

Case Study - Sony United Kingdom Limited

Company Background












Sony is the manufacturer and distributor of Sony branded products, which are principally electronic goods for the domestic, leisure, business and professional markets. Sony has offices in Basingstoke, Thatcham, Weybridge and Pencoed in South Wales. It has 2,500 staff in the UK.

Sustainability Initiatives

Sony operates a comprehensive environmental management system certified to ISO14001. A number of improvement programmes are underway to reduce the impact of Sony's operations and products.

The company has a strong community involvement programme with a range of partnership activities benefiting the local community and economy.

Summary of Key Achievements

- 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions from vehicle fleet since 2002   
- 15% reduction in packaging in 2003  
- Between 2002 and 2003 general waste reduced from 252kg/head to 243kg/head 
- 85% of wooden pallets now recycled (10% greater than last year) 
- 90% of reduction in the amount of computer equipment sent to landfill 
- 3,300 hours of volunteer time spent on community projects in 2003  
- £189,800 donated to charities in 2003 

KEY



Contribution to a Sustainable Economy

Sony has been operating in the UK for 30 years. They continue to be a significant employer in the region.

Sony is actively involved in partnerships in the region to enhance its contribution to the economy. It is a member of the CBI and trade associations and actively engage with Surrey County Council and other local businesses regarding important local issues such as transport. Sony is also an active member of Business in the Community.

Sony Corporation is a member of the prestigious Dow Jones Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good Index. It regularly contributes to journals, conferences and debates on sustainability and technology.

Sony supports the Surrey Business Enterprise Agency to support individuals setting up businesses in the Surrey area. One of Sony's senior managers is the Chairman of the Agency and Sony is providing financial support to the initiative.

Enhancing Environmental Quality

All of Sony's sites within the South East have been certified to the international environmental management standards BS EN ISO14001 since 1998. A guide on what the standard means for Sony has been issued to all staff.

Sony's environmental policy sets out its commitment to the environment. This is communicated to staff via induction training, notice boards, on-going training, manuals and displays. It is also included in every company telephone book.

Sony publish an annual Social Responsibility report (www.sony.net/eco).

Sony's ambitions for environmental management are set out in 'Green Management 2005.' This specifies Sony's mid-term targets for environmental improvement in all areas where the company has a significant environmental impact. These targets are disseminated to senior managers and made available to all staff.

Sony uses its environmental management system to reduce resource and energy use, reduce waste sent to landfill and to minimise emissions.

Sony's largest impacts are the resources used in its products. Through continued developments in technology, Sony's products continue to get smaller. This means less packaging is needed, less material is sent to landfill and less transport and fuel costs are required to transport the same quantity of product.

Sony is also actively reducing the energy consumption of its products. It claims to have the lowest product standby energy use than equivalent products on the market. Sony is also actively

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reducing energy consumption within its offices. It has implemented the following practices:

- A switch off procedure using coloured dots to indicate which appliances or lights should be switched off out of hours
- All photocopiers and printers are fitted with power saving time switches and have been centralised where possible to discourage use
- Sony has installed a new energy efficient boiler which has increased energy efficiency by 11%
- All bulk lamp replacements now use energy efficient bulbs

In 2002, Sony introduced waste segregation for almost all office waste and in 2003 it began recycling film and shifted to using plastic recycled pallets. General waste has been reduced by 10 kg/head in the last 12 months. Sony is now working with its caterers to reduce canteen and packaging wastes.

Sony has more than 1,000 suppliers. It has recently introduced an I-Shop purchasing system. This tool ensures that all suppliers meet with the companies purchasing policies and Green Management 2005. All suppliers are requested to produce a Health and Safety and Environmental policy as part of their registration as a new supplier. An environmental supplier questionnaire is used to track the environmental performance of suppliers.

Sony has been working with its vehicle fleet provider to reduce fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions from its fleet. It has downsized the fleet and shifted to diesel vehicles. Sony has also been increasing the use of video conferencing to avoid unnecessary transport costs and developed 'train.net' allowing Sony employees to participate in training sessions remotely. These measures have resulted in a 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions from vehicles between 2002 and 2003.

This year, Sony has established a travel plan for the company. A Steering Group comprising senior management and representatives from other local companies have been briefed to prepare a travel plan of action. A recent survey conducted to inform this plan has shown that 53% of staff surveyed would be interested in some kind of car share arrangement.

As part of Sony's Green Management 2005 targets, Sony has a commitment to double eco-efficiency by 2005 and a commitment to double the amount of product sold using the same amount of resources.

Improving the Social Wellbeing of Stakeholders

Sony has a very active programme in the community with a plethora of initiatives. These include:

- A donations committee tasked with overseeing company donations. Recent donations include financial support for Camp Mohawk which provides holidays and short breaks for brain damaged and autistic children
- A matched giving programme for company staff who donate money to an organisation of their choice and which fall within the guidelines of the scheme
- A member of the Percent Club, a group of Business in the Community members who commit to donate one half of one percent of pre-tax profits to community organisations each year

- An internal lottery to raise money for charity. £70,000 has been raised since 1995
- The fifth Sony Annual Global volunteer day, where employees took part in projects to help Riding for the Disabled in Thatcham and The Elmbridge Borough Council with conservation work
- Supporting the Surrey Child Rescue Alert Group which has been set up to activate a fast response time to help find an abducted child before they come to any harm
- Hosting the South East regional final of the Young Engineers for Britain
- Working with Cares Organisation in Surrey to find homes for redundant product
- Sponsorship of the Surrey County Scholars Award
- Regular meetings with Surrey County Council regarding local transport issues and have recently worked with the council to establish a staff bus
- Sourcing catering services and office products from local suppliers

Sony is also very active in its support for its staff. It has recently been promoting work-life balance across the company including a home-working programme for staff. Seventy staff have been allowed to work from home and Sony is currently undertaking risks assessments to ensure all staff have an adequate home-working environment. The work-life balance programme also includes a range of other initiatives including a comprehensive benefits package, long service awards, subsidised gymnasium facilities, a company restaurant promoting healthy eating, relaxation treatments for staff and various sports and social clubs.

The company actively supports career advancement programmes and management development. It supports staff wishing to take MBAs, professional accreditations and advanced language training. Sony provides leadership and communication training for senior managers, culture awareness training and operate a Europe-wide Graduate Trainee Programme.

Sony also has a comprehensive health and safety management system. This includes a range of health and safety related training programmes for staff (e.g. hazard awareness, fire marshalling, defensive driving, travel awareness, induction training, manual handling and supplier auditing) and other measures to ensure continued compliance to health and safety legislation (e.g. disability surveys, asbestos surveys).



Presentation of the Surrey County Scholars Award

¹ This includes: cash support £158,000 (cash donations and community sponsorships), staff time £7,300, gifts in kind £2,000 and management costs £22,500

² Please note that these figures incorporate staff terminating company car contracts and taking a cash alternative. Therefore some company car CO₂ savings will have been replaced by staff owned car emissions

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Awards supported by:

