

Npower reports CO2 reduction not a business priority in current economic climate

Submitted by: pr-sending-enterprises

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Npower has released data that shows more than eight out of ten businesses feel that Government targets to reduce CO2 emissions are unrealistic, with many not seeing the benefit of a small carbon footprint and relegating carbon reduction measures to concentrate on managing costs.

These are among the findings of the npower Business Energy Index (http://www.npower.com/web/In_business/Electricity_and_gas_supply/Businessenergy/index.htm), an annual report tracking business opinion on energy use and carbon emissions.

In this latest index, the majority of businesses (83%) said the target to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050 was unrealistic. Attitudes on the potential commercial opportunities of a small carbon footprint are equally downbeat; only 31% think new business will occur as a result of reducing emissions, compared to 47% in npower's 2008 index.

The findings also reveal that the economic downturn is leading businesses to prioritise finances over CO2 reduction; 97% said they are currently more concerned with reducing costs than emissions.

68% of businesses believe it is still important for the UK to take a leading role in reducing global emissions. This is a drop from the 2008 index in which 88% of businesses backed the Government's emission reduction plans.

Despite these opinions the Business Energy Index (http://www.npower.com/web/In_business/Electricity_and_gas_supply/Businessenergy/index.htm) reveals a renewed focus on energy efficiency measures, with the importance attached to energy efficiency at its highest level since 2005. Furthermore 80% of businesses say they are likely to increase energy efficiency initiatives and, while this was primarily for cost benefit, the same measures would also lead to emission reduction.

Energy efficiency (<http://www.npower.com/e3/energyefficiency.html>) was also rated as the most popular action for businesses to take to reduce emissions, with 43% giving this answer ahead of changing processes (22%) or switching to a green tariff (18%). However, the Index suggests that more needs to be done to support businesses, with 51% of those questioned saying they thought the Government did not offer enough useful advice on the issues of carbon reduction (http://www.npower.com/web/In_business/Energy_management/CarbonReductionLegislation/index.htm) and energy efficiency.

Julia Lynch-Williams, director of energy services at npower, said: "The Index shows that most businesses do not see the commercial benefits from having a small carbon footprint, but we can't escape the fact that climate change legislation and the strength of public feeling means that CO2 reduction remains important. The Government has set the UK on a path toward a low carbon economy and must now continue to stress to businesses the opportunities that will come from low carbon operations.

"Energy efficiency is an excellent way to save money and it's encouraging that many businesses are looking at this to reduce costs. While it's understandable that businesses are more focused on the bottom-line in the current economic crisis, we would encourage them to see energy management (http://www.npower.com/web/In_business/Energy_management/index.htm) as an effective means of reducing emissions as well as costs.

"Our advice to businesses is to make energy efficiency a priority now and in the long term."

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Notes to Editor:

In-depth telephone interviews were conducted in January 2009 with a representative sample of 300 UK businesses, comprising 200 small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with significant energy usage and 100 major energy users (MEUs).

The npower Business Energy Index (nBEI) is sponsored by npower, in association with the Major Energy Users Council (MEUC) and Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). The nBEI is designed and executed by Moffatt Associates, an independent research consultancy.

About npower:

npower is one of the top energy suppliers to the UK business market, serving over 230,000 small to medium sized enterprise sites and around 15,000 industrial and commercial customers, with over 100,000 sites.

npower is dedicated to helping UK businesses use energy more efficiently and therefore spend less money on their bills.

PR Contact:

Greg Phillimore
npower
Oak House
Worcester
WR4 9FP
0121 713 3795
www.npower.com/businessenergy