



GLOBAL RESEARCH PROTECTING BRANDS AND REPUTATION

Echo Research

Communication of Progress 2010-11

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Country	UK	Sector	Market research

Brief description of nature of business

Established in 1989, Echo Research is the premier independent specialist provider of reputation analysis. The company has offices in London, Surrey, Paris, New York, and Singapore. With 50 research managers and 150 analysts, the Echo group supports FTSE100 and Fortune 500 companies, public sector clients, regulatory bodies, non-governmental organisations and nation states.

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

Providing impartial and in-depth stakeholder studies and analysis of mainstream and social media, the company delivers objective intelligence to enable its clients to measure and improve communications effectiveness and relationships, and identify emerging issues and risks to reputation. Its media content reports have been used by the Press Complaints Commission in Britain; its stakeholder and focus group research has been tabled to Government Ministers to drive regulatory change; and its senior management facilitation programmes and internal surveys have supported change management and brand development. Echo Research is on the *UK Register of Expert Witnesses* for legal purposes, and 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).

Evidence of the company's sector-leading excellence is that it has won on its clients' behalf over 80 awards for reputation measurement and research, an outstanding achievement compared with its sector peers.

ISO-accredited for its quality procedures, Echo addresses through its services the challenges of corporate social responsibility and corporate governance, enabling its client base to understand the views and behaviours of their stakeholders in this area.

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


In 2010-11, 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 powerfully illustrated during the year by the completion and launch of a new, integrated, global study in our Echo CSR series initiated some 11 years ago.

Developed together with the International Business Leaders’ Forum (IBLF), which runs the UK UNGC Network secretariat, the report *A World in Trust: Leadership and Corporate Responsibility* explores influences on the future development of corporate sustainability and social responsibility. In it are distilled the opinions of more than 50 global business leaders on strengthening responsible impulses to gain greater business success. The report enjoys a rich and ambitious scope, looking at links between CR and the all-important trust factor, the journey travelled and ahead including ‘roadblocks’, indices of social media influence, and guidelines for brands wanting to better communicate their CR.

Our research underpins the UNGC’s main purpose in, perhaps, an even stronger way than the sum of our ethical and environmental activities can, by illuminating the path of best thinking and best practice about corporate responsibility for the benefit of the Compact’s many adherents.

The report is freely available at http://www2.echoresearch.com/downloads/files/Echo_Research_CR10_Report.pdf?submit2=Download+Report

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"> ▪ As a new initiative on the health front, we made available to staff weekly fresh fruit supplies and ceased providing sweet cakes and pastries. Although in itself a small act, it expressed well our fervently held belief in the principle of small changes cumulatively making a big difference. ▪ We are currently carrying out a Visual Display Unit check for all staff to help maintain good posture and prevent back strain. ▪ Echo is itself a company with a strict no-smoking policy. ▪ Having reviewed our commitment not to work for tobacco companies, based on the negative health effects of smoking, we took a changed view that, if our engagement with them was to supply research into their CSR, and was therefore to lead to higher standards of social responsibility on their part, the net effect would be positive. Accordingly it was decided that Echo would as a principle work with such companies, which in 2010-2011 we have done. 	
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"> ▪ Our continuing research programme with a Middle Eastern Government Cabinet Office enabled us to relay to them the external views of significant stakeholders such as Western governments and media, and make them more aware of human rights standards as ‘lived’ in democracies globally. It was noted that this particular country did not experience the wave of popular unrest and dissatisfaction that has swept across many countries in the region in recent months. 	

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. 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular meetings were held to inform /consult with employees: a taskforce was set up to generate ideas and actions to encourage teamwork and a Forum was facilitated to encourage staff to talk openly about their views and concerns. This led directly to a reorganisation of the teams and a new Director appointment to better address their needs and suggestions for improvement. 	
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 have received confirmation of adherence to this Principle by our non-UK suppliers Feedback Market Research Ltd, Sharjah, UAE. 	
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 debars 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. ▪ We have received confirmation of adherence to this Principle by our non-UK suppliers Feedback Market Research Ltd, Sharjah, UAE. ▪ We believe strongly in supporting organisations that can extend beneficial social influence beyond what we could achieve on our own (the "proxy" approach) and we apply the approach to this Principle. 	
Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Indirect / proxy action:</i> As a company Echo has continued to provide financial support for the international charity WaterAid, which indirectly reduced 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, to study or play. Link: http://www.wateraid.org.uk/. For the fourth year, the sum donated by Echo enabled the provision (or equivalent) of five locally built rope pumps in Mozambique. Rope pumps are easier for communities to maintain than many other types of handpump, and therefore contribute to ensuring the sustainable, long-term delivery of safe, clean water to many of the more remote areas in Mozambique. 	

