



Journey: Mr Liszka

Time for innovation

SMALL businesses, inventors and innovators now have access to free consultations from the Alchemy Innovation Development Service, supported by the Government with the aim of advancing innovation within business.

“Innovation is tough. Australia is great at invention but the commercial realisation of those inventions is where we fall short,” Alchemy Innovation Development managing director Dan Liszka said.

“This service aims to assist innovators get on the right track to commercialisation early in their innovation journey.”

The services offered will help corporate and private innovators evaluate, develop and commercialise products, services and technologies.

There will be a series of seminars across the state this year.

For more information go to www.ausinvent.com, email info@ausinvent.com, or phone 1300 411 417

Credit to be tighter

BIG and regional bank loan officers expect credit underwriting standards for small businesses to be tightened further in 2010.

A survey of loan officers in all of Australia’s big and regional banks revealed they expected small to medium-sized enterprises to be among those hardest hit.

Underwriting standards for large corporates were expected to remain unchanged.

Investment bank UBS conducted the survey of chief financial officers in December and found standards had been tightened in the last six months of the year.

Banks’ rising funding costs were cited as the top reason, followed by the general economic environment, but competition from other banks also proved a strong driver.

Going green involves change not boasting



Growing industry: Leonard Cohen of The Canopy Project, among trees planted at Hartley in the Blue Mountain to offset carbon emissions

Picture: Kelly Barnes

MARKETING departments pushing a green message must tread carefully when trumpeting newly acquired green credentials.

Consumers are now well educated on environmental issues, and misleading green marketing messages may actually have an adverse effect.

Already we have seen the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission penalise companies that exaggerate their green credentials.

Planting trees or offering an offset program that consumers indirectly pay for is a small step in the right direction but not nearly as powerful as companies first taking responsible action to cut waste and pollution.

Consumers are now well aware of greenwashing — the term used to describe companies that embellish green credentials.

green power

Tony Hall



Simply reducing emissions or even aiming for the admirable target of carbon-neutral is not enough for a company to boast that it is green.

A good example of this is the recently released Airbus A380, dubbed “The Jolly Green Giant”.

Just because its carbon emissions are less than the 25-year-old Boeing 747 it replaces does not mean it is not belching thousands of tonnes of carbon dioxide into our stratosphere.

The best way to communicate green credentials is to tell the truth. Smart consumers know when a

visible polluter is trying to cover up a much bigger environmental problem.

Mining companies are a good example. A sound strategy for miners is to clean up their mess, over-offset for their emissions and then honestly tell the public and shareholders what they have done to dramatically reduce their impact on our landscape.

A checklist for marketing green credentials should include:

- A low-cost audit and action plan;
- Independent advice, certification;
- Honest communications about the actions you have taken;
- Simple statements, which are better than sweeping claims;
- Case studies on your website outlining your actions and results;
- Continual communication of environmental progress;
- Clearly substantiated claims;

■ Partnering with a specialist environmental consulting company;

■ Utilising a local carbon offset or compensation program that does not take many years to absorb carbon or is subject to high administration costs;

■ Heeding advice and feedback from customers and clients about environmental actions important to them.

Green marketing is still a new and relatively unregulated field. Companies are best advised to take substantial action on reducing carbon emissions but keep green claims conservative.

One thing is clear though, there is absolutely no downside to making your business more sustainable.

Tony Hall is CEO of environmental business certification company GreenBizCheck. Go to greenbizcheck.com

Staying in the same job is so 2009.

This is your year

