



From cost to profit: a new perspective on sustainability

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From cost to profit: a new perspective on sustainability



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As data centre sustainability transitions from an added cost to an MO, Green demonstrates how ESG can offer an invaluable market differentiator

Clearly, sustainability is more than a low-level concern for Green. This Swiss data centre leader is rapidly expanding, going from a single site to a multi-site, multi-campus company in just a few years – and it plans to become pan-European in the near future.

All of this, while implementing sustainability standards as the cornerstone of its architecture.

Green's monumental success demonstrates that sustainability doesn't have to be a 'necessary expense' or a roadblock to data centre growth – in fact, it can be their differentiator.

Navigating the challenges facing the data centre industry

While many industries are facing major, omnipresent challenges, it's hard to compete with the extent and variety of the difficulties faced by the world's data centres.

Firstly, there's the longstanding impact that COVID-19 and global conflicts have had on supply chains.

"Of course, now, most recently – when we thought that finally the pandemic had ended – we have the Russian Ukraine war, which has again impacted global supply chains and energy supply in particular," explains Roger Sueess, the CEO of Green.

"Certainly, with our clients and customers, this has created a lot of

anxieties about how they navigate through those crises, while at the same time, needing to transform their businesses."

Running parallel to energy and supply chain threats is the rate of expansion that global businesses are demanding of data centres. As digital transformation is being deployed at an immense scale, meeting global demand is no mean feat.

Then, amongst all of this, there's the issue that there simply isn't enough talent out there to navigate these hurdles.

"While it's an old topic, what's still very much true for us as we expand is the war of talent and getting the right people who can actually support that growth," Sueess comments.

“It's about more than just chasing one KPI. It's a very holistic approach – and that's also something that's very hard to just copy, because it's a complete mindset change”

ROGER SUEESS
CEO,
GREEN



Ashley Davis,
Executive Board
Member, Green
(left). Roger Sueess,
CEO, Green (right)



“I firmly believe that best-in-class operability is now in our DNA”

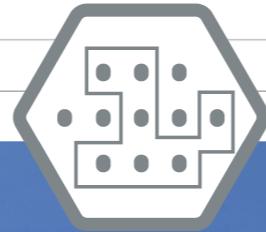
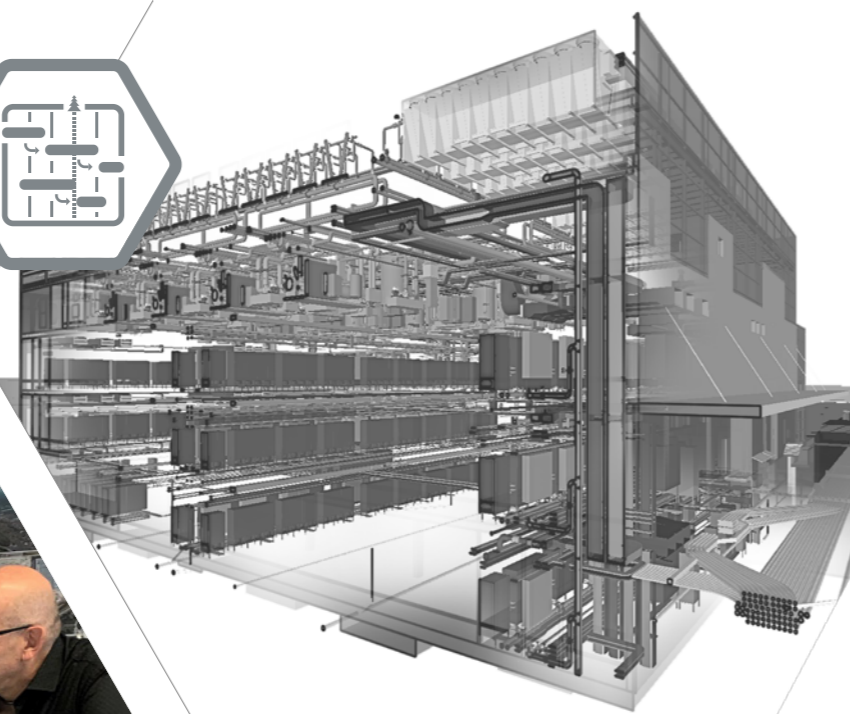
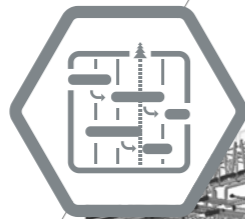
ASHLEY DAVIS,
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER,
GREEN

