

Going Green in the UAE

BGREEN SINGLES OUT THE BEST OF THE BEST GREEN INITIATIVES WITH OUR SEAL OF APPROVAL



GREEN PLUS DEALS

Green penny pinchers can finally rejoice. Gone are the days when going green translated to a high premium. GreenPlusDeals.com is the latest online coupon website to originate from the UAE, featuring cost-effective green products and services across industries. The website officially launched at the end of January, with a discounted deal on a green Business Training Workshop. Since then, GreenPlusDeals.com has branched out to include sustainable desert safari tours, water ionisers and carbon-neutral skin care and other eco-friendly goods and services. "By Green we mean eco-friendly products and services which are healthier for you and better for the planet," says the Director of the company, Mehdi Mourtada. "We have a few strategies in our pipeline that will further our green vision. First in the list will be to replace paper vouchers that need to be printed with SMS vouchers instead.

"When we started building our business model, we anticipated that there are many cost/benefit factors that companies and individuals consider when making buying decisions. Environmental and social factors are most likely to be overlooked because of its high cost and lack of consumer awareness. This is where we want to come in and make a difference," Mourtada adds.

Launched in January, GreenPlusDeals.com already has a considerable following on social media.

KAMSTRUP

Utilities around the world are currently replacing conventional metering devices with smart meters that allow consumers to observe their behavioural patterns in relation to their spending to move towards using energy efficiently. Tapping into their extensive experience with battery design, Kamstrup's smart metres only require 0.6 watts of power to function. In a year's time the smart meter will only consume 5 kilowatts of electricity.

"People are already aware that energy is an expensive resource, and if they are made aware of their consumption habits, they will automatically seek to adjust to a more energy savvy behaviour," Jarmo J Heikkinen, General Manager - Meter Division, Heat, Cooling and Water of Kamstrup says. "European experience states that about 30 per cent energy savings can be achieved when using individual BTU metering for cooling energy if compared to bulk metering where cooling charge is included into the rent. There is a clear difference in the consumption pattern of energy and water in measured and non-measured apartments."

In the UAE, where air-conditioning makes up the bulk of energy consumption, Kamstrup seeks to increase personal accountability among consumers and corporations in their energy usage habits. According to Heikkinen, 1°C in indoor temperature represents 5 per cent of the energy bill, which means that a tenant can actually save 10 per cent by increasing the indoor temperature from 20°C to just 22°C. "This very concrete economic benefit of individual metering allows consumers to keep a critical eye on their consumption as energy prices are in a steep rise," he adds. Kamstrup also provides metering solutions to existing buildings through retrofitting.

CARBOUN

The latest regionally-focused sustainability platform, Carboun, is headed by Karim Elgendy, a UK-based architect with a strong interest in advocating sustainable practices and environmental conservation in the Middle East. With a committed focus on sustainable design and development, Carboun explores the built environment in the MENA region and ways in which resource allocation can be best meted.

Carboun, a play on the Arabic pronunciation of the word carbon, reflects the initiative's deep regional roots while calling to attention the duality of the very element that makes up our life form that has more recently been driving climate change.

Directed by a steadfast group of volunteers, Carboun hopes to alert the world of the urgency of climate change, and what we can do as citizens to mitigate its effects for a greener future.

BGreen's expert panellist and regular contributor Wissam Yassine, currently heads the initiative in the UAE as the Carboun National Coordinator. Find out more about at www.carboun.com, and in the April issue of *BGreen*.