

Briefing:

Awareness implies a deeper understanding and engagement with climate change than just “brand awareness.” We look for awareness of how climate change will affect core business, operations and premises and the capability to prosper in a carbon constrained future.

Why is it important? In organisations with low awareness, action only takes place if there is a compelling reason to do so – perhaps to respond to consumer pressure. In organisations with high awareness, a pro-active and wide-ranging strategy for action is developed over a longer time-frame. If awareness isn’t broad enough, decisions will be made which lock- in patterns of high carbon behaviour or vulnerability to weather impacts for many years into the future.

Position Statements

Which of the following best states your company’s position on climate change? If you have a position statement, please add it overleaf.

1. Climate change is not mentioned in planning, strategy, or review meetings. It does not feature on the organisational agenda.
2. Although the issue of climate change comes up from time to time and may be linked occasionally to action on recycling waste, water and energy saving, there is no analysis of what it means, nor comprehensive programme of action. In general the organisation’s position statement would be, “this has little to do with us, we have little impact on it and it has little impact on what we do, why take costly action when not much needs changing?”
3. Climate change is an important issue that is likely to affect our organisation in various ways – taxation, customer preference, costs, etc. We need to get the systems in place (e.g. some comprehensive system to measure energy/water consumption better across all operations) to be able to manage the issue.
4. This issue looks bigger than we first thought. We’ve had people working on waste reduction, energy management and so on. Now we’re looking at how it will affect our longer-term competitiveness and strategic direction. We are learning how to change current practice and we are devising innovative projects to allow us to do so.
5. Climate change has implications for every aspect of our organisation. Many of the decisions we make will either leave us more vulnerable or more resilient to direct climate impacts (weather related) or indirect impacts from taxation, regulation, power and fuel shortages/costs etc. Decisions on new equipment, buildings, processes, delivery of products and services could lock us in to patterns of high carbon usage for decades to come and/or lower asset values.
6. This issue is among the biggest that our planet has ever faced. We cannot adapt for ever. We might not make it but we have a responsibility to do what we can. We need to make radical choices about the way we do business and our future strategic direction. As well as strengthening our own position we need to work on the external context, to facilitate not just our own survival but the survival of the economy, civilisation, and the “eco-system services” on which we depend.

What examples support the chosen position? Look at public statements.