

CLIMATE HEROES

sponsored by Acterra & Bay Area Green



Small Business Owner is a Climate Hero



Amar Panchal, CEO of Akraya, Inc., a small IT business in Sunnyvale, is recognized by Acterra as a climate hero for his extraordinary leadership in turning his company green.

While waiting to pick up his car at an auto body shop last summer, Amar came upon a brochure that started him on his climate hero journey. The auto body shop, The Driving Machine, in Cupertino, CA., had recently become a certified green business and the brochure was an invitation to other small businesses to follow their green path.

Inspired by this call to action, Amar decided that his firm, Akraya, Inc. would also join the fight to combat climate change. Amar states, "I have always been environmentally aware, and I saw becoming a green certified business as an opportunity to take it to the next level."

When he returned to Akraya, Amar shared his vision with his leadership team and they quickly started the "greening" process.

Amar, appointed Rituparna Chatterjee, Akraya's marketing communications manager as Akraya's new in-house green consultant. He asked her to spearhead the program but to keep him involved. He states, "To effectively make this cultural change it is very important to have the support of the leadership team; I don't just want to delegate, I want to be a part of the process." Rituparna developed a new green campaign for Akraya called "Green Earth, Green Akraya." To green their office environment, she used the checklist developed by the Bay Area Green Business Program as a guide.

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Amar Panchal,
CEO of Akraya, Inc.

→ **Do you know someone who is taking action to fight climate change?**

Acterra is looking for Climate Heroes; individuals or groups who have gone to great lengths to reduce the carbon emissions within their community. People who have taken action and have inspired others to join them.

If you, or someone you know, is a Climate Hero tell us about it so others can learn from your accomplishments.

Send us your heroic stories!

Email a paragraph describing what you have done and its impact to heroes@acterra.org. Please include your name, phone number and a photo of the activity.

Go to acterra.org for more information.



It's been a little over six months since Akraya first decided to green its business practices and they have a lot to show for it. They recently gained Bay Area Green Business certification and have effectively integrated green thinking and behavior into their company culture. Akraya now publishes a quarterly "green" e-newsletter called *The Green Vibe* that highlights employee actions to green not only their professional but also their personal lives. Amar states, "*The Green Vibe* is another way for us to learn from each other and to reinforce the value of the program".

Akraya has also built green expectations into their HR department by having all current and incoming employees follow their new Green Employee Policy. The following are some of the 11 Green measures that each employee should follow:

- Employees are encouraged to carpool or take public transportation to work. (Occasional telecommuting is also an option.)
- Computers, printers and other electronic devices must automatically switch to standby mode, when idle for more than 15 minutes.
- Employees are encouraged to plan efficient delivery/pick up routes and eliminate unnecessary trips in order to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions.
- Outgoing emails of all employees must have Akraya's green signature: "Green Earth, Green Akraya. Please print this email only if necessary."

Amar admits that the greening process hasn't been easy but he thinks it's been worth every minute spent on it. He says it has really unified his team, "It's like a religion, it becomes a part of who you are."

Amar has plans to expand Akraya's green program. Not only that he and his team are now also able to pass along their new knowledge and enthusiasm to other businesses not yet green-certified. Amar states, "Just the other day my new green email signature line caught the attention of a Wells Fargo executive. He was curious about the program and I was able to share with him our success with it."

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Amar Panchal is a climate hero because as a business leader he has taken action to commit to greener business practices, and has created a work force that is more environmentally aware and responsible. Amar and his team are now environmental advocates and encourage other small businesses to join them in becoming green.

To find out more about the Bay Area Green Business Certification process please visit www.greenbiz.ca.gov



Acterra is a non-profit organization with a 39-year history of bringing people together to create local solutions for a healthy planet.

For more information about Acterra go to www.acterra.org.