Yet, in the face of all of these challenges, Green has continued to thrive, achieving a rapid rate of expansion.

For Davis and Sueess, this success is predominantly down to the talent of its teams, Green’s partner ecosystem, the consistent prioritisation of sustainability, and its ‘Best-in-Class’ status.

“Both Roger and I have been with Green now for the last four years, and have gone through significant transformation during that period. And, frankly, I think that’s because of the commitment, discipline, patience, and hard work of our teams,” said Ashley Davis, an Executive Board Member of Green.

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“We have a whole set of key partners involved in our delivery, as we build data centres and create the systems”

ROGER SUEESS
CEO,
GREEN

Alongside this, Green’s growth has also been fuelled by an expansive, invaluable network of partners.

“On the one hand, we have a whole set of key partners involved in our delivery, as we build data centres and create the systems. Then what we’ve done – very much in the background – is create an ecosystem of partners supporting that transformation and that journey to cloud, making Green the place where everything comes together,” Sueess explains.

“As you look at our website, you’ll see the ecosystem described and a set of partners, starting from consultancy, across transformation, implementation, security, and then the infrastructure where our core assets are.”

‘Best in class’ in practice – achieving the highest standards of sustainable operability

Recently, Green was awarded the status of ISG’s Best in Class Switzerland Data Centre Leader, a feat the company has achieved for the third year in a row.

In practice, such a status comprises a wide variety of factors, in which operational excellence, sustainability and technological innovation are included.

For Davis, another contributing factor of Green’s success in this area has come from the fact that both he and Sueess have worked with data centres from every angle.

“Throughout our careers, both Roger and I have been demanding consumers of data centres, users of co-lo data centres, owners and operators of in-house data centres, and, now, we’re developers and operators of commercial data centres.



“For us, it was almost a given that we would invest in sustainability and differentiate ourselves there. But now, it’s actually become an advantage – in a lot of the discussions that we have – that we did this early on”

ROGER SUEESS
CEO, GREEN



ROGER SUEESS



TITLE: CEO

INDUSTRY: DATA CENTRES

LOCATION: ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

» Roger Sueess is CEO of the Green Group - consisting of Green Datacenter AG and Green.ch AG, an ISP for private and SME customers.

Roger has over 20 years’ experience in the financial services industry, where he was Managing Director and Fellow at UBS and Credit Suisse, responsible for cloud strategy and execution, IT infrastructure, IT architecture and IT innovation, acting as Head Cloud Business Office, CTO and Global Head Engineering, steering and forming the banks’ IT landscape and the industry as a whole.

Additionally, Roger was responsible for the Swiss and EMEA region and the banks’ representation at various boards, including the Swiss Banking Association. Prior to that, he worked as a consultant across the IT industry.

