



GLOBAL RESEARCH PROTECTING BRANDS AND REPUTATION

Echo Research Communication of Progress 2011-12

Company name	Echo Research	Date	March 29th 2012
Unit (if applicable)		Contact name	Amy Wright
Address	Craven House, Station Road, Godalming GU7 1EX	Contact position	Senior Account Manager
		Contact telephone	+44 (0)1483 413 600
		UK Network membership date	2001
		Employee numbers	50+ (Ebiquity parent group: 600+)
Country	UK	Sector	Market research

Brief description of nature of business

Established in 1989, Echo Research is the premier global specialist in reputation analysis and stakeholder research. The company enables clients to measure how they are viewed and to protect the integrity of their brands and reputations. Echo works accurately and with impartiality, combining meticulous research methods with expert analysis to provide comprehensive, high-level reports. During 2011-2012, Echo became part of the Ebiquity group, which provides independent data-driven insights to the global media and marketing community to continuously improve clients' business performance.

As a full-service communication research company, Echo helps organisations achieve their ambitions by providing a clear and objective 'echo' of perceptions and expectations. To support clients' leadership and excellence, Echo understands and measures intangible assets such as reputation, communication effectiveness and drivers of behaviour. It does this by combining understanding of the drivers of brand, reputation and communication, with expertise in market research and media and digital media content analysis to provide tailored solutions for 500+ clients spanning all sectors and regions.

Echo has increasingly focused on the challenges of corporate social responsibility and corporate governance, with a particular emphasis on helping its client base to understand the views and impact of key stakeholder groups.

Echo's sector expertise ranges across financial and professional services, education, government and public sector, healthcare, consumer, telecommunications, media and technology, utilities, the environment and many more.

The company is on the *UK Register of Expert Witnesses* for legal purposes, a member of the college of the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), MRS (Market Research Society), ESOMAR (European research association), CASRO (American research association) and AMEC (Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communications), and is ISO-accredited for its quality procedures.

Statement of support for UNGC by the Chief Executive of Echo Research


In 2011-12, Echo Research maintained its full commitment to the Compact and observance of the Compact’s 10 ethical and environmental principles. Details of our activities for each Principle appear below.

Our strongest faith in and support for social, financial and environmental sustainability was again powerfully illustrated during the year by our implementation of high-profile global research on the interface between business and society.

The 2011 Echo / Cone Global CR Opportunity Study showed that 10,000 consumers in major countries around the globe are demanding higher levels of responsibility by companies in dealing with societal issues, with consumers reporting they were already using their own spending and loyalty to press these demands. The survey was fielded in countries comprising approximately half the world’s population, including the United States, Canada, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Russia, China, India and Japan. From this research we anticipated some interest in responsible business; what we encountered was a groundswell. The desire to see companies drive social and environmental change was clear and consistent across all the markets surveyed.

Together with the Institute for Human Rights & Business (IHRB), Echo ran an international survey among corporate stakeholders on corporate human rights preparedness, and publicised the results widely. These results were a clarion call to business to urgently attend to its human rights practices and reputational risk record, given that an alarmingly large proportion said their organisation had no formal policy on human rights, and relatively few reported taking the important precautionary measure of assessing their human rights impacts.

For us, conducting this research underpinned the UNGC’s main purpose in at least as strong a way as the sum of our ethical and environmental activities, by illuminating paths of best thinking and best practice about corporate responsibility for the benefit of the UNGC’s many adherents.

