

Partnership with the SEE scheme

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Partnership with SEE What You Are Buying Into presents a unique opportunity to engage with and motivate business on Social, Environmental and Ethical (SEE) issues.

By sharing knowledge and expertise, SEE Partners can help businesses to better understand the vital yet often complex challenges affecting people and planet. The SEE scheme raises expectations and standards. It promotes more responsible and accountable business practices and a fairer, more sustainable future.

A Genuine Alternative

Profit-maximisation is hard-wired into business. Unless the pursuit of best SEE practice is a prerequisite to success, it will remain a marginal and optional endeavour. The SEE scheme seeks to change this. Working within the existing framework of the free market system, it offers a simple and effective way for businesses to do good for society, lessen their environmental impact and yet still benefit their bottom line.

The SEE scheme allows companies to tell the wider public how they integrate SEE issues into their operations and policies; in essence, to explain their policies and practices and justify them. It provides a means for customers and citizens to make informed choices and select goods and services from companies that share their own SEE concerns and values.

The SEE scheme is accessible and consumer friendly. It makes the issues real, relevant and tangible to 'the man in the street'. By empowering people to voice their SEE concerns to businesses and be heard, the scheme drives companies to demonstrate genuine openness and honesty.

By supporting the scheme, SEE Partners can put the issues that most concern them - and their own membership or constituency - into the heart of business decision making. The SEE scheme is a powerful way to make such issues applicable and accessible to any company, regardless of size or sector. It provides a unique opportunity for SEE Partners to encourage leadership, learning and improvement in business.

What Partnership Involves

SEE Partners assist in the development, review or revision of the questions in the SEE Questionnaire, a series of 35 detailed questions regarding social, environmental and ethical practices, which all SEE listed companies must answer publicly to join the scheme. This may take the form of public involvement or it may be the anonymous contribution of expertise behind the scenes.

As well as contributing to the development of questions, SEE Partners have previously also:

1. listed on SEEWhatYouAreBuyingInto.com together with their logos and hyperlinks to their websites;
2. been specifically referenced against the question(s) they have co-authored; and
3. provided materials (references, reports, guides etc) to support their SEE Questionnaire questions and help companies further understand the issue(s) examined and how best to respond to them.

SEE Partners have also been encouraged to promote the SEE scheme in basic ways, for example, by providing links from their own websites, referencing the scheme in newsletters or reports and by discussing it in articles or reports.

Looking forward

SEE What You Are Buying Into has enormous potential to make the world a better place. It is the product of many years' research and development and of collaboration between like-minded people, organisations and companies. As the scheme has evolved, so too has its potential to raise both expectations on business and standards within business.

With the growth of Web 2.0, the possibilities have multiplied yet further. Much more than a simple list, catalogue or directory, SEE is a web portal with a treasure trove of information about responsible and ethical business. This information is unique, high quality and continuously expanding. The opportunities for using it in creative and imaginative ways are endless.

It is likely that a number of SEE Partners will play a much greater, more hands-on role in shaping and developing the SEE scheme in the future. Several proposals are under consideration and all are up for discussion: new suggestions and ideas are both welcome and appreciated.

Benefits of being a SEE Partner

The advantages to those participating as partners in the SEE scheme include:

- promoting their particular SEE issues and concerns within business;
- identifying and defining best SEE policies and practices;
- raising expectations - and thus standards - across business;
- establishing business transparency and business accountability as expected social norms;
- helping business to be more responsive, more responsible and more sustainable;
- gaining worldwide exposure to web-based social networks and their members who share an interest in SEE issues;
- gaining greater insight into how and why businesses and stakeholders respond to particular issues.

The SEE scheme has genuine power to change the world for good - and fast.

If your organisation is considering supporting the SEE scheme as a partner, please visit SEEWWhatYouAreBuyingInto.com for more information or contact Michael or Clare at SEE What You Are Buying Into Ltd.