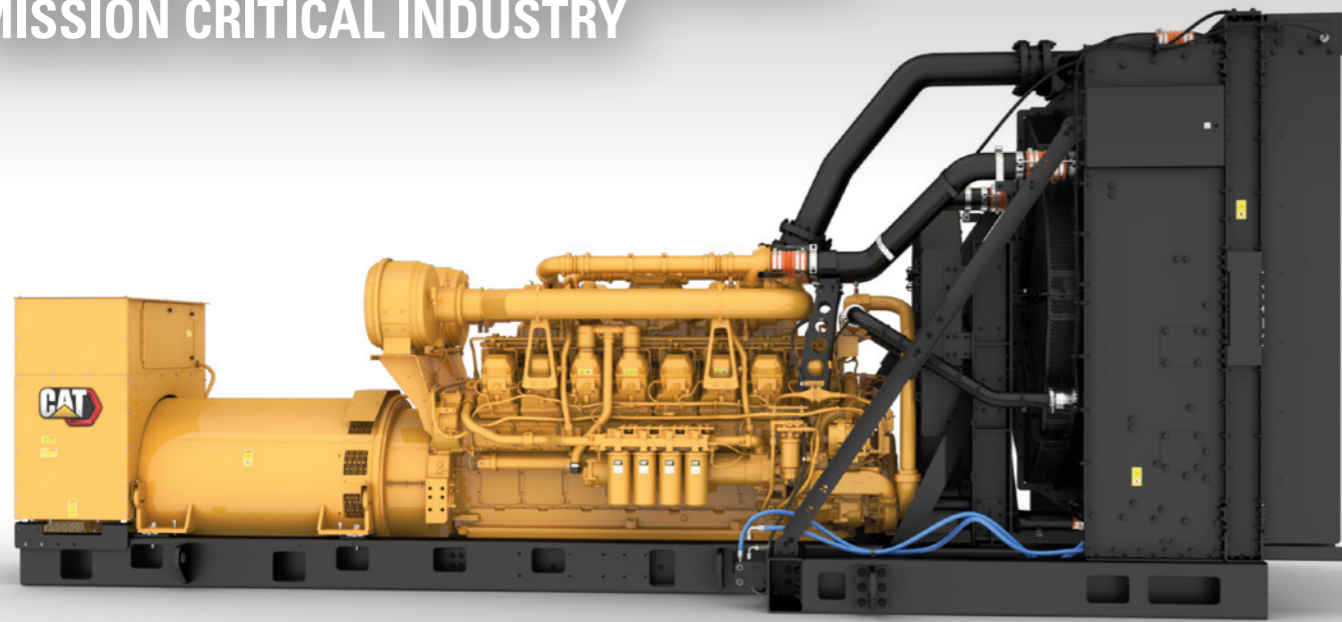
Roger Sueess has spent many years living abroad in the US, Asia and all over Europe, providing him with a wealth of international experience and a broad network.

He holds a Master’s in Engineering and a Bachelor’s in Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies from the University of Rapperswil (HSR).

EXECUTIVE BIO

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GREEN DATACENTER



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ASHLEY DAVIS,
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER,
GREEN

When you've been on the other side as a consumer, you recognise what's important in terms of maintaining the brand and the entity that you work for. Our being able to influence how Green has grown, with that lens across service, availability, consumption and development, certainly brings a unique differentiation for Green.”

“I've always said that best in class is a process, not just an event. The commitment and hard work behind the scenes, which goes into operating our sites, maintaining our sites, etc. is evident in our recognition as best in class,” adds Davis.

Utilising their perspective as former consumers – and thereby understanding the priorities of their consumers first-hand, as well as what their end-user experience expectations are – Green has taken its sustainability commitment several degrees further than its competitors.

“I think we really went through a whole journey. Of course, we chased the optimal PUE, which is something very much known in the industry, but then we went even further,” explains Sueess, outlining the approach and extra-mile-factor that set Green apart.

ASHLEY DAVIS

TITLE: EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

INDUSTRY: DATA CENTRES

LOCATION: UNITED KINGDOM

» Ashley's career spans 35 years within the financial services technology sector, giving him a unique perspective on the exacting requirements and meaning of mission critical environments, with roles including data centre strategy, cloud strategies, and leading HQ workplace developments.

Ashley has been involved in over 2msqft of data centre developments, spanning the UK, Europe, US, and Asia. He has a Master's in Intelligent Building Design & Operations and is a Chartered Engineer and Fellow of the Institute of Engineering and Technology.

