

EIP



EIP joins tech business community at BEN: Green Profits

EIP were recently in attendance at the Bristol and Bath Enterprise Network's Green Profits event.

Bristol and Bath Enterprise Network (BEN) is a network for the technology business community based around Bristol and Bath. They hold a series of events designed to foster profitable connections between individuals and companies in the region.

The key question for this event was: can commercial and environmental success be aligned? To help answer this question two case studies were presented.

Linda Farrow talked about how her innovative architecture and design practice, White Design, allowed them to develop a new building module, Modcell, for the rapid construction of sustainable (and even carbon-negative) buildings. The Modcell is a brilliant idea: a prefabricated flat pack wooden frame is assembled and filled with compressed straw bales before being coated with lime render to form a wall panel. Modcell have a granted UK Patent GB2457891B of a broad scope and are moving forward with protection worldwide. This will help ensure that they can adequately capitalise, from a commercial perspective, on the years of design and testing that went into the product. Both White Design and Modcell are a fine example of the kind of technological and commercial thinking that can help address the seemingly intractable problems of climate change and dwindling resources.

Linda was followed by Griff Holland of Friska Food, a restaurant/sandwich shop on Victoria Road in Bristol. Griff offered a different perspective on sustainable business practices. Even though food is a rather low-tech industry, Griff had important lessons on how to make clients and customers feel good about themselves by incorporating

sustainable (or 'green') thinking into the heart of the business.

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The case studies were followed by a presentation by Amy Robinson, network director of Low Carbon South West (LCSW) who explained the myriad of accreditations and organisations to support business in the South West. LCSW are a trade association with a mission to promote growth in environmental technologies and sustainable services in the South West of England.

A lesson that emerged from the presentations and resulting round-table discussions was the need for long-term thinking and investment coupled with effective client/customer communication. Laying the groundwork for a sustainable business unfortunately often involves higher initial investment (and possibly higher product cost). However, this investment may pay off several years down the line when the market shifts and a business turns from fringe player into market leader, with competitors struggling to retrofit their own practices to keep up.