

**by Matt Powell, Business Growth Manager,  
CPR Regeneration**

On 26<sup>th</sup> April, Camborne launched its campaign to go plastic bag-free. Clearly this is not something that will happen overnight - for a start, I can pretty much guarantee that none of the businesses reading this that used carrier bags before 26<sup>th</sup> April will suddenly have stopped using them.

I know this message has already been covered in other issues of the Crier, but I wanted to take this opportunity to start to look at the business case for stopping the use of plastic bags.

So, first question - how much does your business spend on carrier bags every year? Assuming that a box of 1000 costs about £30, it could be anything from £30 to £3000 or more, and supposing that currently you don't charge per bag, that money is walking straight out of the door. Stop using them and you reduce your costs, simple as that! BUSINESS CASE #1

If that would come as too much of a shock for your customers, or simply isn't practical, start charging for them - 5p a bag even makes you a nice little profit! And, more importantly, should start to reduce the number being used (bearing in mind that for any town to go plastic bag-free, it requires educating the consumer, this is an easy step in the right direction). BUSINESS CASE #2

How about offering a discount if customers bring their own bags? Explain to your customers that not only are they doing the right thing but that they are also contributing to the campaign, so you'll cover the 5p cost of their bag. This will go a long way to helping the campaign work, and, more importantly, creates customer loyalty. BUSINESS CASE #3

Then there are the alternatives. Biodegradable and paper bags both have pros and cons attached to them, ultimately cotton or jute bags (or granny trolleys!) are the reusable options that will reduce the amount of packaging. If you get your own printed with company logo on, they even become a marketing tool (you may have noticed the variety of TESCO jute bags that have suddenly started appearing everywhere, they clearly feel it works for them! BUSINESS CASE #4

As this campaign gathers momentum, people will become more and more aware of who still uses plastic, who charges what for bags and who is fully behind a greener Camborne, who do you think they will choose to shop with? BUSINESS CASE #5

But for me the bottom line is that increasingly environment and sustainability are becoming part of the bottom line. Building in "green" or "environmental" policies into the way you run your business, will ultimately all start to contribute to a more profitable business (as another example, a policy of sourcing your stock or goods locally will soon start to cost less because of rising fuel prices and is also "greener").

Going Green is not only the right thing to do, it's the profitable thing to do!