EXECUTIVE BIO

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We digitize sustainably

PBP AG engineering has played a key role in the planning of the new Green Metro Campus Zurich. Three high-performance data centers for cloud providers, enterprises and system integrators are built on 46,000 m² of space at the Metro Campus Zurich. Green is an important player for the future of cloud computing. PBP was selected as a suitable partner for the implementation of the campus. In collaboration with Green, PBP launched a future-oriented modular DC hyperscaler concept with an IT load of approximately 50MW on a greenfield site and accompanied the huge project in close cooperation with the client. The unique PUE performance makes the Metro Campus Zurich the most energy-efficient data center in all of Europe.



Salvatore Baia

Salvatore Baia is Co-Founder, Owner and Vice President of PBP AG engineering, a general planning, electrical engineering and consulting company operating throughout Europe. Baia also acts as CTO for PBP as the technical leader in the Datacenter Green Metro Campus Zurich project. He has been in the industry for more than 30 years and has been involved in data center project planning from an early stage. Baia was involved in complex planning of cages, small DC conversions, followed by power upgrades to the largest hyperscale data centers in greater Europe.

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“We are part of the Swiss Data Centre Association, making sure that some of the knowledge can be shared and that we can build on various ideas. We work together with hyperscalers to help them improve their architecture and evolve ours.”

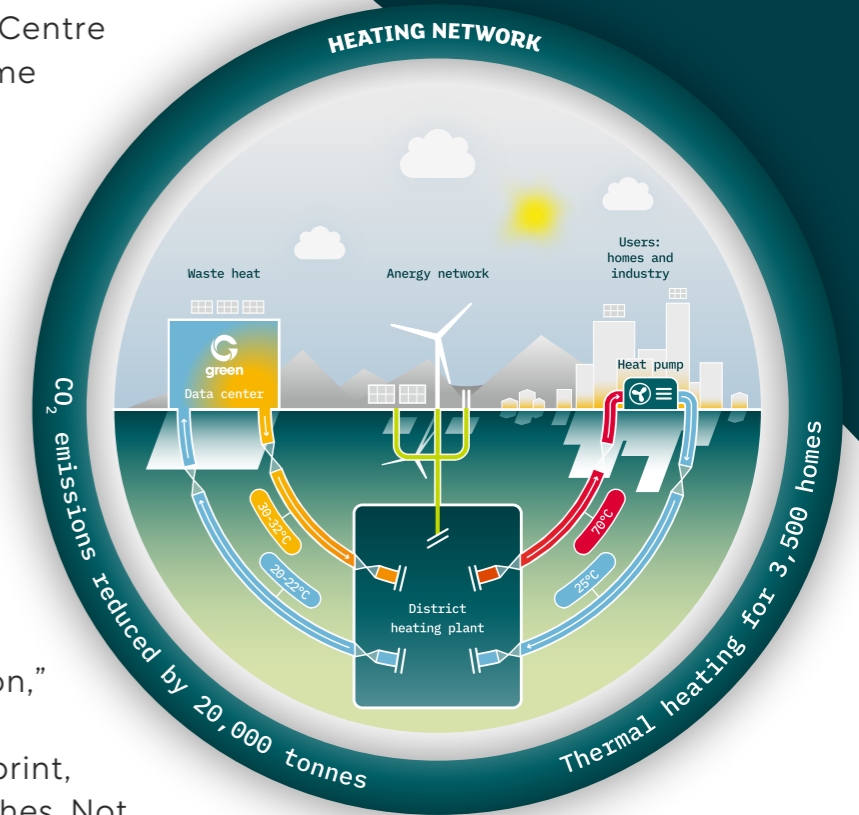
“This includes actually working together with two universities in Switzerland, going further to lead a new standard to certify data centres that is more inclusive – not just in the PUE, but actually the whole front-to-back operation,” adds Sueess.

With regard to ecological footprint, Green is also taking new approaches. Not only does this pay off for Green, but it also aids the region’s climate protection drives.

