

# Win A Million Dollars

BY FC Expert Blogger [Terry Tamminen](#) Tue Mar 30, 2010

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Seems like every week there's another big-money prize awarded for low-carbon leadership. If these things actually stimulate innovation, let's encourage the creation of a few more to spread the wealth and inspire even more low-carbon winners.

For example, there's a \$10 million prize for cars that get 100 mpg sponsored by the same X Prize organization that handed out \$10 million to Burt Rutan for the first commercial spaceflight demonstration. And the Zayed Future Energy Prize gives \$1.5 million annually to low-carbon energy innovators, awarding its inaugural prize to the inventor of the solar lantern.

Sponsors can be equally effective at a lower price point. Staples is offering \$25,000 prizes to inventors of low-carbon office supplies - - contenders include a desk chair that controls office energy use and pens that save resources by lasting longer and being more easily recycled than conventional models.

Of course prize money can reward achievement, but it can also inspire action for the future. Pharmaceutical giant, Bayer, handed out a 50,000-euro prize to the institute that linked polar and ocean health to climate change, motivating numerous governments to take action. And, although not related to carbon, the Nobel Peace Prize that went to President Obama highlighted the motivational potential of big-name prizes. The President acknowledged that the prize wasn't as much for past accomplishments as it was meant to inspire future greatness. The power of vision and hope.

So if big money and the notoriety that comes with it can help to create markets for entirely new products and inspire others to think big, how about these ideas for future million dollar prizes:

- The first "Carbon Neutral Equals Higher Profits Award" goes to Parducci Wine Cellars, the world's first carbon-neutral winery, proving you can save money by reducing waste, installing renewable energy supplies, and working with your supply chain to take similar steps.
- And the inaugural "You Can Teach An Old Dog New Carbon Tricks Award" goes to the Walt Disney Company for its carbon cutting moves at Disneyland - - trains, boats, and generators now run on clean biodiesel, while some 16 million gallons of water are recovered and recycled by the largest indirect potable reuse facility in the world.
- Finally, the initial "Recycled Green Money Award" goes to Salix Finance in the UK, which runs a revolving loan fund for energy efficiency projects that gets repaid from savings on electricity bills. Their first £57 million fund financed over 1400 projects saving nearly 100,000 tons of carbon a year. Why would Salix get this award instead of other companies that do the same thing? Because they only lend to public institutions, lowering costs for schools, government agencies, and hospitals, saving money for taxpayers and creating local sustainable jobs in the process. As April 15th approaches here in the US, anything that demonstrates how to lower taxes is a good idea, right?

So if saving money, becoming more efficient and competitive, and saving a planet are not enough motivation to reduce carbon in everyday life and business, maybe a million dollar prize will get the attention of a few more American businesses and entrepreneurs. Of course if you are one of those who have started to measure and reduce your carbon footprint before now, you are already a winner.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/1601791/win-a-million-dollars>

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/36080931>

<http://www.grist.org/article/win-a-million-dollars>

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