

**It's Easy Being Green:  
The Steele Group**

**Help Your Business Now:  
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**5 Questions with  
John Neighbours**

# Catalyst

GREATER INDIANAPOLIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE | SPRING 2009



## **Visions of a World-Class City**

**A Conversation with Bill Corley**

*Following is a conversation with David Steele, Principal at The Steele Group, a privately held management consultancy specializing in the customer side of business success. The Steele Group is a member of the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce's Green Business Initiative. To learn more about the Green Business Initiative and how you can earn your Green Business seal, visit [IndyGreenBusiness.com](http://IndyGreenBusiness.com).*



**The Steele Group has created a Green Policy. Can you briefly describe its components?**

We believe in creating *sustaining* values as part of our organization's Guiding Principles. Early on, as we considered what we believe to be the essential core responsibilities of any company, not just our own, we had consensus that "stewardship" of the environmental responsibility we all share must be essential to the Guiding Principles of our company.

**Why do you think The Steele Group's Green Policy is important?**

When you place in writing your company values, regularly articulate these values to associates and clients, and then model the behavior of the related attributes, it becomes a very powerful component of how you work and how you are viewed through the eyes of everyone who interacts with you. For example, when we are asked for a marketing slick, we respond, "We only use electronic media due to our commitment to reducing paper." This kind of response generally creates a much broader discussion with our clients about who we are and how we work. Without a doubt, it has become a differentiator as well as a fun conversation to engage.

**Have your employees responded to this initiative?**

Yes, and it begins with me modeling the leadership necessary to help everyone understand that this is important to our company, our community, our society and perhaps most importantly, our future generations. When associates ride with me and see me fill up with E-85 fuel, steer clear of all trash cans and use only the blue recycle bins, and utilize video conference instead of traveling across town for a meeting, everyone begins understanding "this is a core value" and "we will all model and contribute to this value." Perhaps more important and satisfying is that everyone truly internalizes the positive value of our initiative.

**How has the implementation of this affected business for you? Can you gauge a business advantage?**

Certainly qualitatively! If we had an RFP where the prospective client required a "green vendor" and we won, then you could tie the new top line revenue to "being green." But, at the moment, we simply believe it is the right way to run our business. A great conversation is generated when we inform prospects/clients that we do not see the need to fly to their location and can, instead, do a video conference and save fuel costs and overhead. On more occasions than not, the client says, "We need to adopt a practice like this, can you send us your policy?"

**Are you able to quantify savings because of the Green Business Initiative?**

We have become fanatical about reducing electricity, fuel and paper costs. When you look at the numbers associated with running copiers, using regular light bulbs, running news all day that no one is watching on a plasma screen, it quickly becomes a big number. The same goes for paper and fuel. Every organization should have their CFO run the numbers on miscellaneous consumption of electricity and paper in their organization; it is staggering. We have reduced general and administrative costs by about 10 percent with our focus on electricity, copies, plasma screens, fuel, paper and travel — and our environment is better because of it.



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