

Carbon Reduction Is a Good Business

Taipei Innovative Textile Application Show (TITAS) 2011 will celebrate its 15th anniversary on October 12-14 at Exhibition Hall 1 of Taipei World Trade Center. 300 exhibitors with over 500 booths are expected to participate in the event.

Low carbon economy

A low carbon economy is an economy which follows the principles of sustainability to develop new clean energy, lower energy consumption and cut greenhouse gas emissions. The term “low carbon economy” was coined in UK’s energy white paper 2003, which indicated that the low carbon trend would change the way the global economy reformed and transformed.

As the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, Britain was the pioneer industrial nation of the world. Centuries later, the energy policy and its implication unveiled in UK’s energy white papers prevailed in European Union, Canada and New Zealand, and provoked global discussion. As they followed UK’s steps to build industrial transformation policies, low carbon economy has become the common vision for the world’s future economic development.

Green consumerism, a prerequisite for low carbon economy

As the frequency and intensity of natural disasters and communicable diseases are increasing due to global warming, climate change has turned bread and butter on our tables into economic issues on summit agenda. It is inevitable to foresee the coming of the green revolution in particular with the revelation of the “low carbon economy” concept.

The significant difference between “low carbon economy” and the current state of economy lies in whether the process-- from manufacturing, retailing, end-using to recycling-- meets the requirements on low carbon emissions. It is encouraged, for example, to use materials that are organic, bio-degradable or recyclable, to adopt measures and practices that help cut carbon footprints, and to lower energy waste in the flow of goods and services.

As we did not pay attention to the wellbeing of the planet until climate change hit our everyday lives, low carbon economy will not come into reality until we consumers become more green savvy than we are now. Low carbon manufacturing and green consumerism are the two sides of one coin. When shoppers start sending green messages with their wallets, market suppliers will react in no time. It is without doubt that green consumerism is the premise for low carbon economy.

Low carbon consumerism

“Fast” is the word that best defines the economic development in the 20th century. With the dawn of computerization, we have lived in a cybernated fast lane: speeded-up manufacturing and faster-than-ever consumption rate. What comes after disposable cutlery, plastic bottles and shortened life cycles of consumer products are piles of dumps and wastes.

Then the word “fast” evolved into an even more sophisticated word that encompasses every aspect of our lives: convenience. Fast food, 24/7 convenience stores, online shopping, next day air, express delivery...the can't-do-without services and goods have resulted in a great deal of waste in resources and energy. The so-called “modern life” costs us dear. The outcomes of electrification, automation, mechanization and digitalization --skyscrapers, automobiles, elevators, and air conditioners...-- not only bring us convenience but also leave a long trail of carbon footprints.

In today's consumer-driven markets, the realization of low carbon economy depends on how green your wallets can be. Green consumerism is the foundation of low carbon economy.

Less carbon footprints, more competitiveness

It is not easy to recover Earth's health. At the least extent, it will not be possible without a try. When the vision for low carbon economy becomes widely accepted, low-carbon tech, low-carbon development, low-carbon cities, low-carbon life...anything low-carbon will turn into the center piece on the round table.

Some sagacious manufacturers may have already included low carbon policies into product development plans; earth-friendly marketing activities may have taken place in some marketplaces. However, the efforts to cut carbon emissions are watered down due to the limitation in market scales. It was not until late 2010 when retail giant Wal-Mart got transformed into the first “low carbon supermarket” did low carbon economy begin to make business sense.

Since 2011 Wal-Mart's suppliers are required to disclose the carbon footprints generated from materials sourcing, manufacturing, product distribution, consumer use to end-of-life disposal. Wal-Mart is also committed to carbon info transparency. All Wal-Mart product categories will have carbon reduction labels by 2015 to help consumer make a greener shopping decision. With Wal-Mart's impactful efforts, suppliers and consumers are inevitably speeding up their green actions: suppliers are accountable for carbon reduction in their product development; consumers bring home with environment-friendly products. Wal-Mart's low carbon actions—low-carbon trade, carbon reduction labels, carbon neutrality, net zero carbon footprint—have proved carbon reduction a good business.



Carbon reduction and TITAS

It is essential for business entrepreneurs to have measurable standards evaluating how to incorporate carbon reduction into business operation. As for suppliers and retailers, low-carbon trade, zero carbon footprint and carbon neutrality are at the center of discussion. In order to provide comprehensive consulting services for exhibitors, TITAS this year will continue the low carbon theme in 2010 and work with Global Views Monthly and British Standards Institution to invite experts contributing their valuable opinions on low carbon economy.

TITAS 2011 pre-show seminars on low carbon economy are tentatively scheduled on March 17-22, held in Tainan, Taichung and Taipei. All TITAS exhibitors are welcomed. For more information, please stay tuned and visit TITAS website: <http://www.titas.com.tw> or contact Asia Pacific Affairs Section, Taiwan Textile Federation at 886-2-2341-7251#2331.