



Carbon Literacy at Volkswagen Group UK: Driving a Low-Carbon Future

Volkswagen Group United Kingdom (VWG) is the UK's leading automotive group, accounting for around one quarter of the passenger car market.

With the global strategy of "Mobility for Generations", VWG is committed to playing an active role in transforming the automotive sector towards a sustainable, low-carbon future.

The Challenge

Before implementing Carbon Literacy training across the workforce:

- VWG's sustainability efforts were driven by small committees, and could be **inconsistent**
- Working in silos and according to job role meant there was patchy engagement and focus

VWG needed a single, scalable tool that could embed climate understanding and **drive a unified, company-wide approach**.

The Solution: Embedding Carbon Literacy

Carbon Literacy training was adopted as a core tool to educate and empower colleagues to contribute to VWG's overall sustainability efforts.

Before: Fragmented

After: Unified Impact

- ✓ **Cultural shift:** Carbon Literacy enabled a culture where personal and professional sustainability commitments are made in unison.
- ✓ **Rapid Adoption:** After an initial cohort of key individuals completed the training, demand spread quickly.

Actions: As a result of Carbon Literacy



Board-level commitment

Three board members were certified, which led to stronger strategic backing and increased funding for sustainability initiatives, including continued training.



Procurement

The procurement team revised tender processes to include **more stringent sustainability criteria**, enabling emission reduction through the supply chain.



Energy and Fleet

The company car scheme was updated to **promote EV adoption**. VWG also partnered with OVO Energy to switch tariffs to **renewable electricity**.



Travel and Waste

Better journey planning and alternative transport options were adopted for business travel. Disposable coffee cups were banned, and a significant reduction in printed assets was enforced.



Retailer Engagement

Introduced an 'opt out of a service wash' option across the retailer network – planting a tree for each opt-out.



Wider Collaboration

VWG shared best practice, leading to **Bentley** and **VW Financial Services** independently delivering their own CL training.

The Impact: Outcomes from actions

Carbon Literacy training quickly established a unified approach to sustainability, leading to tangible results internally and across the wider VWG network.

Measurable results



110,000 kg CO₂e saved

via the actions pledged during training.



200 staff certified

helping VWG achieve **Silver Carbon Literate Organisation** status.



~1,700 trees planted per month

through the 'opt out of a service wash' initiative



Sylvain Charbonnier,
Member of the Board of Management

"I was the first of our board of management to complete Carbon Literacy training back [in] 2023, facilitated by our partnership lead, Leanne Thomas, who works in my department..."

...I could see for myself the business benefits as well as the personal passion of people taking part..."

[Carbon Literacy]...gave us a tool and measure for employee engagement under our commitment to educate and encourage our people to contribute to sustainability."

Maintaining Impact: Operational commitment

VWG created an online system to track learner actions and follow up on implementation after their quarterly Carbon Literacy sessions. Regular check-ins ensure progress and accountability, embedding Carbon Literacy into everyday operations.

Future Plans

1 Train 100 more staff in Carbon Literacy over the next year, and work towards Gold Carbon Literate Organisation status.

2 Utilise Environmental Awareness Days throughout the year to spark new sustainability conversations.

3 Assess the carbon impact of IT projects to lower emissions from digital activity.

4 Graduate and undergraduate projects planned to integrate Carbon Literacy outcomes into the business as part of early-career development.

5 Support sister companies across the wider group, such as Bentley and Porsche, with their Carbon Literacy journey.

The automotive sector is under huge transition, shaped by shifting policies, evolving technology, and global uncertainty.

In this turbulent landscape, education through **Carbon Literacy** provides VWG with a **stable foundation** on which to implement its sustainability strategy.