

# One-quarter of businesses say they cannot reduce their environmental impact

New research from Ricoh Europe reveals that one in four business leaders believe their organisation cannot reduce environmental impact. The research, conducted by Opinion Matters, polled 1,500 decision makers and revealed that 60% agree that there is no incentive for the C-suite to help mitigate a company's negative environmental impact.



Jacques van Wyk, CEO of Ricoh South Africa. | Source: Supplied.

“Two-thirds of people are unsure or don’t have the resources to achieve meaningful change,” says Jacques van Wyk, CEO of Ricoh South Africa. “But 67% admit that their people care a lot more for the environment today than they did just five years ago.”

Van Wyk says business leaders face numerous pressures to perform and even recover following the local, regional and global economic and supply chain impacts of the pandemic, which tends to push environmental sustainability initiatives further down the priorities list.

“One of the challenges South African businesses are going to face is meeting the tenets of the Carbon Tax. They have numerous options to do so, such as transforming operations or buying carbon credits,” van Wyk adds.



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A major snag is that only 27% of business leaders say they have set long-term environmental sustainability goals, meaning most have failed to implement a basic roadmap for change. Lack of planning and action is thrown into sharp relief by the fact most businesses (65%) recognise the importance of environmental sustainability for their competitiveness in the market in which they operate.

Combining digital transformation efforts with a clearly articulated environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) framework is one way businesses could start to see benefits across their organisation.

David Mills, CEO of Ricoh Europe, says: “The first step is often the hardest in any business change programme. There will be many areas where improving operations or productivity overlaps with ESG goals, so it can be the ideal place for businesses to start. Digital transformation is one thing that can help drive operational and ESG gains. But making any changes towards ESG goals needs to be complemented with a clear framework and commitment to measurable success.”

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