

Echo Research Communication of Progress 2006-7

Company name	Echo Research	Date	February 5th 2008
Unit (if applicable)		Contact name	Nigel Middlemiss
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		UK Network membership date	2004
		Employee numbers	45
Country	UK	Sector	Opinion research

Brief description of nature of business

Echo Research is a leading independent specialist provider of reputation analysis, established in 1989 with offices in Europe and the USA, and research suppliers in Asia.

With 145 research managers and analysts, the group supports many FTSE and Fortune 100 companies, as well as public sector clients (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office), regulatory bodies (UK Health and Safety Executive) and non-governmental organisations (WWF).

Echo's practice sectors span financial and professional services, higher education, healthcare, consumer, telecommunications, media and technology, utilities, energy, public sector and NGOs.

Providing impartial and thorough stakeholder studies and media analysis, Echo Research is on the *UK Register of Expert Witnesses*. The company delivers communications intelligence to help its clients measure and improve communications effectiveness, and track emerging issues and risks to reputation. Its media content reports have been used by the Press Complaints Commission; its stakeholder and focus group research has been tabled to Government Ministers to help drive regulatory change; and its senior management facilitation programmes and internal surveys have supported change management and brand development.

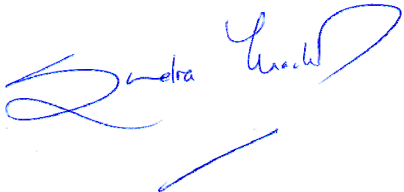
Compared with other sector players, Echo's clients have won a record number of industry Association of Measurement and Evaluation of Communications awards in recent years for measurement and integrated research, including top Platinum Awards.

ISO-accredited for quality, and a supporter of the United Nations Global Compact, 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.

This COP reports principally on conformance and progress in respect of the UK offices, with selected references to our offices in Paris and New York.

Statement of support for UNGC

In 2007, Echo maintained its commitment to the UN Global Compact. In particular we consolidated our policy statements on several UNGC Principles and widened our measurable activities under each Principle, combining direct and proxy actions. This is a long and gradual journey and we are proud that Echo began its engagement so early on in the life of the UNGC.

Signature		Position	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 and 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"> ▪ In 2007, we adopted a formal written policy for the Principle ▪ We conducted a Country Walk lasting half a working day as a health booster for all staff ▪ We entered into a commitment not to work for tobacco companies, in light of the negative health effects of smoking, which now appear to us acceptably scientifically proven. ▪ We initiated practical engagement with Reporters Without Borders, a special interest group working against censorship and laws which undermine press freedom. 	
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"> ▪ We adopted a formal written policy for this Principle. ▪ We supported moves towards democratisation by countries formerly under non-democratic regimes by (for example) accepting a commission as independent Expert Witnesses on the balance of pre-election news coverage in Armenia. 	
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"> ▪ Conformity with the UK's Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004. 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular meetings held to inform /consult with employees: 2-way monthly debriefs with all staff, monthly Operations Team meetings, and twice-monthly Sector / Practice meetings. 	
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"> ▪ Echo adopted a formal written policy for this Principle ▪ We have received confirmation of adherence to this Principle by our non-UK suppliers Manthan Ltd, Bangalore, India. 	
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 alone minimises the likelihood of child labour within Echo. Our India-based suppliers Manthan Services indicated they hire people with a minimum of a bachelor's degree thus ensuring that all staff have at least 12+3 years of education and are above the age of 20. As part of their corporate policy, all their suppliers/vendors providing support services (security, housekeeping, maintenance etc.) are compliant with the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, Government of India. ▪ We believe strongly in supporting organisations that can extend beneficial social influence beyond what we could achieve on our own ("proxy" approach) and we apply the approach to this Principle (see below). 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Indirect / proxy action:</i> As a company Echo provided financial support for the international charity WaterAid. This indirectly reduces the requirement on children in, for example, Africa to find and carry water over long distances to their villages (effectively unpaid child labour) and instead to be with their families, study or play. Ref: http://www.wateraid.org.uk/. For the second year, the sum donated by Echo enabled the provision (or equivalent) of a village hand-dug well with hand pump to serve 250 people on a sustainable basis with an associated hygiene education package. 	
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	

