

## **TMC 3BL: A Triple Bottom Line Approach to Sustainability**

The socially responsible firm is obligated to pursue the Triple Bottom Line philosophy: operating business in a way that is environmentally, socially and economically sound. The Marketing Clinic's owners believe in striving for environmental and economic sustainability, in contributing to the community and economy, and in providing a supportive and flexible work environment to best meet the personal, emotional, and family needs of employees.

### ***The Environmental Bottom Line***

The Marketing Clinic has streamlined its processes in recent years with a goal of reducing waste, and recycling materials, to the extent possible while maintaining confidentiality standards and requirements. A key accomplishment for a research organization is the ability to reduce the use of paper and ink. As a survey research company, TMC typically consumed hundreds of thousands of sheets of paper for data collection and analysis. This amount has been greatly reduced by using electronic documents and surveys, virtually eliminating the need for paper consumption for telephone surveys through the use of Computer-Assisted-Telephone-Interviewing (CATI). In addition, online surveys are used whenever possible given the needs of the project and sampling requirements.

TMC further reduces resource consumption by using electronic communications with clients and by distributing final reports and project documents electronically whenever possible and when approved by the client. Use of electronic communication, involving telephone, fax, or email, greatly reduces greenhouse gases released through transportation requirements, while also eliminating the use of paper-based communications. Use of electronic tracking and editing software in desktop publishing, presentation, and word processing, eliminates the need for use of ink and paper.

Data are stored on Canadian servers for up to two years following project completion, in accordance with PIPEDA requirements. All data is destroyed after two years, unless further storage is required by the client, or used in subsequent benchmark studies. Paper files related to projects are shredded prior to disposal to protect client confidentiality.

The Marketing Clinic's services do not require the use of chemicals apart from those involved in ink or toner cartridges. Using electronic communication reduces the use of chemicals related to ink and paper use and production. As a result, chemical exposure is not a factor in the workplace health of employees.

### ***The Social and Humanistic Bottom Line***

TMC maintains an employee-centred office environment allowing for frequent employee breaks during data collection. Data collection and data entry can lead to employee fatigue and discomfort if frequent breaks are not provided for walking and resting. On average, TMC's employees are provided 10 minute breaks every hour, or as needed, if highly demanding telephone work is required. These breaks are provided in addition to traditional coffee and meal breaks. Such breaks help to ease muscle strain,

reduce headaches related to the use of technology, and ease job stress. They also help to build camaraderie and maintain staff morale, resulting in a healthier workplace.

TMC believes that employees must have time for self and family. In keeping with the values of the family-owned firm, TMC does not open on Sundays. This allows employees to have a specified day each week that they will not be required to work.

The TMC workplace is very flexible, allowing staff members the ability to plan their work hours around family obligations and personal needs. This flexibility has greatly reduced employee turnover, increased staff loyalty, and resulted in a very comfortable and engaging workplace.

### *The Economic Bottom Line*

TMC is a small, family-owned business. Like most small businesses, focusing on the bottom line is imperative for success. This requires due diligence in reducing consumption to essentials, eliminating many of the frills that larger firms may enjoy, and focusing on what is necessary to provide a comfortable workplace and an exciting future for the firm. Careful financial management is necessary to manage a firm economically and to ensure its continued growth.

TMC contributes to local economic development by providing jobs and paying taxes, as well as through providing a great deal of free consultation and mentoring to small and medium-sized businesses and non-profit organizations. TMC is a member in good standing in the business community. Consultants regularly engage in panels and other activities in universities and community college to facilitate student learning. Also, they are advisors in the Entrepreneurs Forum, an organization that helps to advise and mentor entrepreneurs. In addition, TMC supports local sports organizations, schools and charities through sponsorships and donations.