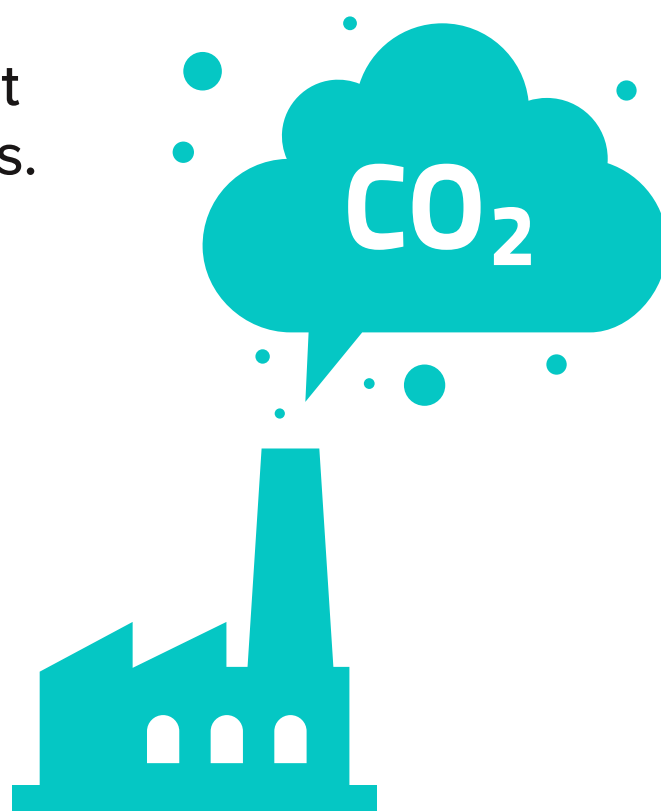


4 STEPS TOWARD BECOMING CARBON NEUTRAL

BY CARLOS M. GONZÁLEZ



Manufacturers are a significant contributor of carbon emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency reported that the industrial sector in 2019 was third after transportation and electricity generation with 823 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions.



While the automotive industry is transitioning to electric vehicles and the electrical sector is growing renewable energy sources, the industrial sector must also turn toward carbon neutrality.

THE THREE LEVELS OF CARBON-FREE PRODUCTION

CARBON NEUTRAL:

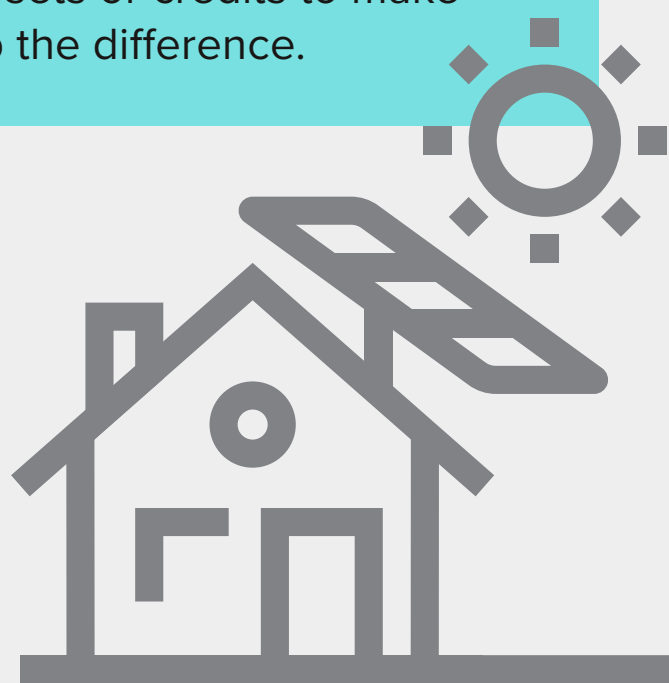
A product or company that removes the same amount of carbon dioxide it emits into the atmosphere. This is typically accomplished by purchasing carbon offsets or credits to make up the difference.

ZERO CARBON:

Zero carbon buildings and modes of transportation offset its energy use through renewable sources, in addition to any carbon emissions resulting from its construction. A manufacturing plant can be deemed a zero-carbon building by relying on solar power, for example.

CARBON NEGATIVE:

A carbon-negative company is able to remove more carbon than it emits.



According to Climate Neutral, an organization devoted to helping companies reduce their carbon emissions, here are the four steps companies can take to reach carbon-free production.

CO₂

1 | MEASURE

The first step a company must take is to measure its carbon emissions. This might be challenging depending on a company's product.

- For a company that doesn't produce a physical product, the most significant part of its carbon footprint might be its energy consumption, the size of its office space, or how much travel occurs within the company.
- For companies that produce a product, their emissions will come from the machines and processes used throughout its supply chain.

2 | REDUCE EMISSIONS

Once an organization has identified its emissions, the next phase is to take active steps in reducing said emissions. Depending on the organization, this can take different forms.

- Recycling materials or reduce material waste is one method.
- Increasing the use of renewable energy sources or limiting travel is another way to reduce carbon emissions.

3 | BUY OFFSETS

For organizations that have difficulty reducing emissions due to the nature of their business, another method of reducing emissions is buying offsets.

- Companies can buy high-quality carbon offsets or fund projects that have measurable emission output.
- An example is a company sponsoring a solar energy farm, or funding landfill covers to prevent the escape of methane emissions.

4 | COMMUNICATE THE MESSAGE

Organizations like Climate Neutral offer companies a certification that indicates they are "Climate Neutral Certified." The company can use that certification as a label to be placed on its products, packaging, and branding. This will create a carbon-neutral ecosystem and encourage other organizations to source goods from carbon-neutral companies.

