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# BUSINESS TRENDS FOR 2011

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## First Steps



**LIZA and ROBERT CRESPO:** "We meet the construction industry's demand for sustainable building products."

# Buildings Going Green

**'Saving the world' isn't a fad anymore. Businesses can become environment-friendly by greening their places of work.**

**RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS OWNERSHIP** goes beyond proper compensation, paying the proper taxes and social responsibility. Companies now strive to cut their carbon footprint in their day-to-day operations. You, too, can make deliberate, informed choices to help save the environment—starting with your business furnishings.

**Bringing green to the Philippines**  
Architect Liza Morales-Crespo and husband, Robert, worked in the US

construction industry while they were based in New York for over 13 years.

"I took the credentialing exam for leadership in energy and environmental design to gain the expertise needed to design green buildings," says Liza, a licensed architect in New York City.

Robert, meanwhile, worked with a building supply company and was involved in green projects, especially at the procurement stage. "We worked on different sides of the fence; I was on the

## ADVICE FOR GREENING YOUR BUSINESS

If you're at the business planning stage, it's a good time to consider using green products. "The decision whether to use these environmentally responsible products or conventional electric fixtures needs to be made at the very early stages because this would help the owners know what their eventual operating costs will be," architect Liza Morales-Crespo of Philippine GeoGreen Inc. advises.

Factor in the cost of such products against the long-term benefits for your business. "Sustainability of these green products is their strength, so long-term financial goals can be put on the table from the very beginning. Use of electricity for these products are minimal, if any, [so] this helps owners control their budgets without having too many unknowns like increasing electricity cost."

Of course, you have to assess whether a product is right for your purpose, to avoid making a costly mistake. "The key is knowing which products to use," says Crespo. "There are some technologies available out there that are still in their infancy stages, so the costs are still through the roof."

Crespo advises businesses to consult suppliers about the specifications of the product to find out if it fits their needs. "We have done our research in screening and selecting which products to distribute and evaluate them for their efficiency, durability, and affordability. It will be extremely difficult to sell products that we cannot financially justify to our clients," she explains.

When it comes to businesses that are already in operation, Crespo says they can still benefit from green products they can use to replace their old fixtures. "Companies need to evaluate which aspect of their operations is contributing the most pollution to the environment. Usually, these are electricity-related, such as lighting and air conditioning equipment," she says. "Our products can help facilities significantly reduce your carbon footprint." —M.C.S.

design side and he was on the procurement side," adds Liza, who focused on green building design.

But, she says, "we had always wanted to settle back home. During our visits to the Philippines back then, we were surprised to find out that green and sustainable products were hard to find—ironically, with our electric utility rates being among the highest in the world!

"Having two kids, we also wanted to leave behind a legacy that somehow we did something that contributed to making the world greener."

In 2009, the Crespos decided to move back to Manila, and brought affordable and green technologies with them through their business, Philippine GeoGreen Inc. "We meet the construction industry's demand for sustainable and environmentally responsible building products," says Liza.

The Crespos have since installed their products for top companies such as Unilever Philippines, Kraft Foods, Nestle Philippines, Procter & Gamble, Yokohama Tires Philippines, and the Greenhills Shopping Center, among many others.

#### Green products you can use

Philippine GeoGreen Inc. has three "green" products in their line-up. All of them help homes and commercial facilities



reduce their carbon footprint. One of the products, Solatube Daylighting Systems, brings daylight or natural light into any space without producing heat and harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. With this system, companies have been able to turn their electric lights off for six to eight hours a day, depending on the time of the year.

Solatube products have a warranty that lasts for 10 years, so a business can forget about having to replace those bulbs every so often, she adds.

Big Ass Fans, meanwhile, is a line of high volume, low speed fans ideal for large spaces with high ceilings, like warehouses, to address heat and ventilation issues. From industrial to small commercial spaces, the fans come in various models for different environments. The fans run on minimal electricity, but are very efficient at increasing air movement.

Sol Exterior Lights, another Geogreen product, are exterior street or perimeter lights that run solely on solar power.

"There is no need to dig for underground utility provisions for power, as the battery and solar panel are all contained within the unit," she says. "These are ideal for remote and off-grid locations."

She adds: "Our clients are conscious about their impact on the environment. We have installed almost a thousand Solatube Daylighting Systems in the Philippines, and there are more than a hundred Big Ass Fans throughout the country."—**Mari-An C. Santos**

#### PHILIPPINE GEOGREEN INC.

www.philgeogreen.com  
85 Kamuning Road, Quezon City 1103  
(02) 332-2657

## WHAT'S YOUR GQ (GREEN QUOTIENT)?

Complete the 10 sentences below with any of the three choices given, and with the scoring system provided, find out whether you are sufficiently friendly to the environment.—**M.C.S.**

### 1. WHEN THE COMPUTER IS NOT IN USE, YOU ...

- a. turn it off.
- b. turn it to "sleep" or "hibernate" mode.
- c. just leave it on.

### 2. YOU REQUIRE ALL MEMOS AND OTHER COMMUNICATION TO BE ...

- a. sent by e-mail.
- b. sent by e-mail, printed out as needed.
- c. printed out and "received."

### 3. YOU ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO THROW THEIR TRASH BY SEGREGATING ACCORDING TO ...

- a. leftovers, paper, plastic, wood, rubber, glass, special/industrial waste.
- b. biodegradable, recyclable, special waste.
- c. wet and dry.

### 4. AFTER SEGREGATING YOUR TRASH, YOU ...

- a. participate in recyclables

collection events or waste markets.

- b. sell the recyclables to the *bote-dyaryo*/junk shops.
- c. throw out the trash and let the garbage truck take care of it.

### 5. WHEN IT COMES TO AIRCONDITIONING, YOU ...

- a. turn it off one hour before the end of the office day.
- b. set it to low before the end of the day.
- c. let the last person left in the office turn it off before leaving.

### 6. WHEN YOU FOUND OUT THAT COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHTBULBS (CFL) CUT POWER CONSUMPTION BY AS MUCH AS 80 PERCENT, YOU ...

- a. immediately replaced all your bulbs.
- b. waited till your bulbs died out, then bought CFL.
- c. did not consider replacing the

bulbs, since you've been using the same kind for a long time.

### 7. YOU ENCOURAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES TO ...

- a. use public transport like the MRT or LRT to lessen their carbon footprint.
- b. car-pool.
- c. take any mode of transport.

### 8. WHEN IT COMES TO WATERING THE GARDEN, YOU ...

- a. collect rainwater for this purpose.
- b. use a pail and water dipper instead of a hose.
- c. use a hose to water the plants.

### 9. WHEN BAGGING PURCHASES OF YOUR CUSTOMERS, YOUR COMPANY ...

- a. recycles magazine pages and brown paper to make paper bags.
- b. encourages customers to bring their own reusable bags.
- c. uses plastic bags.

### 10. WHEN SOURCING RAW MATERIALS, YOU ...

- a. buy local materials that are comparable to imported brands.
- b. consider using local sources.
- c. go with your usual imported brands.

#### IF YOUR ANSWERS ARE

**Mostly a's:** Certified Green

Congratulations! Your GQ (Green Quotient) is off the charts! You are aware that there is a need for each person—and each business—to do their part in saving the earth. Keep it up!

**Mostly b's:** Promising Prospects  
You've only just begun. To your credit, you have made sure steps towards making your lifestyle and business greener.

**Mostly c's:** Needs Improvement  
You need a paradigm shift—and fast! Either you don't know how to help save the earth or you don't really care; hopefully, it's the former.