

A greener planet is in every

On November 1st, Glasgow plays host to this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference where the heads of international delegations will discuss sustainability and reversing environmental decline.

It has become urgent in our industry that we have the same discussions. According to a BCG report, the ICT industry accounts for 3 to 4 per cent of global CO2 emissions - about twice that of civil aviation. With global data traffic increasing by around 60 per cent per year this contribution is forecast to grow to 14 per cent of all CO2 emissions by 2040.

The report reads: "Within telecoms specifically, the issue of sustain-

ability has become urgent. The unprecedented demand for digital communications during the pandemic has forced telco infrastructures to consume more energy than ever, expanding their carbon footprint."

The telecommunication industry is also uniquely placed to help other industries become more energy efficient, providing customer enablement solutions to clients and securing reseller's role as a trusted and ethical partner.

We therefore asked our contributors, what steps can business leaders in the channel take to reduce their company's environmental impact, and can they benefit from the image of a sustainability champion?



GAVIN JONES
BT WHOLESale

"There are multiple ways that we can overcome sustainability challenges in the channel. Firstly, investing in energy efficient and climate resilient networks will future-proof connectivity, revenue streams and the environment. This comes down to choosing materials that minimise energy outputs and supporting reuse and recycling initiatives to promote a circular economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Collectively, we can reduce energy needs and decarbonise the energy we use and buy, including the purchase of renewable energy. Having a detailed understanding of power use is extremely valuable in helping businesses to control their energy use, understand implications of different deployment options, and to choose how to rationalise declining systems. At BT we have worked to reduce engineer visits to site when providing services and we have been developing a range of greener services to allow multiple tasks to be completed at the same time to keep down 'truck rolls'."



CAROL MCGROTTY
VAPOUR

"Companies often believe every sustainability initiative they roll out must be major if it is to have an environmental impact. Yet really, what's perhaps more powerful, is the collective effort of as many people as possible, and the continued achievement of even marginal gains. For example, using secure public cloud services rather than on-premise server rooms or private data centres can dramatically reduce carbon footprint. The wider consolidation of hardware can further lower power consumption, especially if more energy efficient models are chosen. Seemingly redundant kit should be disposed of responsibly, ideally using compliant yet environmentally responsible recovery schemes that prioritise reuse or recycling. A clearly communicated mission statement should encourage employees to also be considerate and responsible for their own behaviours at the workplace and at home. 'Green thinking' then stands a better chance of growing to become a mindset, rather than simply a fad."



SARAH PARSONS
CITYFIBRE

"Having a sustainability champion at CityFibre has enabled the importance of our environmental impact to be brought to an executive level and to be considered in decision making across the business. CityFibre has also ensured our Responsible Business strategy aligns with our existing business strategy and KPIs. We are aware it is our responsibility to understand the environmental impact of building a digital infrastructure and take the relevant steps to minimise this. At the start of 2021 CityFibre appointed Anthesis, a world-leading sustainability consultancy, to help collate and understand our GHG emission data. Now CityFibre has a clear understanding of our impact, we are working to identify what we are doing well and what we could do better. Identifying and implementing opportunities for reduction of GHG emissions is the next step CityFibre will be taking as part of our Responsible Business strategy, as well as setting some ambitious goals."



NEIL WILSON
VIRTUAL1

"Embracing cloud technologies will be our most effective means of combatting climate change as an industry. The promotion of UCaaS, SaaS and IaaS solutions are already a hugely more efficient use of resources than what we saw in the legacy world of dedicated, onsite servers - not to mention that they are also dramatically more energy efficient to run. This is all before the more obvious environmental benefits that the applications can deliver, such as less travel. We already see tender responses questioning the environmental impact and sustainability of suppliers, their supply chains and their solutions. In such a highly competitive industry, being able to deliver an effective and transparent message around this will undoubtedly help differentiate. By embracing cloud solutions, we can help businesses have a much lower environmental impact, and be more cost effective, which is exactly what will be needed to drive real change now and in the future."



JEFF MAY
KONFTEL

"Business leaders should be sustainability champions, as we all have a role to play and it is the collective actions that will have the most impact. Their involvement will lead and inspire all. In an era of agile working with huge demand for conferencing and collaboration hardware, caring for the planet is just as important as connecting the world. Konftel was the first in the collaboration devices sector to earn official Climate Neutral certification - recently extended for the second year in a row. This means all greenhouse gas emissions have been offset, across all aspects of the business, from manufacturing and packaging to transportation. Konftel continues to cut impact at source too with a series of new initiatives. We want to be part of the Green Recovery, rebooting the economy for a sustainable and climate neutral future, long after the Covid crisis is over. Together we can all make a difference."



