

SEEDA Sustainable Business Awards aim to encourage and promote a sustainable approach to business in the South East region through celebrating excellence, significant achievement and through the dissemination of best practice.

TRANSBUS INTERNATIONAL DENNIS LTD

COMPANY BACKGROUND

The Dennis brothers began manufacturing commercial vehicles in 1904 in Guildford, Surrey. During the First World War Dennis established itself as one of the largest vehicle manufacturers in Britain and by the 1920's it was ranked as the most successful truck company in the UK. The modern day TransBus Dennis is part of the Transbus International group, with factories at key sites around the world. TransBus Dennis Guildford manufactures bus, coach and fire appliance chassis and also acts as the head office for the group of companies.



SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Sustainability is a central theme and the benefits are well recognised by the company. Practical steps are now being taken as the company is working towards ISO 14001 accreditation and this has involved extensive training.

The company is situated on the Slyfield Industrial Estate, Guildford and hosts 'Surrey Alert', the SUMS training programme. This is part of the ongoing efforts of the Council and the Environment Agency to help local businesses become more environmentally aware. It is the first company on the estate to be working towards ISO 14001 and is seen as the flagship leading the way for other companies to follow. Similarly, it is the first company in the TransBus International group to work towards ISO 14001 and will be assisting other companies in the group to achieve the standard.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ Reducing suppliers' packaging and segregating waste has reduced the company's overall waste and saved money.
- ❖ New improved chassis painting process – reduction in waste and paint.
- ❖ New improved degreasing process – reduction in toxic waste and safer process.
- ❖ Through analysing energy use and costs, an over charge of £48,000 was identified. This money has now been repaid to the company who will use it to help to reduce its CO₂ emissions.

Water Consumption

A large amount of water was used in the paint spray booth process where a "flowing water backdrop" (a waterfall) was used to collect and carry away the overspray. The process was revised and the water backdrop is no longer required. Water is no longer used in any part of the manufacturing process, thus the company's water consumption is very low for a company of its size. A new degreasing process has been introduced using Ecophor instead of Pai-Kor, greatly reducing Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emissions.

Waste / Recycling

Huge effort has been directed towards reducing waste. New terms introduced into supply contracts have meant that suppliers have reduced as far as possible the packaging they use for their goods. This has resulted in many suppliers now moving towards reusable plastic, metal and wood containers. Empty containers are stored and collected by the supplier on their next delivery. Changing the system in such a way has saved the company money through reduced waste collection charges.

At present, cardboard is still widely used. However, great efforts have been made in educating the workforce to use the new recycling bins now located throughout the engineering workshops. Recycling of cardboard has reduced the overall waste stream by 40%, saving £10,000 per annum since the scheme started in February 2001.

All waste metal, office paper, aluminium cans and toner cartridges are also recycled.

A workers' suggestion box has resulted in two other recycling initiatives. Bungs used in the packaging of oil pipes were thrown away until a conscientious operator realised they could be reused. All bungs are now collected and returned to the supplier. Plastic milk cartons are collected and recycled by an employee.

All fluorescent tubes are now recycled through a local recycling business.

Mobile phones are handed over to a local charity for recycling.

Energy

The Climate Change Levy has hit the company hard, forcing it to address its energy consumption. A Climate Change Agreement has been applied for and all energy consumption has been surveyed to gain baseline data to identify where cost savings could be made and better practice established.

Control of Pollution and Hazardous Substances

Basic chassis components arrive in pieces and are then bolted and welded together. Once constructed the metal frame is painted using the new electrostatic system. The new system reduces the amount of paint used by 30-40%, due to paint being attracted to the metal.

Secondly, the supplier now supplies paint in large reusable totes rather than 205 litre drums that would have entered the waste stream.

The old metal degreasing process, which primes the metal prior to painting, was a 'dirty' process. A new improved system has been installed, reducing water consumption and use of toxic substances. The process is now simpler, cleaner and safer to operate.

An audit of pollution and hazardous substances identified better practices for disposing of containers such as those for white flux.



Supply Chain

Influencing the supply chain has led TransBus International Dennis to reduce its waste and consequently waste removal costs.

'Green lean' buses are what every one of TransBus' customers desires. Research is therefore concentrated on developing products that use less energy in their manufacture, perform more efficiently and also on the development of alternative fuel vehicles. A Guildford based team of researchers is dedicated to this task.

Corporate Social Responsibility

With TransBus International Dennis' long history, a great number of requests are received every year to tour the factory. The Railway and Transport Club, Loughborough College and Institute of Road Transport Engineers are examples of organisations that visit the factory every year. Requests for tours from individual members of the public are always honoured.

Local schools also visit the factory for a general tour or sometimes for special talks, e.g. job opportunities within manufacturing.

The annual egg race is an event run for the Royal Grammar School – a fun afternoon with TransBus International Dennis engineers working with pupils to design an egg carrying vehicle able to withstand an impact. The latest school initiative being developed is the Guildford Schools Earth Summit in which TransBus Dennis will be a key business partner.

As well as offering design advice, a number of staff are volunteer business advisors with 'Young Enterprise', an organisation which helps young people entering into business. The company has also entered a team of engineers into the TV series 'Scrapheap Challenge' and a range of charities benefit from fund raising events at the works.

Over the last two years TransBus International Dennis, with Guildford Borough Council, has been the main sponsor of the Matrix Trust, a charity that works with the local community, supplying not only financial support, but also the company's maintenance team to improve the properties of disadvantaged residents on the nearby Bellfields Housing Estate.

Both the local community and employees benefit from free broken pallets which are turned into bird tables etc.

Planned Initiatives

As recycling has proved so successful, a baler will be purchased next year to bundle cardboard and plastic into manageable parcels.

ISO 14001 will be achieved next year.

The current energy consumption monitoring will provide the information needed to ensure that changes are made to reduce energy consumption and save money.

Awards

Surrey Sustainable Business Award

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