



■ Concorde Limousine has installed solar panels to its Freehold, N.J. facilities allowing it to produce its own energy to run offices.

# CAN YOU GO GREEN and SURVIVE?

Three companies apply sustainability initiatives to secure corporate and group business in a downturned economy

**W**hen gas prices exceeded \$4 per gallon last year, “going green” took on a renewed urgency. • Transportation companies were being asked to produce “sustainability statements” explaining what program they have in place to offset the greenhouse gases they produce.

Large corporations added sustainability departments and officers and, along with their mission statements, put forth sustainability statements. These officers looked at every aspect of the corporate environment for ways to go green.

One of the first targets of their initiatives was corporate meetings. Teleconferencing emerged at the forefront of reforms, with large sales conferences being replaced with virtual meetings. Those meetings that remained in-person looked more to using buses than sedans to move large groups.

Fast forward to today. Gas prices are down. The economy is tanking and the new buzzword of the day is “survival.” Are “sustainability” and “survival” able to live in the same environment? Is it still the time to jump on the sustainability bandwagon if you don’t have a program? Can having a program garner your company any additional business? And is the cost of having a sustainability program recoverable in additional revenue? We asked operators who have made major investments in sustainability to elaborate.

## TAKING THE LONG VIEW

**METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY** (MTC), based in Westchester, N.Y., has leaped into green on a grand scale. Trevor Franklin, president and CEO of MTC Limousine & Corporate Coach, Inc., says a commitment to sustainability doesn’t mean that you focus solely on environmental issues.

“Your focus should be on what the United Nations 2005 World Summit referred to as the ‘interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars’ of sustainable development: economic development, social development, and environmental protection,” he says.

MTC translates sustainability to mean profit, planet, and people. “We have rolled out our programs, and we’ve added a fourth theme: perception,” Franklin says. “If we don’t manage all three types of capital — economic, human and natural — and don’t help educate our customers and partners on what we are doing to change perceptions, we simply won’t survive,” Franklin says. “I still don’t understand why people look at “green” as spending more money. It simply isn’t. It is about spending less than we take in, using fewer resources than nature is able to replenish, and having respect for the people we work with and for. It isn’t business as usual.”

MTC has invested in a carbon off-

set program. "Carbon offsetting costs money, but we've been able to buy our projects well, and the incremental revenue that our offset program has driven is, in a bad economy, huge," Franklin says.

For example, a 30-mile ride to the airport costs about 10 cents to offset the

Concorde Limousine participates in the Customer Online Renewable Energy (CORE) program. Its 91.06 kw solar project has been approved and it has contracted with Geogenix to implement this project. The 396 Sun Power solar panels will cover 6,041 sq. feet. The system is calculated to produce 63% of Concorde's annual power usage. The system will eliminate the production/emis-



## Going Green Saves Greenbacks, Too

**SCOTT SOLOMBRINO** also believes in the green initiative regardless of the economic downturn. As CEO of Boston-based Dav El Chauffeured Transportation Network and president of the National Business Travel Association's Allied Division, Solombrino believes sustainability should be addressed through greener fleets.

Solombrino has made strides buying hybrid vehicles, such as the new Cadillac Escalade Hybrid SUV. "I believe this is where the future is going to be at the end of the day," he says. "The new administration in the White House believes in the green movement. Green is here to stay. The greener your fleet, the better you will fare. At Dav El, we are going to continue to evolve and continue to add — we think that is what our clients are asking us to do."

But Solombrino sees the flip side of green efforts as well. "Last year, we were talking to sustainability departments in companies," he says. "Now, those whole departments are gone due to cost cutting moves." As companies downsize, sustainability departments are among the first to go.

Nevertheless, Solombrino believes that by investing in hybrid vehicles, he will save money on fuel long term and be a better corporate citizen.

"I don't believe that gas prices will stay where they are," he says. "We need to reduce our dependency on foreign fuel. I am personally driving a Cadillac hybrid. I like the quietness of the vehicle. People have stopped me and asked me what I am driving. People are interested. It is here to stay."



**“The waste oil heater burns at over 2,000 degrees to eliminate pollutants. It burns cleaner than an automobile, does not consume new resources, and we save money, all at the same time.”** —BOB BELLEGAMBA

CO2 generated, Franklin says. "I don't know how much goodwill and visibility you can build for 10 cents. If GE and IBM and hundreds of other companies see value in carbon offsetting, then I'd have to be crazy not to give them what they understand and want."

MTC believes that having a sustainability program will get you business over a competitor who does not have one. "We moved 500 people in and out of a meeting in Dubai late last year," he says. "We earned the business because we could not only save them money by managing vehicles and passengers to reduce cost, but we could also measure and report the environmental impact that their transportation would have and had a plan for reducing the emissions."

### CREATIVE EFFORTS

**BOB BELLAGAMBA** OF Concorde Limousine Inc. of Freehold, N.J., says his company is addressing sustainability through its new solar efforts.

To accommodate its solar conversion,

sions of carbon dioxide by 153,358 pounds per year, nitrous oxides by 265.8 pounds per year, and sulfates by 989.7 pounds per year. Those reductions equal the planting of 20.7 acres of trees a year.

Also on its green plate are measures to heat its 5,400 square-foot garage with used motor oil and transmission fluid.

"We accept waste oil and transmission fluid from our business neighbors and the public; helping to further reduce pollutants," Bellagamba says. "The waste oil heater burns at over 2,000 degrees to eliminate pollutants. It burns cleaner than an automobile, does not consume new resources, and we save money, all at the same time."

Concorde recycles its used oil filters by crushing them, which squeezes out the oil. It uses the oil waste for its furnaces, and oil filters become scrap metal instead of hazardous waste.

Those are among just a few sustainability initiatives Concorde has in place. For 2007, Concorde reduced its paper usage by 30% (15 cases or 75,000 sheets). For 2008, it expects to reduce its paper consumption by another 30%, which would reduce the company's paper consumption by 60% since 2005.

Furthermore, Concorde tries to educate its clients about using online reservations and billing management. This allows the company to eliminate fax reservations, weekly invoice statement mailings, and daily completed trip receipts. **LCT**

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■ **Trevor Franklin gets creative in leading sustainability efforts for MTC Limousine & Corporate Coach, Inc. MTC is a pioneer in sustainability in the limousine industry.**

