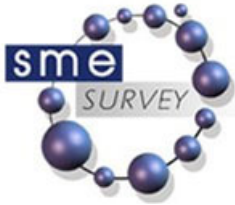


## SMEs also green

According to Arthur Goldstuck, principal researcher of *SME Survey 2010*, sponsored by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the answer to the question 'how important environmental awareness is to doing business', produced unexpected results.



The assumption that peripheral concerns such as 'being green' might be of less interest than establishing a profitable business was disproved when 78% reported that it is indeed important. "That's exceptionally high," he notes.

Goldstuck says this is almost certainly a consequence of business owners bringing their personal viewpoints of the necessity for environmentally sound practices into the workplace. Perhaps even more surprising is that emerging businesses were slightly more concerned than established companies.

### Flying in the face of 'received wisdom'

"Businesses in established markets came in at 77%, while businesses in emerging markets were at 80%. This flies in the face of 'received wisdom,' which assumes that those businesses which are more established and enjoy access to technology and formal communications, might be more concerned about their impact on their surroundings."

When asked 'Do you disagree that the environment is important', 6% of emerging business said they do disagree, while 20% of established companies said they disagree. "In effect, three times more people in so-called 'first world' businesses don't think the environment is important. This turns on its head the notion that the first world is more concerned with the environment than the emerging world is."

### Focus narrowed over time

While the underlying reasons for this are obscure, Goldstuck ventures that a struggling business owner is likely to be focused across all elements of impacts on his organisation, including its place in the community and the environment. However, once more established, company owners tend to narrow the focus to those factors directly linked boosting growth and profitability.

Andile Lungisa, NYDA chairperson, says that as issues of sustainability elevate in the national consciousness, it is noteworthy and encouraging that the small business owner factors the environment into his or her plans.

For more information, go to [www.smesurvey.co.za](http://www.smesurvey.co.za).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>