“We found the purpose element that ESG brings particularly helpful when acquiring talent, and, more and more, I think that's where it starts to pay back”

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“We asked ourselves how we can use resources wisely and reuse them. For example, for the waste heat (which is lost in many data centres) we feed it into a heating network. We initiated this technology, using it to supply thousands of households and industries with climate-neutral heating. This saves 20,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year. We are convinced that sustainable data centres are a win-win for companies, operators and the environment,” Sueess explains.

“It’s about more than just chasing one KPI. It’s a very holistic approach, and that’s something that’s very hard to just copy, because it’s a complete mindset change.”

These ESG initiatives, in turn, drive a greater diversity in the talent pool, as sustainability is becoming an increasing priority for talent, when choosing companies for which to work. And, for Green, this trend has been clearly reflected in their recruitment process.



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WATCH NOW

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ROGER SUEESS
CEO,
GREEN





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Setting sustainability as a differentiator

Countless data centres have included sustainability within their pledges and future growth plans. But, as the title of their entire operations, ‘Green’ has made its presence in their strategy clear.

“We have a deliberate roadmap towards continuous improvement. We ensure that we actually have all the telemetry and instrumentation necessary so that we can be fully transparent, and so we can get those KPIs, maintain those KPIs, trend them and report them,” Davis explains.

“Having that, I believe, has made a significant contribution to a number of threads, in terms of sustainability. And again, I think ESG means many different things, but from a sustainability perspective, we have a very purposeful transparency that we share. I think best in class is a process we’ve institutionalised in those processes from the outset”.

“We found the purpose element that ESG brings particularly helpful when acquiring talent, and, more and more, I think that’s where it starts to pay back,” Sueess says. “That sense of purpose is something that resonates with literally all employees. I don’t think it’s about particular demographics necessarily, but certainly the young ones – Gen Z in particular.”

“I firmly believe that best-in-class operability is now in our DNA,” adds Davis. “We have a very purposeful agenda, in terms of talent development, and I know for certain the contribution from our teams – in terms of our growth, and more importantly, our efficiency, our reliability, and so on – is a significant differentiation in Switzerland.”



“We are actually looking, every year, to see how we could push our new technologies”

ROGER SUEESS
CEO, GREEN

Far from this being a hindrance to their growth pace, for Davis and Sueess, it is actually the key factor that gives Green its best-in-class reputation.

“Initially, when you focus on some of the sustainability topics, particularly in data centres, they're always being viewed as a tradeoff. So, if you invest a lot in sustainability, then you're not as profitable.

In the meantime, though, our clients and customers are actively asking about ESG strategies,” Sueess continues.

“I see that as an opportunity to start monetising as, you know, we are the company Green.

“For us, it was almost a given that we would invest in sustainability and differentiate ourselves there. But now, it's

actually become an advantage – in a lot of the discussions that we have – that we did this early on,” explains Sueess.

“For a data centre, you're looking at a lifespan of 20 to 30 years. So, if you haven't already made those investments and if you don't keep improving, you'll have a stale asset, so to speak, and you have to innovate at another level.”

Thanks to its proactive approach, Green has set sustainability as its key differentiator, and a priority that marks it out from its competitors. As such, it has a marked competitive advantage over its rivals, who have only just begun to implement their ESG progress strategies.

“There's a tonne of competition out there that we consider ordinary. But very few that are extraordinary, and our achievement over the last three years is that we consider ourselves to be extraordinary on that basis,” says Davis.

“Sustainability is a differentiator that people are looking for, and I think more and more it is becoming an MO rather than something that you can choose to do,” Sueess elaborates.

“Having an advantage there, or being ahead of the rest, helps. It's important that you keep working on it.

“That's a mindset that we were able to establish at Green – and that makes our customers very confident that they made the right choice, because they see us continuously improving.”

“It's not that we go, ‘Okay, now we put the ribbon on it, we're done’. No, we are actually looking, every year, to see how we could push our new technologies: can we improve processes, configurations and so on, to keep that advantage and to keep ahead?” concludes Sueess. ◉



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