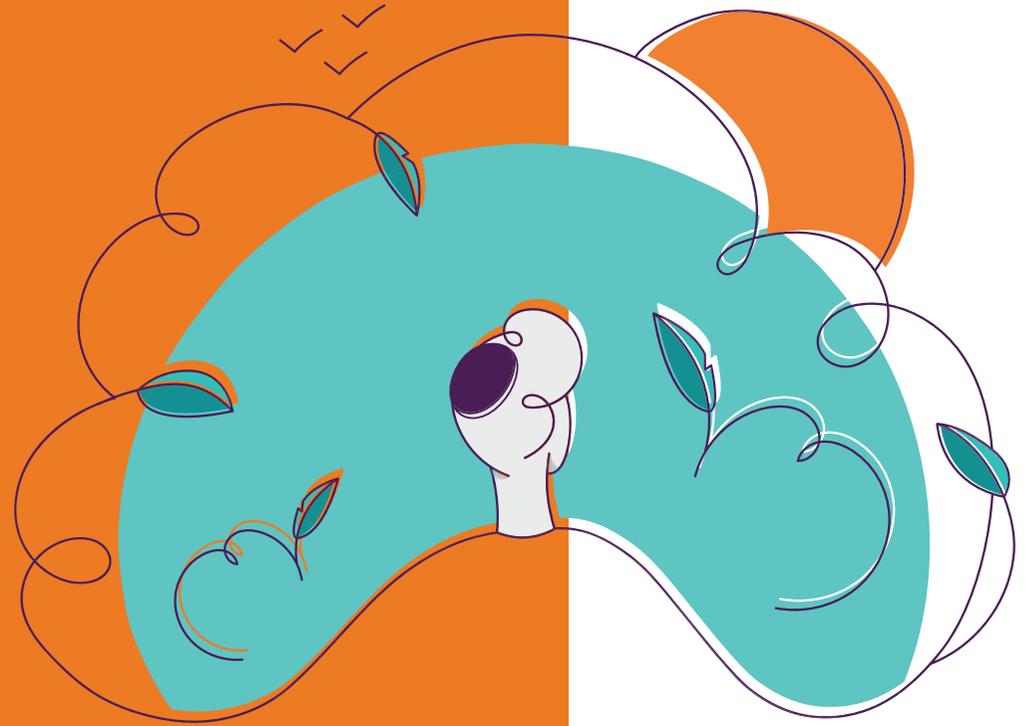




SAPPHIRE SYSTEMS: A CARBON NEUTRAL BUSINESS

sapphire



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The climate for SMEs: 4 steps to action toolkit helps SMEs to understand their carbon footprint and take action to reduce it with the goal of achieving net zero emissions. Our case studies highlight SMEs at different stages on their journey to net zero.

Global provider of digital operations platforms for enterprises, Sapphire Systems, is based in Southwark, London. The company joined Heart of the City as a member in 2010 and is now an ambassador, with CEO Ian Caswell on our council and Jan Phayre, Head of Responsible Business, on our board advisory panel.



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WHY SAPPHIRE WENT CARBON NEUTRAL

Sapphire has always recognised that its everyday actions consume energy and produce carbon emissions, and it's a worry. For years, it's had an environmental policy which consisted of smaller, achievable goals and offered environmental volunteering opportunities to employees. But in 2019 Sapphire's CEO wanted to do more.

Ian decided to make the business carbon neutral after watching Quentin Wilson (an ex presenter of Top Gear) talking about why he drives an electric car. Ian promised himself his next car would be electric and became more interested in the area. He saw that Sapphire could make a difference by becoming greener, and that it would set an example to employees, customers and suppliers.

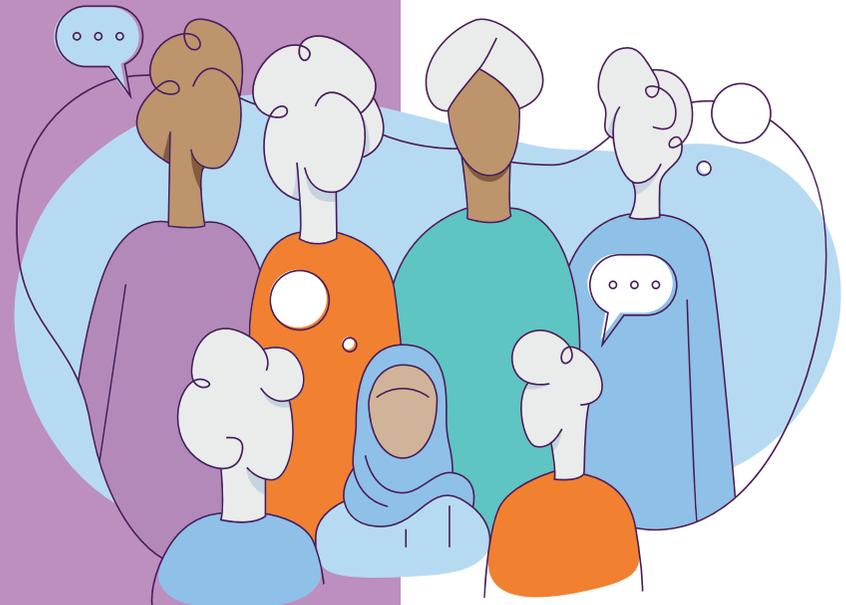


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TAKING THE FIRST STEPS

Ian asked his responsible business (RB) team to look into offsetting Sapphire's carbon footprint. At first, the RB team found the task quite daunting as it was something they'd never done before, like many companies. If you're in the same boat, here's what the team did to get started.

- They worked closely with the Sapphire finance team to find out flight, server, mileage and utility bill data. Fortunately for them the data was well organised and detailed, saving a lot of time. The most challenging task here was getting a recent utility bill!
- Then they researched carbon calculators and found a simple, **free carbon calculator** to convert the data.
- Jo Goddard, Director of **Green and Good** and Heart of the City council member, was introduced to Sapphire by Heart of the City, and she provided incredibly effective expert advice to support the process.



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WHAT A CARBON NEUTRAL SAPPHIRE LOOKS LIKE

Since becoming carbon neutral, Sapphire is getting more accurate in uploading its CO2 data. The company only uses renewable energy in all its offices, and this determines where they'll rent office space in the future. The RB team is gaining more confidence in its sustainability journey through workshops from Team London Bridge and being part of Heart of the City's climate action working group. It also has an Environmental, Social and Governance framework in place to help with sustainability benchmarking, targets and reporting.

Sapphire is still very much learning as it goes along. That's why the team is looking forward to learning more through the climate for SMEs: 4 steps to action programme. As the business has already started its carbon neutral journey, we asked for some top tips for organisations that are considering becoming carbon neutral.

- Start now! It's not as daunting as it sounds and it's really interesting once you get started. Make sure to record your data quarterly to save time and use a simple, effective spreadsheet that converts your data for you.



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- We offset Sapphire's carbon emissions through **Carbon Footprint** supporting **Kenyan reforestation**. The business has now planted 950 trees, which will help towards offsetting CO2 emissions, reducing poverty, providing wildlife habitats and creating a brighter future for project team members.
- The RB team at Sapphire is small but it took less than 12 weeks to capture our carbon footprint for the whole year. If you're struggling to record your data, please feel free to get in touch with **Shola Sullivan** who will happily share her knowledge with you.

True to his word, Ian now drives an electric car!



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