



MWH



SEEDA

Sustainable Business Awards for the South East 2004

Case Study - MWH

Company Background

MWH supplies engineering, planning, design and construction services both in the UK and worldwide. Its core business involves projects for water supply and treatment, wastewater collection and treatment, and environmental management and engineering. The staff-owned company has 6,100 employees worldwide.

Sustainability Initiatives

- Promote sustainable development on all client projects
- Continual support for a range of local community initiatives and national charities
- Encourage suppliers and sub-contractors to operate to environmental standards that match those of MWH
- Mitigate travel impacts and reduce the company's environmental footprint

Summary of Key Achievements

- MWH is one of the first engineering consultancies to receive an award for occupational health and safety practices. In 2003, MWH won the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' Gold Award, the highest health and safety award attainable
- In 2003 MWH received the magazine 'DM Review' Award, which recognises excellence in business intelligence and data warehousing strategy and implementation
- All UK offices are certified to ISO9001 and ISO14001
- In the five offices where it was possible, 45% of MWH's energy consumption has transferred to using renewable electricity supplies
- MWH successfully makes its annual Colorado Springs conference 'Carbon Neutral'
- 97% of all paper used at headquarters is recycled
- Operated a worldwide Sustainable Development Knowledge Base since 2001 and published Sustainable Development Reports for 2002 and 2003



KEY



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



BUSINESS BENEFITS



ECONOMIC BENEFITS



SOCIAL BENEFITS

Contribution to a Sustainable Economy

MWH supports a range of local community initiatives. Key examples are summarised below:

- MWH actively supports the Environment Centre in High Wycombe, which aims to 'advance community participation in sustainable development and raise awareness of environmental issues'. Funding was provided to produce the Centre's first leaflet in 2001 and the current leaflet. Trustee time is also funded. MWH is currently assembling a team of 20 staff volunteers and funding to work with schools to raise awareness of sustainability, manage an annual event, and man the Centre. The company benefits from this commitment through staff satisfaction, and the opportunity to hire a meeting room at a competitive rate
- Staff members are involved in a 'Community Participation Programme' where MWH matches the amount raised by fund-raising efforts. A key initiative is sponsorship of the Mersey Basin Campaign where staff participate in environmental conservation initiatives

MWH donates to several national charities. As MWH's nominated charity, WaterAid operate by training local labour to build and maintain water and sanitation facilities in developing countries. MWH typically donates more than £3,000 a year to this charity, and has now joined their Project Link Scheme committing to raise at least £5,000. Managed by a company representative, initiatives include:

- Sponsored events completed by staff including a 'Bike Ride to Brussels', marathons, Munroe Challenges and the Thames Raft Race
- Staff can donate through payroll, foreign coin collections, dress-down days and Water Company Lotteries
- The company donates to the charity on a corporate level
- Company events, such as Summer Ball and Christmas raffles



Bike ride to Brussels for WaterAid

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MWH operates an 'Environment, Safety & Health Awards Scheme' for participating contractors. The Scheme encourages a competitive approach towards achieving high standards, and MWH makes a donation towards the winner's choice of charity.

Enhancing Environmental Quality

All UK offices are certified to ISO9001 and ISO14001, with the exception of the Isle of Man to ISO14001.

MWH has worked on client projects concerning sustainability, such as the United Kingdom Water Industry Research programmes on the effects of climate change and sustainable small sewage treatment works, and a pilot study for the Water Framework Directive on the Shannon Catchment in Ireland. Such projects illustrate how MWH works in a wider industry context to encourage policy-makers and practitioners to adopt sustainability frameworks.

The group's embedded principles of sustainability into its evolving system for project delivery through a Project Issues Register that examines social, economic and environmental factors and acts as a prompt to focus the team on potential issues and client expectations. Issues considered include greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, community impacts, and staff welfare.

MWH runs an internal sustainability competition to identify the best example of sustainable development and its translation into practical engineering. The 'Sutton Poyntz Cryptosporidium Project' was the 2003 winner, and involved designing borehole source control measures to prevent cryptosporidium from contaminating the spring water supply. Such an innovative approach avoided the construction of a costly membrane filtration plant and associated plant impacts.

Each office has an 'Environmental Champion' that ensures a sustainable approach to office supplies, such as recycled office paper (97% of all paper used at headquarters), non-CFC cleaning materials, fluorescent tubes, etc.

MWH has consulted with its office suppliers in order to reduce its environmental impacts – e.g. through changing from a five times a week delivery schedule to a once weekly schedule and using re-usable boxes.

In the five offices where it was possible, 45% of MWH's energy consumption, has transferred to using renewable electricity supplies.

The group holds an annual technology conference in Colorado Springs, which it aims to make 'Carbon Neutral™'. Over the past years, in partnership with Future Forests, it has successfully offset carbon emissions through the following initiatives:

- Buying low energy light bulbs for the Jamaican tourist industry
- Investing in planting forests or carbon neutral technologies
- This year, MWH is hoping to provide solar panel equipment to rural community homes in India and Sri Lanka to reduce wood burning and related health problems



90% of office paper is recycled

MWH has operated a car-sharing database for several years. However, due to logistical difficulties, the success of such a scheme has proved limited. The company also provides an incentive of 2p per mile if you take a passenger for business. Video-conferencing facilities are also provided in all offices to encourage virtual meetings.

Improving the Social Wellbeing of Stakeholders

Project Clearwater was an initiative launched in 2002 aimed at demonstrating the benefits of working for MWH. A staff survey was undertaken to develop an action plan, out of which several key initiatives were set and achieved. A few examples are:

- As part of the coaching and mentoring programme, 137 staff have been trained on a two-day course
- A 'Buddy' system has been introduced for all new starters in their first two weeks

In June 2004, MWH introduced an Employee Assistance Programme for all UK employees. The programme, run by Validium Group Limited, is a 24-hour, free phone confidential counselling and information service to assist staff with personal or work-related problems. Over the last four months, about 40 employees have contacted the service.

For the past two years, MWH has run a 'Future Leader Programme', which aims to encourage communication between senior management and staff, and thus provide insight to senior management. Each office has a 'Future Leader' who acts as a link between senior and junior staff. Future Leaders are nominated by their peers and short-listed by management for a period of 12-18 months. Staff are encouraged to express concerns and issues, e.g. at monthly 'coffee and croissant' morning meetings arranged in the High Wycombe office, and Future Leaders meet one another four times a year in Brussels to exchange experiences, build their own network of contacts and to acquire new skills. Discussions are then reported back to management teams to help them affect positive changes in their offices.

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