

# Raising Environmental Awareness at our Brazilian Shopping Centres

Sonae Sierra

*Our commitment to the environment extends beyond our own operations to the actions of our visitors and tenants. In Brazil, our environmental awareness campaigns aim to inspire shopping centre visitors to adopt more environmentally friendly behaviours. In 2011, we reached more people with the simple message that we can all play a part in safeguarding the environment.*

## THE CHALLENGE

Sonae Sierra Brasil has a long-standing commitment to the environment and to reducing the environmental impact of our shopping centres and offices. Communicating these achievements to our visitors is increasingly important as there is a growing body of evidence - supported by external research and visitor surveys - that making our shopping centres more sustainable not only makes them more efficient, but helps to build visitor loyalty and trust.

We also aim to raise visitors' awareness of the steps they can take to reduce their impact on the environment. But while most people are familiar with the major global challenges that are facing the environment, few are aware of the simple steps that we can all take to help solve them. Getting these messages across in an engaging way is a key aim of our environmental awareness campaigns.

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*"We need to take action to re-orientate consumer choices (...) towards more sustainable lifestyles and purchasing decisions to remain within the carrying capacity of the Earth".*

**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

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## OUR OBJECTIVES

Promoting environmentally-conscious shopping experiences and raising visitors' awareness of Sonae Sierra's environmental performance helps us to develop strong relationships with visitors who share our goals.

Our strategy is to deliver a sustainable shopping experience with a focus on attracting and retaining environmentally-conscious visitors. To support this, we have set ourselves a long-term objective to enhance visitors' recognition of our shopping centres' sustainability performance.

## OUR APPROACH

Every year we organise a series of marketing events at our shopping centres in Brazil to provide information on the main environmental challenges facing our business and our achievements in tackling them. We also aim to raise awareness of the simple, effective measures that our visitors can take to reduce their impact on the environment, particularly when visiting our shopping centres.

From coordinated activities across all 11 shopping centres to individual initiatives, our campaigns aim to create a fun and enjoyable shopping experience where visitors can learn more about the challenging environmental issues we face, and about the small changes they can make to their daily routines to help them to live more sustainable lifestyles.

One of the many initiatives we organised in 2011 was the publication of a special 'green' edition of *Recreio* - a popular children's magazine - to coincide with celebrations for World Environment Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> June.



Figure 1: The "Recreio Verde" magazine published in June 2012

"Recreio Verde" contained information on Sonae Sierra Brazil's sustainability journey, including the company's environmental and social responsibility initiatives presented in an easy to understand and engaging way. Through simple language and illustrations, children could learn more about our approach and the progress we have made to date.

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*"We believe that children can be big advocates for the environment. When they are with their families, they are the ones who are engaged with the issue and who influence the people closest to them. We chose Recreio magazine as it is a highly accredited publication and a great opportunity for us to reach a young audience with our message."*

**Laureane Cavalcanti**  
Corporate Marketing Manager for Sonae Sierra Brasil

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Figure 2: More than 20,000 copies of "Recreio" magazine were distributed to children visiting our shopping centres.

### The "Green Code" Campaign

In 2012, we invested over €607,000 in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Green Code campaign (*Liquidação Código Verde*) that took place across all our shopping centres in Brazil. The aim of the campaign is to combine promotional sales with environmental awareness events, so that we can take advantage of the higher footfall and reach as large an audience as possible.

Each year it features different initiatives and ideas to promote more sustainable behaviour and greater environmental awareness among shopping centre visitors. In 2009, for example, we planted more than 22,000 trees in a deforested area of Amazonas, representing a total investment of over €1 million. In 2010, the campaign aimed to increase awareness among shopping centre visitors about the importance of conserving water, and for every €86 spent, customers were rewarded with a bag made from recycled materials (which can be used instead of plastic shopping bags) designed by a well-known artist.

In 2011 we encouraged visitors to sign a Conscientious Consumption Manifesto and commit to reducing the amount of waste they produce. Visitors signed a large, empty sack signifying zero waste and made a commitment to follow the three 'Rs' - reduce, reuse and recycle – to help protect the environment. Everyone who signed the manifesto received a free recycling pack called 'Reuse and Recycle, Adopt a Green Attitude' which contained information on everyday materials and how long they take to decompose.

We also created an online "Green Attitude Quiz", which was accessible through our shopping centre websites. Visitors answered a series of sustainability-related questions about their actions and behaviour to create a personal environmental profile and measure how "green" they are. Participants could share their scores with friends and families via social media.



Figure 3: Green window display

All shops taking part in the "Green Code" campaign were invited to take part in a competition for the best green-themed window display. Shops were required to use sustainable materials and objects to help spread the message of the campaign. More than 1,900 shops took part to win prizes that varied between shopping centres.

