

Case Study - Rentokil Pest Control & Rentokil Initial Research & Development

Company Background

Rentokil Pest Control is the world's largest commercial pest control company. It operates in 37 countries, employs over 4,000 people and generated a turnover of £211.2 million in 2002. Rentokil Pest Control traces its origins back to the early 1920s, and its name is synonymous with effective pest control around the world. The business is part of Rentokil Initial Plc, a FTSE100 business to business company, which generated turnover of £2,339.5 million last year.

The Research & Development function was established in the 1950s and currently employs a team of about 30 scientists working in a variety of service areas. Much of its pest control research is aimed at understanding the characteristics and behavioural patterns of pests. This allows them to develop more targeted solutions which reduce or remove the need for toxic materials in treatments. This approach allows Rentokil to prevent pests rather than control them, thereby avoiding more drastic solutions. The activities of Research & Development are certified to the requirements of Quality Assurance Standards and Good Laboratory Practice.

Sustainability Initiatives

Key Achievements

- RADAR Unit- a truly 'green' pest control option.
- Zero Option service.

Innovations

As the UK's leading name in pest control, Rentokil is dedicated to providing a professional and environmentally responsible service to all sectors of commerce and industry. This is demonstrated by the innovations described below.

Rentokil Pest Control has launched a new rodent trap onto the market in the UK, which represents a major step forward in safe and environmentally friendly pest control. The trap, called 'RADAR Unit' detects the presence of the rodent using pressure pads, traps it within the unit and kills it quickly and humanely by releasing carbon dioxide. In addition, the carbon dioxide is a by-product of the brewing industry.

A rapidly flashing light alerts the customer that a pest has been caught and a technician is called in to service the unit.

RADAR was designed for use in 'high risk' areas such as food production and pharmaceuticals where the risk of product contamination from traditional rodent baits precludes their use.



The 'RADAR' Unit

The use of RADAR to replace conventional baits reduces the risk to the environment.

In January 2003 Rentokil Pest Control in the UK launched what it believes to be the most advanced and environmentally friendly method of pest control. The service is called 'Zero Option' and offers a complete pest control to customers without the use of long-lasting, highly toxic substances.

These two innovations will be instrumental in Rentokil in the UK achieving its objective of reducing the availability of anticoagulant rodenticide in the environment by a minimum of 75% by March 2004.

Resource Efficiency

Rentokil is committed to continual improvement and the promotion of sound environmental practice. This is an integral part of its corporate strategy. This is currently being demonstrated as Rentokil undertakes a study to review its waste production in the UK. This will allow the company to assess the effectiveness of existing schemes and to set targets for improvement in the future.

Rentokil has already set some chemical reduction targets which are discussed above.

Social Responsibility

Rentokil has adopted central Corporate Social Responsibility Policies. In the last year, it has drawn up eight further 'Employment Good Practice Guides' which cover key functions such as recruitment, communication (incorporating whistle blowing), training and development, and organisational change.

To assist employees and improve health and safety Rentokil Pest Control has developed 'Pink Notes' which have standardised the companies' rules on pest control, removed uncertainty over what is permitted and prohibited, and made information readily accessible throughout the operation. 'Pink Notes' cover many policy issues. Each 'Pink Note' gives key operational instruction, together with a brief explanation of the policy stance.

Rentokil is currently drawing up Good Practice Guides for customers and suppliers which will incorporate social responsibility issues.

The company continues to sponsor PhD students and provides support and workspace to Masters level student research in relevant areas, notably pest control and tropical plants.

Rentokil continues to operate a 24/7 contact line manned by trained scientists who can deal with any queries regarding services and products. The public have access to Rentokil Initial's extensive library of technical information via the Research & Development website.

Supply Chain Management

Rentokil Initial adopts the following principles when dealing with suppliers:

- Seek fairness and truthfulness in all activities including pricing.
- Ensure that relationships with suppliers are free from coercion.
- Foster long-term stability in supplier relationships in return for value, quality competitiveness and reliability.
- Share information with suppliers and integrate them into planning process.
- Pay suppliers on time and in accordance with agreed terms.
- Seek, encourage and prefer suppliers and subcontractors whose employment practices respect human dignity.

Planned Initiatives

In 2004, Rentokil will be launching a new pest control device which will incorporate renewable energy. Unfortunately, details cannot be disclosed at this time for competitiveness reasons.

Awards

- ISO 9002 certification - Pest Control UK.
- Winners of the Gold Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - RoSPA-2003.
- Finalist in SEEDA Sustainable Business Awards 2002.



Sustainable Business Awards for the South East 2003

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