

All construction businesses should focus a significant amount of management time on 'going green' as it will give them a competitive advantage.

That's the advice from expert Simon de Grey of leading environmental and health and safety training company Pivotal Performance.

He was reacting to research by the Environment Agency which revealed that UK businesses are losing interest in reducing the impact of their business on the environment.

According to the research, only one in five are planning to invest in making their business more environmentally friendly in the next 12 months.

Said Simon: "That's just crazy. A properly planned and executed environmental management programme will benefit virtually any business in a number of ways.

It's got very little to do with being seen to do the right thing and has a lot to do with improving the bottom line.

"Businesses that make a significant commitment to going green tend to see costs drop as they review working practices and cut back on packaging and waste.

Secondly, they gain a powerful marketing tool that competitors cannot quickly copy.

There is a lot of attention on protecting the environment at the moment and if you can make a significant difference with your business, it's a great PR opportunity."

He added: “There is an additional benefit among your staff. As people become more and more green aware, they prefer to work for an employer that shares their green beliefs.”

The Environmental Agency research found that only 7% of businesses think they have a negative effect on their environment – whereas actually nearly half do. And while more than half of the UK’s SMEs have an environmental policy, many tend to overestimate the effectiveness of their effort.