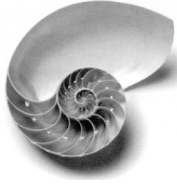




GLOBAL RESEARCH PROTECTING BRANDS AND REPUTATION



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PICTURE  
OF YOUR  
ORGANISATION



## COMMUNICATION OF PROGRESS (COP) in implementing the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles for Business

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## CONTENTS

Since 2001, the Echo Research Group has subscribed to the principles of the United Nations Global Compact. We are proud of this fact and have since those early days regularly supported and participated in the UK Chapter of the UNGC, both at plenary and Executive Committee levels. This includes our financial contribution to the operation of the UK Secretariat, instituted in early 2006.

Echo's principle area of business is reputation analysis. We provide opinion research to help clients understand the structure of their reputation, image, campaigns and messages, adding practical intelligence to facilitate strategic decisions. This can be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of communications, monitor competitors' strengths and weaknesses, and evaluate each client's standing among stakeholders.

In this COP, we are very pleased to be able to report progress on our programme of activities in support of UNGC's 10 Principles.

We are conducting the programme in two ways: through **direct action** by individuals in the Echo team and Echo as a company, and **by proxy**, that is, through the agency of organisations which engage professionally with global and local environmental and ethical challenges.

Echo's Ethics and Environment Taskforce has been the main instrument to design and achieve the 2006-7 programme. The parameters established early on for the company's Corporate Responsibility activities are that they should:

1. relate clearly to Echo's status as subscribers to UNGC
2. create engagement with other countries and timezones, given Echo's international status
3. enable engagement not only by raising funds but also by devoting time to suitable causes
4. do "little things" internally every day as well as doing one or two "bigger things" externally on a corporate basis.
5. deliver, as collateral, business benefits to the company e.g. through reduced overheads and increased marketing profile.

Examining the 10 Principles of the UNGC, and with the 5 guidelines above in mind, we identified where we conform to the Principles, and where we could still more proactively live them out. In summary:

- **Human Rights (Principles 1 and 2):** We already observe these as a company.
- **Labour (Principles 3, 4, 5 and 6):** We already observe these as a company. Echo is especially inclusive on Principle 6 (elimination of discrimination) through our use of ethnic minority analysts.
- **Environment (Principles 7, 8 and 9):** As well as energy saving measures through recycling and low-energy computer selection, we are offsetting Echo's carbon footprint through greenhouse-abatement activities.
- **Anti-Corruption (Principle 10):** We conform to this principle.

The seven *Ethical Principles (1-6, 10)* are implemented by a variety of means.

The first is through the provision of support for *WaterAid*. The choice of this global charity represents and reflects the international nature of the Echo Group, with offices in London, Godalming, Paris and New York and alliances in India, Australia and South Africa. WaterAid is dedicated to providing safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people, and with a strong presence in Africa. It is felt to be especially appropriate given the high-profile international concerns with drought and desertification, and in light of 2006 being The Year of Africa. Indirectly our WaterAid involvement provides support for Principle 5, the abolition of child labour, since children are often required to find and carry water over considerable distances for families and villages, instead of being able to play or study, which is the right of other children in more fortunate parts of the world. Via WaterAid we also encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies in bringing water to deprived communities.

Another way in which we have striven to conduct our business ethically manner is by endorsing the balance between "working" and "living". This is an extension of Principle 6, the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. Work-life balance is an issue faced by some Echo team members, in particular the young mothers and fathers among us. Echo therefore supports the *Chase Children's Service*, based locally in Loseley House, near Guildford, Surrey, UK, which gives parents opportunities for respite care to rebalance their own lives. (These are in most cases the parents of seriously ill children). This particular part of the Echo programme is local to the UK office only, with the recognition that community endeavour, with results that are locally visible, is known to be a motivator for teams to buy into, give backing to and engage willingly with socially responsible activities. Echo further promotes a workplace culture that engenders work-life balance by allowing staggered working hours.

Echo is further committed to equality of opportunity in employment by welcoming applications from all sections of the community. We aim to ensure that no job application or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, disability or age. The nature of Echo's work – multi-lingual research – also means that in practice employees and analysts are drawn from many ethnic and national backgrounds.

Furthermore, employees joining the company's Group Personal Pension Scheme, operated through Norwich Union, can choose to put some or all of the Echo contribution to their pension in ethical funds. This is explained to all new staff joining the scheme for the first time.

Finally, Echo is committed to areas of activity including making charitable donations instead of sending corporate Christmas cards; supporting staff, clients and other stakeholders in sponsored events to raise money for our chosen causes; allowing staff to use Echo premises and time to raise awareness of and gain support for charitable events (e.g. Friends of Bulgaria events); and co-ordinating initiatives that allow staff to make other contributions in support of Principles 1-6 and 10.

In respect of the three *Environmental Principles (7-9)*, Echo aims to use sustainable products and support local suppliers to minimise the environmental impact of delivery distances (i.e. greater fuel consumption), while balancing this with commercial value-for-money criteria.

In terms of our practical engagement with proxy (professional environmental) organisations, we support the *International Tree Foundation*, based in West Sussex, in

the planting of trees to act as a carbon dioxide sink and therefore both a buffer against greenhouse warming and a partial offset of Echo's own carbon footprint through energy consumption. (1 tree = sequestration of 500kgs CO<sub>2</sub>). During FY 2006-7 some 125 trees will be planted and a bench placed by the planted area carrying a plaque marked Echo Research. There will be an accompanying ITF press release and publicity. Echo team members will have the opportunity to attend and assist with the planting ceremony.

Furthermore, we aim to address environmental issues before they become legislation within the UK. To do this we keep up to date on EU Directives through the Surrey Programme for Environmentally Responsible Businesses (SuPeRB) and from Business Eco Logic.

In terms of recycling and materials re-use, Echo collects used silver foil for charitable purposes, and recycles paper via the SCA Recycling company. Posters on energy saving are to be designed and posted round the office during the coming year.

Suppliers are routinely requested to provide Echo with details of any environmental / ethical policies they have adopted. In particular stationery and furniture suppliers are asked to be pro-active in recommending sustainable products to us, such as materials with a recycled content.

**In these many different ways, and acting within our necessarily circumscribed capabilities as an SME (Small/Medium Sized Enterprise), we aim to support the aspirations of the Global Compact for Business and to realise in practice the UNGC's 10 Principles.**