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	
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Direct action:</i> 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. <i>Direct action:</i> 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. <i>Indirect / proxy action:</i> This year under ‘caring responsibilities’ we are supporting the charity 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 have raised money for CHASE by taking part in sponsored runs and monthly themed dress-down days (colours, eras, seasons, events). <i>Indirect / proxy action:</i> We encouraged our staff to take advantage of the UK government’s Childcare Voucher scheme, with some 10% of the team doing so. <i>Direct action:</i> In respect of ‘race’, Echo have 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. <i>Indirect / proxy action:</i> Staff in the French office again engaged in <i>pro bono</i> activity to make children aware of cultural differences (exhibitions, reading workshops, world dances). In addition, some staff supported a nursery school in Sri Lanka (Sirigaya), providing clothes and shoes for the children of extremely poor parents in the region, as well as notebooks, pencils and other items according to need; other Echo staff spent time helping children after school with homework or were active as members of a theatre group that collects funds for charities to buy books, food & other goods. 	
PRINCIPLE 7	Business should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges
Our commitment / policy & management system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	

- The use of postal services went up slightly year-on-year, largely as a result of distributing the World in Trust report (printed on sustainable forestry sources) mentioned above. This is somewhat regrettable from the environmental point of view, but does demonstrate that principles may inevitably clash with business practicalities: in this case the desire of some readers to have hard copies of a substantial document so they can read it “on the train/flight”.
- We kept up to date on EU Directives through SuPeRB and Business EcoLogic.
- The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) was another initiative with which we engaged, evaluating the communications impact of some of the partnership initiatives that have taken place in the UK as part of the IYB. The credibility and brand association arising from the backing of the UN and Defra (Government Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) were important benefits for partners, as were the opportunities for networking and collaborative partnerships this backing created.
- The US office has worked with a number of leading IT providers to help them better understand awareness of "green" solutions for technology and the findings were made available for public release to help raise awareness of green IT alternatives and best practices.
- The US office also has a proposal outstanding with a leading philanthropic organisation to help them monitor issues around the world in several key areas, including HIV/AIDS Prevention, Family Health, and Education.
- The US further submitted a proposal to gather consumer attitudes around the use of wind energy and wind farms.

PRINCIPLE 8	Business should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
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Our commitment / policy & management system	
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Echo aims to reduce its negative environmental impact through recycling and minimising energy use. | |
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Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We took an important step in reducing the potential quantities of paper that we and our clients use, by rolling out a major new electronic media monitoring and search facility, EchoSonar. This system draws on 30,000 - 35,000 online titles and permits Echo's clients to do the same, thus replacing an equivalent volume of paper.▪ More than 95% of Echo Research products were again supplied to clients in electronic rather than paper form. As a result, stationery and printing costs were down by a further 10% year-on-year.▪ The majority of paper used was recycled (Green "Evolve"), although slightly less than in earlier periods because of the requirement for a small number of high-quality-finish photographic papers. This was an occasion where a pragmatic balance had to be struck between commercial and sustainability imperatives.▪ 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 charity WaterAid (see above).▪ We restricted travel where feasible to public transport (up to 80% of total Echo business journeys last year).▪ In our Paris office, we further raised staff awareness on paper reduction, increased electronic traffic over paper and drove down the use of printing. In addition, we promoted webinars as much as possible to maintain client contact and proximity while avoiding transport when not totally necessary. Furthermore, we encouraged the use of trains rather than planes when travelling in France, or abroad when destinations allowed.▪ Echo USA actively recycles paper, glass and aluminium. Whenever possible, paper is re-used for materials that need to be printed in a "draft" state. US staff are encouraged to use public transportation by providing each employee with a flexible spending plan. This plan allows employees to withhold money from their pay tax-free and place it in a flexible spending account. These funds are used solely for ground transportation expenses. | |
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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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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We support the introduction, development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies. | |
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Actions implemented in the last year and outcomes	
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ As outlined under the previous Principle, we invested heavily in IT & R&D to enable more online sourcing and researching through EchoSonar – the first ever global, all-language online and social media capability.▪ In the past year we continued to consolidate some of our inefficient and outdated servers using virtualisation software. This made it possible to run multiple server operating systems <i>virtually</i> on one <i>physical</i> server - not only a more efficient use of our server hardware, but requiring less electricity.▪ 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." | |
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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

- Towards the end of 2010-11 we opened discussions with a potential partner on raising awareness of how few of the world's largest companies have made a public commitment against corruption, and how this state of affairs might be improved.

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 (please see the Chief Executive's introductory remarks).



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