**Sustainability should be a cultural value at your place of work**

*By Owen Lewis – VP Finance, Cambridge GaN Devices*

Everyone’s relationship with their job has been through a fundamental change over the last couple of years. For many people, Covid-19 caused a period of reflection, and now, more than ever, it feels important to have a cultural connection with the underpinning values of the company you work for.

Certainly, one of the strongest ties that binds us together at [Cambridge GaN Devices](https://camgandevices.com/en/) (CGD) is the company’s overarching commitment to its core values - of which sustainability is perhaps the ‘first among equals’. What really drew me to CGD was how the company’s core values - which also include innovation, knowledge, collaboration, commitment and courage - were so ingrained into the company – it was clear there was a passion from everyone I spoke to about these.

In this article, I want to focus on sustainability. It’s a huge and highly complex subject, and presents you with difficult choices. Especially as a smaller company. CGD is, of course, a company that was founded to develop energy-efficient GaN-based power devices to make greener electronics possible. The provision of more efficient power supplies is a significant step, but sustainability and achieving net zero (Carbon zero) is a much wider activity. The [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](https://ghgprotocol.org/) describes it thus: “Developing a full [greenhouse gas] emissions inventory – incorporating Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions – enables companies to understand their full value chain emissions and focus their efforts on the greatest reduction opportunities”. Just a reminder, Scope 1 are those emissions that can be directly attributed to the activities of a company, whereas Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions are result of a company’s activities but which occur from sources not owned or controlled by it.

In order for this definition of sustainability to be accepted and implemented, sustainability must be a core value for us all. No individual or company can say ‘I'm going to leave it to someone else’, because that attitude would make it a much harder and lengthy process to get critical mass. Everyone can do something, and all companies can make a difference by standing up and becoming part of a movement. We need to seize the momentum and push forward.

I said earlier that when I joined CGD I was impressed by how ingrained our cultural values, including sustainability, are throughout the company. In part, this has been a leadership philosophy but it runs throughout the company. As an example, take our Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Committee. This is a group of volunteers comprising a cross-section of our workforce from different functions. Over the last year, we've gone through a process of defining our ESG policy statement. The first tangible outcome of this is the early achievement of ISO 14001 certification, the environmental management standard. With any company you're always going to have time and resource pressures, and it would be very easy not to go for certification. But by putting in the investment to get ISO 14001 implemented now, it means that as we scale, we've got the processes in place to make the right decisions, to understand what we are doing and to track our progress.

So, it’s not only Giorgia Longobardi, our CEO, who believes passionately in sustainability. For many people, myself included, it’s why they choose to work here. We are not just a green power company, sustainability informs every decision we take: the office was chosen for its green footprint; our printers, our pens and pencils, our stationery - anything that we can buy for our office - our cleaning equipment is all environmentally sound and friendly, our signage is recyclable, our electronic waste is carefully managed, the energy we purchase is from renewable sources.

But we recognize that for any company, managing and mitigating our Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions are just part of the wider challenge. As a fabless semiconductor company our footprint extends to our outsourced partners and we enjoy working with them to ensure we have the right policies and processes in place to ensure we scale in a sustainable way. We want to be instrumental in helping other companies take the sustainability journey alongside us.

To get back to where we started, in an age of hybrid and remote working where the need for balance in the individual lives of workers has become more recognised, it’s even more important to have a cultural connection binding the workforce together. For CGD, the commitment to sustainability is a huge bond. Sustainability is a very big buzzword at the moment, but for us, it's more than just ticking boxes - our focus is on how we can live and breathe sustainability. Recognizing that some of the things you do need to be changed for a sustainable future is the biggest step; but then behaviour can change very quickly. And if everyone did that, then obviously, we would all be in a much better place.