005.

### New ISO President

Masami Tanaka has started his presidency of the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and will be in place until December 2006. In his inaugural message he said, "Sustainable development and the global economy require International Standards that, at the same time lower technical barriers to trade and disseminate technologies and good practices. These standards should be globally relevant and designed to meet market and regulatory needs in a flexible, timely and cost effective manner." He also emphasised the role of ISO in helping developing countries that is reflected in the ISO Five Year Action Plan for Developing Countries and said that "Although our broad national membership represents a great diversity of languages, social backgrounds and economic development, the ISO Strategic Plan and Code of Ethics form a common ground on which we can build ISO's future together and bring a positive contribution to globalisation, as well as to our own countries." For further information please visit [www.iso.ch](http://www.iso.ch)

### Patient Feedback

Primary care trusts in England are to carry out a survey to help them highlight areas where they perform well and identify where improvements are required. The survey will cover areas such as:

- making appointments
- quality of care
- communication with health care professionals (nurses, doctors etc)
- dental care

The surveys are part of a national initiative and results will be collated centrally so that trusts can compare their results and learn from high performing trusts. The results will also contribute to the national performance indicators

### Good Practice for Organising Events

There is a new guide for organising outdoor events - PAS 51 Guide to industry best practice for organising events. It has been developed by the British Standards Institute (BSI) in collaboration with the National Outdoor Events Association and is closely associated with BS 8406 Events Stewardship. PAS 51 will be an essential guide for those involved in organising events and festivals and covers subjects such as:

- Risk Management
- Health and Safety
- Licensing
- Planning
- Crowd management
- Staffing
- Communication
- Site Management
- Traffic Management
- Security
- Electrical services
- Waste disposal
- Food Hygiene

For further information please visit [www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com)

### Long Hours Culture

One of the causes of stress at work is the long hours culture. According to the TUC survey, Britons work so much unpaid overtime that on average they are providing their employers with the equivalent of eight weeks work for free each year. This overtime is worth £23 billion says the TUC. Each worker would have on average received an extra £4,650 in 2004 for their overtime hours - if they had been paid. Although 70% of those doing the extra hours are "white collar" workers, other workers are also seen to work extra unpaid hours including

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machinery operatives and supermarket assistants. Londoners do the most overtime - the equivalent of almost an extra day/week (7hr 54mins). Wales and the West Midlands are a close second and third. The reasons for doing this overtime are varied, in some cases there is a valid need to work the extra hours to finish a key piece of work. However, in many cases it is driven by the "long hours culture", there is no emergency but you are expected to stay late. In some places unless you are seen putting in long hours then your progress through the organisation can be slow. Unfortunately, the quality of work or your own effectiveness and efficiency do not seem to be taken into the equation, in many companies - it is quantity and not quality. And, ironically the UK ranks poorly when it comes to productivity compared to other European Nations with shorter working hours. The full results of the TUC Survey will be published on 25<sup>th</sup> February and The TUC is also holding a national 'Work Your Proper Hours Day.' For more information please see BBC News January 2005.

### **Do Organisations value their people?**

Research by Deloitte and *Personnel Today* magazine has found that over 40% of organisations do not see human capital measurement as important. About 20% of large firms never expect to include information on 'human capital' in their annual reports and only 12% of organisations expect to report on it in their operating and financial reviews. Human Capital Management is about the management of recruitment, retention, training and development of employees and seeing employees as a positive asset rather than just a cost. The ISO 9001:2000 standard recognises that the quality of an organisation's deliverable is depended on the quality of the people and that the training and development of staff is a vital part of improving quality. It is therefore rather disappointing to see these results. Brett Walsh from Deloitte said "In a tight labour market where skill shortages are more acute, the knowledge gained through human capital

measurement provides organisations with vital information which helps them develop innovative people strategies to improve employee loyalty, performance and satisfaction". For more information please contact Personnel Today.

### **Good Design**

Manufacturers are beginning to realise that their designs need to take into account the growing older population and not just the youth market. This older sector of the market may have poorer sight and less nimble figures for example and so product design should take account of this. This does not mean that a special product needs to be designed, although in some cases it has been e.g. the BT big button phone, but that the best designs will be "inclusive", designed for the widest range of people possible. Packaging is another area that would benefit from improvement - it is not just older people that struggle with opening cartons for instance. Prof Roger Coleman from the Royal College of Art in London feels that companies should have more imagination and lateral thinking when it comes to the future of product design. And so add another checkpoint to your design checklist "is the design suitable for all ages?"!! For more information please see BBC News Jan 05

### **Kyoto Protocol signed by Russia**

The Kyoto protocol aims to reduce greenhouse gases that are blamed for global warming. Many of the developed nations have agreed to limit their emissions, but it was a major blow to treaty when the US refused to ratify it. However, Russia signed the federal law to back the protocol at the end of last year and this is being seen as a big step forward. Kyoto needed support from countries responsible for 55% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and after the US pulled out the only way to meet this figure was with Russia's support. Thus, this is seen as giving the protocol a fresh start.