

Nike lands Gigaton Award for climate work

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Over the weekend, Nike Inc. picked up the equivalent of an Oscar for the climate change mitigation world when the Carbon War Room recognized the company with a Gigaton Award. At a gala event Sunday, which took place in the midst of the climate talks in Cancun, Nike took home the Gigaton for the "consumer discretionary" category, beating out Toyota Motors, Panasonic, Walt Disney Company and Sony Corporation.

The Gigaton Award, given for the first time this year, recognizes companies that are taking proactive steps to mitigate their impact on the climate. The awards program has the backing of the [Carbon War Room](#) and from Sir Richard Branson, the well-known British entrepreneur. The name comes from the [Gigaton Throwdown](#), a Clinton Global Initiative launched in 2007. That project focused on achieving an annual emissions reduction of at least one gigaton by 2020 through such innovations as biofuels, geothermal energy and electric vehicles.

Nike received the award for its energy savings program focused on reducing its overall emissions. Other winners included:

- In the consumer staples category, Reckitt Benckiser Group, an England-based household and personal care company, for demonstrating its leadership in mitigating risk from climate change and sustainable practices.
- In the energy category, Suzlon, a wind company in India, for its achievement in managing its emissions and overall sustainability milestones. Suzlon beat out finalist Vestas, which has its U.S. headquarters in Portland.
- In the industrial category, 3M was recognized for its focus on energy efficiency.
- In telecommunications, Vodaphone Group won for a new business that provides carbon reducing connections.
- In the utility sector, French utility GDF Suez won the award for emitting among the lowest level of CO2 per KWh produced in Europe.

The awards are creating buzz in the sustainable community industry for the signal they send that financial performance and sustainable practices are not mutually exclusive. As Branson put it in a press release quote: "The world's leaders need to embrace the fact that there does not have to be a trade-off between the economy and the environment, and these awards prove that."

Nike detailed its sustainability strategy and emissions-trimming efforts in a [report on corporate responsibility released](#) in January. In April, the Carbon War Room named Portland among its guinea pigs for a new low-carbon economic development program.