



Sustainable Business Awards for the South East 2003

Case Study - The Entertainer (Amersham) Ltd

Company Background

The Entertainer was established in 1981 by husband and wife team Gary and Catherine Grant. It has evolved from a single toy shop in Amersham, to become the UK's largest independent toy retailer with a turnover of over £40 million employing more than 500 people in 35 stores across the UK.

With a unique approach to staff, customers, suppliers and toys, The Entertainer is a multi-award winning outlet with an ambitious growth plan that aims to double its share of the UK toy market within the next four years.

The Entertainer sells toys which are great value for money, ethically suitable and offer true play value.

Sustainability Initiatives

Key Achievements

- 'Project Breathe' - this extensive staff survey involving 90 interviews (over 12 weeks during January-March 2002) sought to establish The Entertainer's ethos and performance, resulting in the distillation and promotion of six core values.
- Issued new Health & Safety Handbook.
- Environmental Policy adopted.
- Reintroduced printer cartridge recycling.
- Introduced cling wrap recycling.
- Reduced CO₂ emissions by changes to the company car fleet.
- Stakeholder Conferences held to share The Entertainer's vision and five year plan.
- Shopping Centre Stores use on-site recycling facilities.
- High Street stores return all cardboard and packaging to the warehouse where it is either reused or compacted for recycling.
- Establishment of The Grant Foundation, the charitable arm of The Entertainer, to which the company contributes 10% of annual profits, largely for children's charities and projects.

Resource Efficiency

The Entertainer endeavours to reduce waste and educate staff to reuse or recycle wherever possible.

Paper consumption:

- Staff are encouraged to print double-sided, with regular reminders being sent by email.
- Staff are encouraged to use electronic record keeping.
- The Entertainer aims to reduce paper purchases by 10% by August 2004.

Recycling Initiatives:

- Waste paper printed on only one side is either reused or sent to local schools.



Gary Grant, Managing Director New store in Birmingham Bullring

- Other waste paper and confidential papers are either:
 - Shredded for use as packaging, reducing the purchase of bubble wrap and other packaging materials by 50%, saving over £100 a year.
 - Sent to a recycling centre - approximately 150 tons of paper and cardboard sent each year, leading to savings of £5,084.
- Printer cartridges are recycled and income generated is donated to The Grant Foundation, the company's charitable arm.
- Stores are encouraged to send all metal waste back to the warehouse for recycling.
- Wooden pallets not meeting required specifications are either given to the local supplier or donated for the local bonfire night. The Entertainer is currently seeking a local wood recycling centre to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by approximately one ton per month and associated costs by £650 annually.
- Most broken toys are returned to suppliers. Where appropriate they are repaired by warehouse staff and donated to charity, local schools or nurseries. Approximately 33% of broken toys are recycled in this way.
- Useable parts of incomplete toys and games are salvaged and sent to local schools e.g. paint brushes, glue, pencils and crayons.
- Cling wrap recycling is a new initiative where cling wrap is salvaged, compressed and sent for recycling.
- All carrier bags are printed with requests for customers to reuse them.
- Shop uniforms are recycled for use by temporary staff and warehouse uniforms are laundered and reallocated.
- Mobile phones are exchanged for donations to The Grant Foundation.
- An on-site waste compactor reduces the volume of waste by over 50% with an approximate collection cost saving of £1,360 and associated emissions reduction due to fewer collection journeys.
- Monitoring will continue to aid efforts to use energy wisely and reduce waste.

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Water

- Water meters are installed in most stores. Bills are monitored to ensure any changes are investigated, helping to identify leaks.
- The use of toilet 'hippos' in older stores is being investigated.

Electricity

- Energy efficient light bulbs are used throughout the company, with cost savings from 8% to 25%.
- Some stores are fitted with heat sensitive lighting.
- Head Office and some stores have plumbed-in hot water heaters to reduce the use of kettles.
- Head Office is a new building with integrated energy efficient lighting.
- A combined printer-photocopier has been installed at Head Office to reduce energy consumption and costs.

Social Responsibility

The Entertainer understands the role of business in society to make both an economic and a social contribution. Economically, The Entertainer recognises its responsibility for the livelihood of its employees and aims to trade profitably and efficiently. It also has a keen sense of its responsibility to its wider stakeholders, including staff, children, customers, suppliers, local communities, professional advisers, charities, associations and landlords. The Entertainer promotes healthy communicative relationships with its stakeholders based on its six core values of honesty, care, loyalty, outstanding service, enthusiasm and fairness. Annual Stakeholder Conferences have proved to be successful.

Staff are recruited locally wherever possible and The Entertainer operates a care scheme for staff in need. One of The Entertainer's objectives is "Empowering our people to achieve their life's potential".

The Entertainer empathises with working mothers and fathers and allows flexible and part-time working.

The Entertainer uses local suppliers whenever possible.



Children from a local school visit Head Office

Supply Chain Management

Electricity is supplied by Bizz Energy which generates energy from a variety of sources that have been defined by the DTI as renewable.

Most printing and signage is done by Kenton Display:

- 99% of the board used is from sustainable forests.
- All board is recycled.
- Except for neon colours, all ink is water-based, i.e. non-solvent.

A new retail management system enables more accurate and informative planning and reporting to sustain the business throughout and beyond its five year plan.

Transport

- Benefits of smaller cars, diesel engines and pool cars were considered when planning the company car fleet.
- Many stores are located in high streets, enabling staff and customers to use public transport.
- Customers can purchase on line or by telephone.
- All cardboard and waste is returned to the warehouse in delivery vehicles.
- Delivery schedules, dispatching only cost effective (full) loads, involve careful route planning to avoid congestion and minimise emissions. Mileage claims are checked to ensure all business miles are necessary.
- Reduced Pollution Certificates have been awarded to two of the five tractor units. Had this scheme not been withdrawn two new vehicles would also have been eligible.
- All in-house drivers undertake a defensive driving course aimed at reducing: accidents, fuel consumption, tyre wear and tear.
- The company car fleet is being changed to diesel on a rolling programme to reduce fuel costs and emissions. All cars are regularly serviced.
- Pool cars are available to reduce the number of individual company cars.
- Car sharing is encouraged for training and Head Office events.
- Head Office has a bicycle rack for staff use.

Planned Initiatives

- Two new state-of-the-art 'concept stores' in Birmingham and Kingston.
- Extending heat-sensitive lighting to other stores.
- A 'switch off' campaign to reduce energy consumption and raise awareness of energy efficiency.
- Work towards ISO 14001.
- Apply for Investors in People.
- Establish workers' consultation committee.
- Implement supply chain management.
- Set targets and monitor progress for reducing waste and energy use.
- Investigate wood recycling for broken pallets and other products in line with the Government's Waste Resources Action Programme.
- Appoint an Energy, Environment and Sustainability Manager.
- Rural regeneration of 360 acre Restore Hope Latimer site for local and extended community use.

Awards

- TROY- Toy Retailer of the Year 2002.
- British Association of Toy Retailers Award to the Toy Industry 2002.
- Chiltern District Council Volunteering Award 2002-2003.
- Ilford Best Environmental Store Award 2003.
- Winchester Welcome Retail Award 2003.
- Cardiff Backstage Standards Competition 2003.

Contact

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