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CHERIE HOWLETT
JOLA

"We all have a responsibility to reverse environmental decline. There are simple things we can do such as encouraging employees to leave the car at home. At Jola, we participate in the cycle to work scheme and from the start adopted a paperless office. We recycle all packaging and ensure any old hardware finds a good home. We encourage remote working and limit travel to try and reduce our carbon footprint. We are conscious of the impact increased mobile data usage is having on the environment and the challenges faced by the networks to become more energy efficient. We develop products to help partners dealing with environmental challenges, providing smart solutions to reduce the environmental impact. Our SIMs can be found in water and energy metres as well as air quality and parking sensors helping to reduce waste and energy consumption and improve traffic planning and air quality."



HELEN WRIGHT
WAVENET

"With so many businesses forced to adopt homeworking culture at short notice for the sake of business continuity, Covid-19 fast-tracked the move to cloud and the carbon impact associated with the use of office space has for many companies has been depleted. For most ICT businesses the greatest carbon impact is locked within their supply chain and addressing this should be a longer-term priority. Requirements for businesses to make carbon reduction commitments are becoming increasingly commonplace with a more selective approach towards a sustainable supply chain for goods and services that will produce long-term results. However, in the short term, business leaders should engineer change within their workforce by mobilising a sustainability champion to help gear their workforce towards a sustainable future, and to become an advocate for proactive change in all areas. Businesses must use their greatest assets – their people – to rise to the challenge."



DAVID WARDELL
EVOKE TELECOM

"It is unfortunate that in keeping UK plc connected during the pandemic we have seen an increase in CO2 uplift as a consequence. However, at Evoke Telecom we believe our industry can turn this negative into a positive. New systems have enabled us to dramatically reduce our travel footprint with less physical meetings, less events and most importantly supportive remote installations. We are also encouraging a move away from physical phones to drive the adoption of collaboration and reduce the climate impact of hardware manufacture and disposal. When added to electric fleet and sensible estate decisions, we can make a real difference. Driven by boardroom pressure, companies are become increasingly climate conscious and will be encouraged to work with like-minded partners. Without a doubt, if going green and supplying green is not on your agenda then you are in grave danger of being left out in the cold."



ADAM CATHCART
9 GROUP

"By giving your teams a directive to shape and support environmental initiatives within your organisation, you can make sustainability a genuine part of your culture. This shouldn't just be a token effort. Box ticking doesn't work when sustainability and culture are at play. Inspire your leadership team to introduce positive changes and encourage your people to be more conscious – even small changes can make a difference and should be recognised. Your management team should lead by example by acting as sustainability champions. Topics around social responsibility form part of our leadership discussions every month as well as our regular communications to staff. The environmental footprint of a business can provide an indication of how well it is being run and whether or not the organisation will provide strong, long-term results. It is no longer a 'nice to have', it is imperative to the success of a business."



SOHINI RAITHATHA
REDSQUID

"In the UK, businesses account for over 85 per cent of total GHG emissions – making corporate action the number one priority in helping stop climate change. It is vital that organisations within our industry step up to the challenge and review how we can contribute to driving positive change. As a business we wanted to do our part for the environment and we therefore partnered up with Carbon Neutral Britain, with the ambition to measure and offset our organisation's emissions. We are proud to say we became certified as a Carbon Neutral business in April this year. Since then, we have continuously been reviewing our processes and offices to improve our practices and reduce the footprint our organisation leaves on the world. While striving to make a difference, I find that every improvement and reduction counts!"



RICHARD THOMPSON
TALKTALK WHOLESALE
SERVICES

"TalkTalk is on a journey to reduce our carbon usage and environmental impact. One of the most effective strategies is the adoption of full fibre, our number one priority, which can reduce energy consumption by up to 80 per cent compared to copper. Having already reduced our operational carbon footprint by 60 per cent, we're exploring the entire value chain lifecycle, from our data centres and offices to our supply chain and use of devices by customers to minimise impact. TalkTalk Business' MD chairing BITC's Net Zero Taskforce has helped align our goals and share ideas with businesses. Our group of dedicated employees spread the word of TalkTalk's work - and their passion in driving changes is infectious. I would certainly recommend finding sustainability champions to bring that same level of devotion. We must work together to meet these environmental challenges."

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