These are divided into two types, direct action by Echo, and 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 offices we directly employ people with diverse nationalities based in France and in Europe and fully support their development.
- *Direct action:* Under 'caring responsibilities', we consider that part of Principle 6 is greater work-life balance for employees with young children. Staggered working hours to permit greater work-life balance were taken up by 43% of Echo staff, a marginal increase on the previous year.
- *Direct action:* Under 'race', our multi-lingual analysts again included a number (5-6% of Echo's total language capability) from ethnic minority backgrounds: Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, Nepalese, Punjabi, Urdu, and Wolof.
- *Indirect / proxy action:* Under 'caring responsibilities', the decision was taken to work in partnership with a new charity, Working Families, which supports working parents and carers and helps employers create workplaces that foster family-friendly working practices and work-life balance. Ref: <http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk>
- *Indirect / proxy action:* Under 'gender', an important Echo project concluded in 2007 was a report for British parliamentarians on the status and representation of women in public life.
- *Indirect / proxy action:* Staff in the French office engaged in *pro bono* activity to make children aware of cultural differences (exhibitions, reading workshops, world dances).

Principle 7	Business should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges
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Our commitment / policy & management system

- Our interpretation of this Principle focuses on climate change - the eventual impact is uncertain but the need to take action now remains important.
- We believe it is important to support organisations who 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

- Support was continued for the International Tree Foundation which plants trees as a carbon dioxide sink. Ref: www.internationaltreefoundation.org
- Raised funds through an internal programme for the planting of oak and maple trees as a CO2 sink.
- Kept up to date on EU Directives through SuPeRB and Business EcoLogic.
- The safe use of non-greenhouse-gas-producing technology was supported via services for nuclear energy regulators.
- In our US office, support to develop the UN's disaster relief capabilities, including unforeseen environmental disasters, through CERF. CERF coordinates the funding for such relief on a worldwide basis. We provided in 2007 *pro bono* counseling on marketing and web site development.

Principle 8	Business should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
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Our commitment / policy & management system

- Echo aims to reduce its negative environmental impact through recycling and minimising energy use.

Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes

- We provided *pro bono* (free-of-charge) research services to the global sustainability charity WWF, which conserves biodiversity and addresses threats to the environment.
- We restricted travel where feasible to public transport (75% of total Echo business travel last year, a rise of 25% year-on-year).
- 550 unwanted books were “reader-recycled” through the Echo book pool (up 10% YOY)
- 95% of Echo Research products supplied to clients in electronic rather than paper form in 07-08, compared with 70% in 06-07.
- Some paper was recycled through SCA Recycling company, although less than in the previous year due to supplier difficulties.
- All paper used was 100% recycled (Green “Evolve”)
- 1000+ Christmas cards replaced by email greeting and donation of £1 for every card replaced to WaterAid charity (see above)
- We have a standing requirement of stationery suppliers to recommend green options.
- In our French office, we raised staff awareness on paper reduction, increased electronic traffic over paper, drove down the use of printing, and encouraged our staff to use public transport.

Principle 9	Business should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies
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Our commitment / policy & management system

- We support the introduction, development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes

- We purchased 1 server for mass data storage which has a low energy profile giving reduced power use and fewer greenhouse emissions.
- We encouraged staff use of ‘Blackle’, the lower-consumption version of the Google search engine.

Principle 10	Business should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery
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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

- We addressed this principle in 2007 by developing a formal written company policy statement.

How we make this COP available to our stakeholders

We make this COP available through the quarterly Echo e-zine which is sent to 2,500 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, its leadership in assessing CSR strategies, and its *pro bono* involvement in the International Business Leaders' Forum Measurement Committee. Throughout its daily work and thought leadership activities in articles and conferences, Echo's commitment to CSR and the UNGC is underlined wherever possible.