

## **When business goes green, offer some support**

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Last week's Shepherd Express article titled "Is Big Business Buying Out the Environmental Movement?" struck a chord with me. As someone who works to help business become more environmentally friendly through energy efficiency, I encounter business people who truly want to make a difference and reduce the environmental impacts of their businesses while also improving their bottom line and making a profit. These two issues are hardly mutually exclusive.

In my experience I have come to some different conclusions than Mr. Mattera reached in his article. While I do believe it's healthy to question the motives of businesses that go green and to make sure they are true to their word, I don't think an article presented like Mattera's conveys that sentiment appropriately.

Mattera seems to be saying that we, as concerned citizens and environmentalists, cannot trust big business with our precious environmental movement - they are either coming to it out of shame because they've screwed up somewhere else, or they're capitalizing on the current popular momentum surrounding "going green."

While to some extent that may be a truism, I don't see what purpose is served by undermining actions whose aim is improving the environment. Who cares if there are dual motives that include money making? The more going green becomes associated with improved market share, the more innovation and improvement we'll see from big business where infinitely more capital exists to invest in and research these improvements.

There is no denying that some corporations will try to swindle the public into believing conveniently spun slogans such as BP's "beyond petroleum" or Chevron's "Join us." Environmentalists will always have to be the watchdogs of the world, keeping track of where we can make improvements and seeing that everyone is doing their part. But rather than focusing on the negatives, we as environmentalists should be looking for better opportunities to collaborate with big business and to share our knowledge, not tearing them down in their efforts. For many businesses, going green by improving energy efficiency or helping contribute to environmental causes is an important first step that should be met with praise rather than cynicism.

### **About E4**

E4, Inc. is a Wisconsin non-profit corporation dedicated to the environmental and economic benefits of energy efficiency for Wisconsin businesses. E4's mission is to advance economic growth and improve environmental stewardship through the implementation of sustainable, practical, profitable, and innovative energy solutions.

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