

YOUR MONEY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2007



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Green Investing for Maximum Return

Q. During your presentation regarding sustainable investing, you discussed environmentally friendly investing and showed that socially responsible companies can be incorporated into a person's portfolio without compromising returns. Can you give specific examples of companies that have addressed the effects of climate change and have incorporated these policies into their corporate mandates?

A. Great question! Many investors are under the misconception that the environmentally friendly movement restricts their ability to grow their portfolios. As was proven in my presentation, this is simply not the case. There are a great many companies who have realized that responsible actions can positively affect their bottom lines. For example:

Petro-Canada immediately comes to mind. Most people are unaware that this company is a member of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives task force on climate change and is focused on managing greenhouse gas emissions. Petro-Canada has created an energy efficiency team and has even hired independent auditors to help ensure the accuracy of their programs.

Another leading supporter of environmental stewardship is Alcan. This company has addressed the issue of greenhouse gas emissions within its corporate mandate and has set a goal of becoming carbon neutral, on a lifecycle basis, by 2020. Alcan is an outspoken proponent of effecting government policy for climate change and is a supporter of the Kyoto protocol.

One of the most active companies for promoting responsible operations is Suncor Energy. Suncor is one of Canada's leading advocates of environmental sustainability and is a founding member of the

Integrated Carbon Dioxide Network. The company has experienced extraordinary growth in recent years, while being committed to evaluation prospects for carbon neutrality and carbon sequestration.

These three are representative of a multitude of excellent enterprises who've established themselves as leaders in environmental stewardship. Interestingly, there is a common characteristic with companies who have addressed environmental and social issues while maintaining profitability – the other aspects of their businesses are equally well managed.

The issues surrounding sustainability hit home as well. As Whistler prepares for the 2010 Olympic Games, it has become increasingly clear that environmental stewardship and sustainability rank high on VANOC's mandate. Among other things, some of the most pressing concerns revolve around operating in an eco-efficient manner and supporting rehabilitation where negative impacts are unavoidable. For instance, all Whistler Olympic venue sites are designed to minimize vegetation-clearing and avoid old growth forest, wetlands, and stream crossings.

Together, we can make it work. By raising awareness and bringing the issue to light, we can mitigate our impact on the environment, lessening our footprints without inhibiting our financial health. We can support the many companies who embrace environmental stewardship and, in turn, profit by growing our portfolios in a healthy manner.

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