

The Importance of Carbon Reductions as a First Step



Centre for Assessment Ltd.
Jan, 2023 - 3 min read
www.centreforassessment.co.uk

A UKAS-accredited body, we provide certification to ISO and sector-specific Standards, as well as specialist training services.

AN ARTICLE WRITTEN WITH PASSION

I know what you're thinking. It's yet another boring, preachy article from someone in the climate change 'space', banging on about why reducing carbon emissions in your business is so, so important. As if there aren't plenty of similar articles, news stories, flyers and suchlike available on the internet, all spouting the same message, that businesses need to 'wake up to the issue of climate change', 'do their bit', 'play their part', et cetera, et cetera...

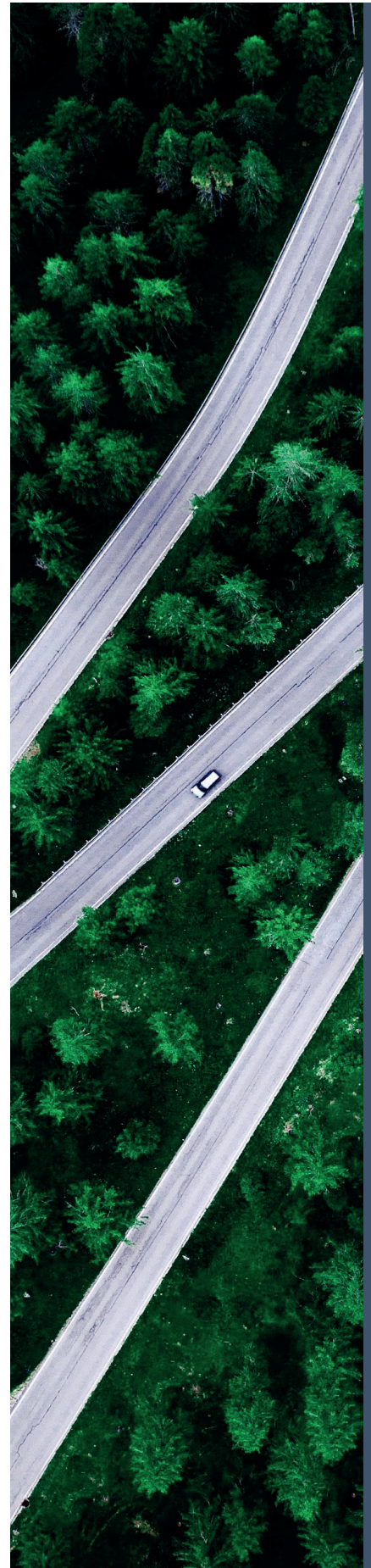
Is this article any different?

Well, actually, no. And there's a reasons for that. It's because that 'same' underlying message, about the importance of everyone, and I mean everyone, doing not

only what they can, but what they must, to reduce carbon emissions, is an absolutely necessary message that needs to be repeated and repeated as much as it can be in the face of an undeniable (and yes, an inconvenient) truth.

And that truth is a simple one – carbon emissions going into our atmosphere are causing our planet to heat up. As our planet heats up, the 'climate' in all the different parts of the world starts to alter (droughts, floods, forest fires, heatwaves, rising sea levels) and as a result of those changes in climate, people suffer and die.

As a truth, it's really that simple. Climate change is an existential threat to millions and millions of people across the planet.



centreforassessment.co.uk
0161 237 4080 | sales@centreforassessment.co.uk
Lee House, 90 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester, M1 5JW

Which is why that underlying message, repeated ad nauseum in dozens and dozens of articles, news stories, flyers and suchlike, and repeated again in this article, will and must continue to be absolutely necessary, because the time for action, for individuals and businesses alike to do what they must, is now!

And the strangest thing is that doing what must be done is not difficult.

In fact, much of it is common sense.

Take energy for instance.

Energy, whether it's gas to heat your buildings and offices or the electricity to run your machines and processes, is expensive.

Very expensive.

So using less, whether that's through:

- using technology (like adjusting office heating to be as efficient as possible, fitting energy-efficient lighting like LEDs, making more use of online meetings to reduce the need for travel, buying energy efficient office equipment, investing in electric vehicles, etc.); or
- engagement with employees (encouraging and incentivising car-sharing or the use of public transport, adopting a cycle-to-work scheme, promoting a 'switch-off-and-unplug' mentality, etc.); or
- ensuring good manufacturing practice ('right-first-time', minimising waste, maximising the efficiency of production) not only makes good business sense because it directly reduces costs and helps boost profitability, but it also gives the added bonus of reducing the business's carbon emissions.

and it's not just the emissions from the use of gas and electricity that you could reduce.

- It's the emissions from your business's vehicles (and those of your delivery service providers) through switching to electric vehicles.
- It's working with your suppliers to help them reduce the carbon emissions associated with the products they provide.
- It's reducing the energy demands of the products you yourself produce by making them more energy-efficient.

And for the more ambitious, there's the potential to generate your own electricity through technologies such as wind turbines and solar panels, although these technologies admittedly come at a price that is too often difficult for businesses to justify.



But can't I just buy renewable electricity and 'green' gas from my energy supplier? I hear you ask.

Actually, yes, you can, and that would mean that there aren't any carbon emissions associated with the gas and electricity, which is certainly a positive. But remember, 'green' tariffs are usually more expensive than non-renewable tariffs (although the difference is often marginal) and, more importantly, you're still paying for what you use, so whilst you may be 'doing your bit' in relation to climate change and eliminating some of your carbon emissions (but not all!), not reducing the amount of electricity and gas you use will still impact markedly on your business's financial performance.

What about just offsetting my carbon emissions? I hear you ask.

Do I really need to put all that effort into reducing or changing tariffs when I could just pay buy some carbon credits?

Once again, yes you could, and in doing so (providing they were good quality carbon offsets) you'd at least be doing something.

But think about it for a moment.

If you want to be able to claim you're 'doing your bit' as a business in helping to tackle climate change, you could calculate your carbon footprint (which for arguments sake let's say is 50 tonnes of CO2 per year) and then simply buy 50 tonnes worth of carbon offsets – job done.

And do the same next year...and the year after...

And yes, you could legitimately claim to be a 'carbon neutral' business.

But if you made the efforts and reduced your carbon footprint by 10% each year, you'd go from having to buy 50 tonnes of offsets to 45, to 40, then to 36, each year saving not only the costs of the energy and fuel you would've been using, but also on the costs of the offsets themselves. And with the price of offsets rising quickly, and due to increase substantially over the next few years, standing still with regards to the amount of emissions that require offsetting is likely to become a very expensive option indeed.

So why wouldn't you want to do everything you can to reduce your carbon emissions?



ONE FINAL THOUGHT.

If you are, like many in business, considering adopting PAS 2060 as a way of demonstrating your climate change credentials to your customers, employees and your other stakeholders, achieving a demonstrable reduction in your carbon emissions is a pre-requisite for successful certification. If you can't demonstrate your carbon emissions have gone down, you can't be certified.

So identifying and then delivering carbon emission reductions is the best first step that any business can take.