### The Battle of the Green Codes

We organised a 'Battle of the Green Codes' to raise awareness among shopping centre visitors in the build up to the campaign. Discounts of up to 70% were offered on thousands of selected products in a variety of stores. Shops asked customers to vote for which of two products they wanted a greater discount on. The product with the greatest number votes received the biggest discount. Customers could also sign up to receive an e-mail with a list of the winning products once they were announced.



Figure 4: Battle of the Green Code promotional material

In addition to the promotions and sales campaigns, each shopping centre organised smaller individual events such as advertisements through the shopping centre radio station, talks by celebrities and attractive decorations, such as zebra-crossings in the parking lot painted with the Code Green logo.

### Sharing best practice

In October 2012, Sonae Sierra Brasil participated in the 12th ABRASCE Exposhopping – one of Latin America's premiere retail industry events.

Coinciding with the International Shopping Centre Congress, the fair was a fantastic opportunity for us to present our achievements such as being the first shopping centre company to achieve ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certifications for its corporate Environmental and Safety and Health Management Systems.

The stand we used for the event was made out of sustainable and recycled materials such as paper, cardboard and wooden pallets. All the materials used for the stand were then donated Casa de Zezinho (a cultural and educational charity that works with children from underprivileged backgrounds) and Cooperacaacs (a cooperative that works with recycled materials to create alternative art).



Figure 5: Sonae Sierra's environmentally-friendly stand at the ABRASCE Exposhopping Event



RESULTS

Influencing customers to be more environmentally responsible is vital to achieve the kind of mass behavioural change that is needed to deliver significant and lasting change for society and the environment. By targeting children we can foster an awareness of the environment and encourage more sustainable lifestyles from an early age. They are also natural ambassadors who, in turn, raise awareness among their families and friends as they share what they have learned at home, school and further afield.

Designing an entertaining and engaging green edition of Recreio magazine meant that we could get our message to children in an effective way and create a lasting impact. More than 20,000 copies of the magazine were handed out to children in Sonae Sierra Brasil shopping centres in the states of Sao Paulo, Amazonas and Minas Gerais. Copies were also given to employees' children so that they could also enjoy the magazine and share the environmental messages with their families. It also received significant press coverage, with more than 100 articles published in local and national newspapers.



Figure 7: Example of article about the green edition of "Recreio" magazine

Shopping centre	Number of magazines distributed
Shopping Penha	1,230
Shopping Metr�pole	5,220
Tivoli Shopping	820
Franca Shopping	820
Parque D. Pedro Shopping	3,250
Boavista Shopping	2,210
Shopping Plaza Sul	1,210
Shopping Campo Limpo	820
Manauara Shopping	1,710
Uberl�ndia Shopping	2,240
Corporate	500
TOTAL	20,030

Figure 6: Number of copies of Recreio distributed per shopping centre

*More than 2,300 products and 1,470 shops took part in the Battle of the Green Codes.*

The Green Attitude quiz was also very successful. It challenged adults who took part to think about how their behaviour and lifestyle choices impact the environment. More than 300 visitors assessed their environmental credentials, with the highest number of responses at Shopping Campo Limpo (121 responses) and Parque D. Pedro Shopping (75 responses).

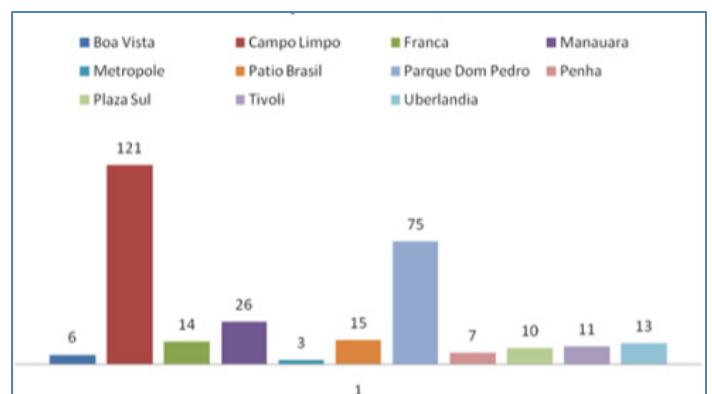


Figure 8: Number of responses to the "Green Attitude Quiz" per shopping centre

## CONCLUSION

There is growing evidence that consumers are demanding more environmentally friendly products and services. Increasingly, they are looking for companies that share their aspirations and that can support them in their ethical and environmental purchasing decisions.

As a shopping centre company, the biggest contribution we can make to protect the environment is by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the many thousands of visitors who pass through our doors each year. Research we conducted in 2012 shows that our shopping centres already attract a high proportion of environmentally conscious shoppers and that most believed and expect shopping centres to help them to live more sustainable lives.

We know that that we can derive value from these visitors by enhancing our reputation and that in turn benefits our business through increased traffic. Whilst it is difficult to measure the success of our marketing events beyond traditional indicators such as footfall and tenant sales, the reaction of our visitors and their willingness to engage with us and our core messages has been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. We aim to build on this momentum going forward.