

Case Study - Icore International Ltd

Company Background

Icore International Ltd is situated on the Slough Trading Estate in Slough, Berkshire. It employs 130 people. The company is owned by Smiths Group Plc and develops and manufactures a range of electrical flexible interconnect assemblies and equipment for the Aerospace and Rail industries.

Sustainability Initiatives

Key Achievements

- Water consumption reduced by 30% or 20.9 million litres per year, virtually eliminating waste water discharges.
- 30% reduction in gas use over a 12 month period.
- 10% reduction in electricity use over a 12 month period.
- Hazardous waste on site reduced by 25%.
- Elements of the organisation's EMS system is viewed as Best Practice by BSI auditors.

Resource Efficiency

Water Consumption

The company uses water for cooling during its manufacturing process. A project team reviewed this system and proposed a fully enclosed system for recycling cooling water. The cost of the system was £2,400 and the company water bill has been reduced by approximately £2,000 per year with water consumption reduced by 30%. The project has virtually eliminated the company's waste water discharges.

Waste

As part of Icore's 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) programme, which only began in 2002, a major project to reduce waste has commenced. The initial stage of the project saw the introduction of recycling the company's waste paper, cardboard and plastic cups. Can crushers have been installed and employees are actively encouraged to bring in used drinks cans to be crushed and then recycled.

Stage two of the project involved a waste stream mapping exercise of one of the key manufacturing areas. The results showed that approximately 3,360 kg of scrap PTFE was being sent to landfill each year. The project team found that with improved machine control and the introduction of statistical process control (SPC) systems there would be significant savings:

- 15% reduction in scrap PTFE to landfill.
- A significant reduction in raw material costs.
- Significant improvements in machine efficiency.
- Improved quality of finished product.



Icore International Ltd., Slough

It was calculated that the costs of the SPC units (£107,000) would be paid back in 12 months through savings. The process is still being monitored and it is expected that the calculated savings will be exceeded.

Energy Efficiency

Another of Icore's key environmental projects has been an energy reduction programme. Icore's Environmental Steering Group set initial reduction targets of:

- 30% for gas
- 10% for electricity

over a 12 month period. These have been achieved, saving in excess of £7,500.

All employees attended environmental workshops where Icore's 'Turn It Off' programme was launched. Energy audits were carried out and charts showing the company's energy consumption were displayed on environmental notice boards. Ongoing performance is monitored and displayed monthly.

The company's electrical sintering oven and gas heating system have been progressively changed to more energy efficient systems.

Control of Pollution and Hazardous Substances

Icore recognised that it had a lot of chemicals on site, in excess of 600 different types. A project team was set the target to reduce these by 15%. They have actually achieved a reduction of 25% and are confident that with new controls in place a further reduction of 10% is achievable.

This project has not only reduced costs but has reduced the risks to health and safety, and the environment.

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Social Responsibility

This is an area that Icore feels it needs to develop. The Environmental Steering Group is discussing the possibility of a company open day to share initiatives and future plans with neighbours. Formation of links with local schools on environmental projects that could be of educational benefit is also being considered.

All Icore employee environmental training focuses on the message that by being 'Green Aware' they can make a difference not only at work but also in their homes and their local communities.

All staff are continually encouraged to contribute suggestions to the Environmental Steering Group.

Training

Icore recognises that for its ISO 14001 EMS programme to be a success, all employees have to be involved. An important initial task was to formulate a training development plan. The first part of the plan was to give the EMS a name to raise the profile of the programme. The winning entry was the 'Green System Initiative' which won the employee £50. This was followed up by workshops and participation in environmental project teams. Employees are also actively involved in producing the company's quarterly Green Scheme newsletter.

Supply Chain

A key part of Icore's business strategy is effective quality and environmental management of its supply chain. Suppliers must have in place, or be able to demonstrate, that they are working towards an effective environmental management system (EMS).

New suppliers are expected to have an EMS in place or be able to demonstrate their commitment to achieving the ISO 14001 standard within a year to 18 months.

Icore is also committed to working with its suppliers to share best practice and offer support in environmental initiatives. This includes visits to suppliers by Icore's Environmental Steering Group to offer support and advice.

Transport

Icore monitors and measures all company travel. Company car mileage is recorded and annual CO₂ emissions are calculated. The same applies to business flights. Icore use these calculations as a benchmark and various initiatives to reduce the company's CO₂ emissions are being discussed.

Video conferencing to reduce overseas travel has been in use for the last 12 months.

Innovations

Icore is currently involved with prime aerospace companies to develop the next generation of more environmentally friendly aircraft. This includes investigating alternative materials for cadmium.



The water conservation team at one of their review meetings

Planned Initiatives

- Continued waste mapping.
- Completing a secure yard area that will allow the company to increase its level of recycling activities.
- A full review of the company's compressed air usage.
- Further reduction targets for energy and water use.

Awards

- Finalist in the Environment Agency Water Efficiency Awards 2003, Envirowise Industry & Business Category.



Sustainable Business Awards for the South East 2003

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