Signature		Position	Group Chief Executive
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PRINCIPLE 1	Business should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights
Our commitment / policy & management system	
We support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, including the right to safe and healthy working conditions, and the right to freedom of speech without distinction of gender, creed, national origin or other differentiator.	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On healthy working conditions, as a continuing practice we provided weekly fresh fruit supplies, having ceased supply of less healthy sweet cakes and pastries. Although in itself a modest act, it expressed our belief in the principle of small changes cumulatively making a big difference. ▪ In the health context again, a Visual Display Unit check was carried out for all staff to help maintain good posture and prevent back strain. ▪ Echo maintained a strict no-smoking policy ▪ Throughout the year, Echo provided fresh fruit free for staff. ▪ We supported and celebrated in public presentations the liberating effect of new social media on forces for democratic change in the Middle East. ▪ We encouraged the free engagement of all staff with charities of their choice for one day of paid leave, which led to individuals supporting a Food Bank, collecting clothes for a poor district in Mexico, supporting the charity the PSP Association - Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (http://www.pspeur.org) and Furniture Now!, a community waste, re-use and training organisation enabling access to learning and skills development, and others. 	

PRINCIPLE 2	Business should ensure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses
Our commitment / policy & management system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We aim to ensure that we are not complicit in human rights abuses 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A survey of our client base indicated no evidence of human rights abuses. 	
PRINCIPLE 3	Business should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining
Our commitment or policy & management system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conformance with the UK's Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004 continued. 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular meetings were held to inform /consult with employees: the work of a taskforce set up in the previous year to generate ideas and actions and encourage teamwork continued, and Echo participated in an Ebiquity-wide staff survey. 	
PRINCIPLE 4	Business should support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour
Our commitment or policy & management system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour. 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We continued to conduct pre-qualification and scrutiny of suppliers to ensure conformity with civilised standards in these areas. 	
PRINCIPLE 5	Business should support the effective abolition of child labour
Our commitment or policy & management system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our business is based on 'intellectual capital' whereby in practice 90% of Echo staff are in possession of a University degree or tertiary education equivalent. This in itself minimises the possibility of child labour within Echo. All our non-First World partners are providers of intellectual property which, again, <i>de facto</i> debars the employment of children. 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We continued to monitor our supply chain for any breach of this Principle which given the nature of the business is already extremely unlikely. 	
PRINCIPLE 6	Business should support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation
Our commitment or policy & management system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applications for employment are welcomed from all sections of the community. Policy is to ensure that no job application or employee should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, disability or age. 	
Measurable results or outcomes	

Our drive to minimise discrimination and enhance its opposite were divided into two types: 1. direct action by Echo, and 2. indirect / proxy action through a third party in order to extend our positive ‘footprint’, as follows:

- *Direct action:* Across Echo we employ a broad range of people with diverse ethnic backgrounds including Asian and Indian. In our US offices we employ Americans as well as immigrants to the United States and actively promote their capabilities. In our French office we directly employ people with diverse nationalities based in France and in Europe and fully support their development. In our Singapore office we employ people from across south-east Asia.
- *Direct action:* We consider that ‘caring responsibilities’ imply greater work-life balance for employees with young children, older relatives, and neighbours / friends / family needing help. This definition is potentially relevant to all members of staff. Flexitime working to permit a better work-life balance was taken up by, again, some 45 % of Echo staff, maintaining the levels of the two previous years.
- *Indirect / proxy action:* This year under ‘caring responsibilities’ we continued to support CHASE, a local children’s charity which cares for families with children and teenagers with life-limiting conditions across South West London, Surrey and Sussex. **Link:** <http://www.chasecare.org.uk/>. Echo staff raised money for CHASE by taking part in sponsored runs and monthly themed dress-down days (colours, eras, seasons, events). Echo also adopted the children’s special needs charity, I CAN, as its chosen charity for the year, providing probono evaluation support and active engagement on the Million Lost Voices Appeal, www.ican.org.uk
- *Direct action:* In respect of ‘race’, Echo has 200 staff and analysts working in 33 languages across the following markets: North / Central America, South America, Europe, GCC, Other Middle East & Africa and Asia / Oceania. Our multi-lingual analysts include, among many more, speakers of Afrikaans, Arabic, Chinese, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Nepalese, Russian, Macedonian, Thai, Ukrainian, Urdu and Uzbek.

PRINCIPLE 7

Business should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Our commitment / policy & management system

- Our interpretation of this Principle focuses on climate change, with the precautionary aspect consisting of present action despite the uncertainty of future impact.
- We believe it is important to support organisations that can extend our beneficial environmental influence beyond what we could achieve in our own right i.e. we support the proxy principle as a multiplier of positive impact.

Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes

- We kept up to date on EU Directives through SuPeRB and Business EcoLogic.

PRINCIPLE 8	Business should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
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Our commitment / policy & management system
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- Echo aims to reduce its negative environmental impact through recycling and minimising energy use.

Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes
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- We took further steps in reducing the potential quantities of paper that we and our clients use, by upgrading and refining our major electronic media monitoring and search facility, EchoSonar, to run on the EVO2 platform. This system draws on up to 50,000 online titles and permits Echo's clients to do the same, thus replacing an equivalent volume of paper.
- In the UK, a strong initiative was taken by our Ethics and Environment team was taken to bring recycling bins to the company to reduce company waste to landfill, for which background research was put in place and a review of recycling options undertaken. At year-end we were at the point of site selection.
- Virtually 100% of Echo Research products were supplied to clients in electronic rather than paper form. As a result, stationery and printing costs were again minimised here.
- The majority of paper used was recycled (Green "Evolve").
- We have a standing requirement of our stationery suppliers to recommend green options.
- The sending of 1000+ paper Christmas cards was replaced by electronic greetings and a donation of £1 for every card saved to the organisation I CAN. I CAN is a leading children's communication charity (www.ican.org.uk) which supports children with speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Echo USA expanded its recycling efforts in conjunction with its new parent company (and office partner), Ebiquity. Dedicated recycling bins were set up throughout the office for paper, glass, aluminium and plastic. In an effort to reduce employee purchases of plastic water bottles, the company installed fresh water tanks at various locations in the office. For printing of materials in "draft" state, emphasis was placed upon the re-use of paper where only one side is printed. Toner cartridges were also recycled.
- We restricted travel where feasible to public transport (up to 80% of total Echo business journeys last year). In our French office in particular, public transport, train and metro (underground) were favoured for everyday use, not least for the very low carbon footprint left by the nuclear electricity used to run most of these services in France.
- In our French office again, we continued to focus on using recyclable materials (paper, ink).

PRINCIPLE 9	Business should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies
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Our commitment / policy & management system
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- We support the introduction, development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes
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- Any obsolete or broken computing equipment was collected by our Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)-certified IT collection company. According to their website, they "recycle over 95% of all electronic equipment by dismantling and recycling the raw materials with possible refurbishment options."

PRINCIPLE 10**Business should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery****Our commitment / policy & management system**

- We aim to work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes

- In 2010-11 we joined with the Institute for Human Rights & Business (IHRB) to run an international survey among corporate stakeholders on corporate human rights preparedness, central to Principle 10. The results were widely publicised as a call to business to urgently attend to its human rights practices and reputational risk record. A very large majority of respondents (97%) believed businesses need to respect the human rights of those whose lives they touch; most (73%) felt that human rights abuse claims have made businesses keener to see what effect their operations have on human rights; a large majority (88%) knew the UNGC framework "Protect, Respect, Remedy" very well. Yet given this high level of familiarity, an alarmingly large proportion said their organisation had no formal policy on human rights, and relatively few (35%) troubled to measure the impact of their business on human rights. With IHRB we extensively publicised these findings in order to encourage the business community to raise its standards in this area.
- All employees across all Echo offices signed an anti-bribery agreement in 2011.

How we make this COP available to our stakeholders

We make this COP available through the quarterly Echo e-zine which is sent to several thousand Echo stakeholders and by posting key points on our website. In terms of raising broader awareness of our actions, Echo maintains its commitment to Corporate Responsibility and the UNGC through its professional engagement in reputation management, of which CSR strategies form such an important part, and through *pro bono* involvement in the International Business Leaders' Forum and the charity I CAN.



Expert Witness



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Craven House, Station Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1EX, United Kingdom
 T +44 (0) 1483413600 F + 44 (0)1483 413 601 E infouk@echoresearch.com

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www.echoresearch.com