

BRAND
GROUP

Our CSR[®] policy

Our policy is...

At Brand Group we believe that a CSR policy is not a publicity stunt, nor is it about telling the world how great we are, and we're certainly not proclaiming to be holier than anyone else, or planning to develop our business into the next Greenpeace.

Our policy is none of the above. It's realistic and honest, and reports on our impact across four areas; our workplace, our marketplace, our community and the environment.

We assessed our business impact on all of our stakeholders; our team, our customers, our suppliers, our local community and we want to improve our contribution to sustain our beautiful planet.

Our CSR policy is a work in progress not a static shelved document – We welcome feedback on any of our CSR initiatives from any of our stakeholders and are open to ideas for improvement and we are especially keen to support our customer's or partner's CSR activities.

“To have a life whilst making a living”

Here at Brand Group we strongly believe in our mission, and try to maintain a balance between developing our business but not at cost to our personal lives, which is all too often easy to do as a small business.

We are a demand led business and this mission guides our relationship with our staff and our partners, we want to be known as friendly, fresh and approachable not burnt-out, grumpy folk because we have no life or time for others!

Our Values are not just statements but are how we operate and what we pride our business on:

- Excellence – we pride ourselves on quality and delivering above our customer expectations
- Transparency – we encourage feedback with all of our stakeholders
- Probity – we operate with integrity and bestow value
- Honesty – we say and tell it as it is
- Powerful – we delight in enabling our customers to stand out from the crowd

approach
lifestyle
offer

Our location

Brand Group is situated in a small office facility on a ex working farm near Wivelsfield, East Sussex. The decision to operate from this location is both commercial and spiritual; in that we keep our overheads low and there for are able to offer savings to our customers of up to £25 per hour plus we are able to provide our staff and our customers a very ambient and comfortable place to work and meet.

Our location truly reflects and compliments our idiosyncratic style. We don't miss the smog, lack of parking, cramped office and inflexibility which some of our competitors have to endure where located in nearby Cities and towns, we love our space, neighbours and our pet alpacas!

Ed Carr, founded Brand Group in 2001.

Our Workplace

Brand Group tries to encourage staff and partners to adopt its mission and provide a working environment where staff 'love to come to work'. It is currently a small team with the aim to develop over the next 5-7 years.

"I love coming to work – it's a great environment and always puts a smile on my face"

Matt Higson – Graphic Designer

Our staff believe that the working environment adds to the creativity, it's far better bouncing our ideas off a few farm-yard animals than off another concrete tower block or seeking inspiration within closed in walls with no windows!

Brand Group also works with several key partners to deliver its services; this keeps overheads low which help to be able to deliver best value to our customers. Our Partners are effectively team members but do not all necessarily work from the Farm.

"I want to develop this business to be an exemplar of what business can do and where people queue to work here or with us"

Ed Carr – Business Owner

Our Business Partners

We aim to work with partners who share our values and mission to deliver our service and in turn compliment our business offering. Quality is key and we aim to work with some of the best in their respective sectors, business partners include;

- Synergy Group (formerly AGP) – Print Management
- Andy White – Wire World Media
- White Hat Media
- Nido
- Izimbra
- Wow

Any job vacancies are posted online, and we are always interested in receiving speculative CVs from local, keen, skilled individuals.

satisfaction

Our Marketplace

Brand Group aims to give value to its customers' bottom line by creating equity in their brand through a marketing-led design service.

Brand Group's clients range from small, sole traders through to large corporates. We feel that clients who appreciate and share our values are our best customers because we are then striving for the same results.

Customer Satisfaction

We encourage our customers to give us honest feedback about our service. Perfection is an art, and most of the time we achieve this but if our customers feel that the service has not been up to our normal high standard we'd want to have the opportunity to put it right.

Upon completion of a job we ask customers to complete a feedback form with criteria that reflect our values. Where a customer is not happy – in the first instance the Manager will set up a meeting to discuss this issue, review the terms and conditions of the contract and try to resolve an amicable solution.

Our Suppliers

We choose our suppliers based on quality and accountability. We welcome working suppliers who appreciate and compliment our values and who are preferably local to us. We fully support a Buy Local policy so that our money and our clients' money goes into our community. 100% of our suppliers are based in the county of East/West Sussex and Surrey.

Our Community

Our immediate community is on our doorstep literally - our fellow neighbours on the Farm! Our Landlord is Oliver Burgoyne who owns the farm. As our location is a little remote we do make a concerted effort to engage with our surrounding community, towns and city.

Brand Group is an active member of the following organisations;

- Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce
- CADIA
- Institute of Directors
- Sussex Enterprise
- 1st Wednesday business club

Our Charity Policy

Brand Group is a small business with a big heart; it supports a number of key community partners with pro bono or reduced cost branding and marketing support.

- The Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce – Ed Carr is a volunteer on the communications group and Ed and Matt have been responsible for the re-brand of the Chamber and the majority of the marketing literature that has been developed over the last 3 years – this work has all been pro-bono
- Brighton & Hove Seafront Traders Association – Brand Group have provided pro bono support to this newly formed group who are trying to help local traders – they helped with a new brand to be able to lobby apply commercial pressure and promote it shopping area as a destination
- University of Brighton – Ed Carr has volunteered as an assessor on the Dragon's Den style panel for the School of Business studies
- Charity donation and pro bono support have been given to our chosen charities; Spina Bifida; Children in Need and The Who Cares Trust

The value of the in-kind and pro bono work we have done in 2008-2009 is £17,601.00

Please note that whilst we know there are millions of needy causes in our community our focus is kept on our charity partners and therefore we will always politely decline approaches for donations or sponsorship. We do review our charity partners annually so welcome local charities sending us information on local causes.

The Environment

Our impact on the environment has dramatically decreased as technology advances in our sector have helped us to communicate with our customers and suppliers electronically.

Design proofs and images are now easily sent via the internet which greatly speeds up the process and also cuts out the need for costly paper, film, packaging and couriers at each stage of the approval process. Our main print supplier is based on the farm so again unnecessary travel journeys are eliminated when we want to check our clients orders.

Where possible we try to encourage our customers to look at alternatives to print like enhanced online brand and marketing activity to reduce their environmental impact but where the need is to be offline we try to source the most sustainable process for them.

Due to the advances in graphic design technology we print a lot less than we used to but when and where we do have to print we operate a recycle and refill policy with local supplier – Cartridge World.

At night and at the weekend we operate an IT shutdown and anti-stand-by policy to reduce our energy costs and CO2 impact.