

Case study



**PATHWAY TO
ZERO WASTE**
The fast track to smarter
resource use

Tiger Enterprises: reuse it, don't lose it!

Tiger Enterprises and companies like it, provide a solution that helps the construction industry save money and limit their carbon impact whilst benefiting their local communities at the same time.

Despite the impact of the recession, South East England remains a comparative hotbed of construction activity. It also sends more construction material for landfill disposal than any other region. Given that almost all this material could be reused, recycled or have the energy recovered from it instead - for much less than it costs to bury it in the ground - sending it to landfill makes as little sense economically as it does environmentally. But help is at hand - in the form of a growing number of construction material reuse centres.

One example is Brighton-based Tiger Enterprises. It collects surplus materials from building and refurbishment projects being carried out by, mainly, medium or large enterprises - and sells them on to small or micro builders, or the general public, at a fraction of what they would cost from a conventional retailer.

As a result, material that would otherwise most probably be dumped in a landfill site is instead put to social and environmental good use - around 3,000 tonnes of it each year at the moment. But if owners Dan and Charis Hill have their way, that will increase substantially in 2011 and beyond.



"Ours is a simple, sustainable model," says Dan. "My father was in construction and I could see the problems he had with leftover materials such as bricks, pipes and bath fittings. It was cheaper for him to throw them away than do anything with them. It seemed such a waste.

"So when we saw there were no companies dealing with surplus stock in Brighton we thought we'd give it a go. It is amazing no one else is doing it. But then it is not easy so will not be for everybody. You have to dedicate yourself to it. We work seven days a week."

And their hard work is paying off. Started in 2007 with £250 and the use of their neighbour's back garden, the company now occupies a 2,787m² space near Brighton Marina - an upgrade aided by a £42,000 match-funded grant from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

Tiger's last stock-take revealed £100,000 of material on-site, while the company's turnover rocketed from £16,000 in 2007 to £250,000 in 2009. Dan believes this figure could double next year, especially if their expansion plans go ahead.

Working together for a zero waste South East:



Material change for
a better environment



SEEDA manages the South East ERDF Competitiveness Programme 2007-13 on behalf of the region. The ERDF has allocated £15.2 million (€23.706) to the South East over the period 2007-13. The total value of the programme is €47.412m (£30.4m) running from 2007 to 2013. The aim of programme is to promote competitiveness and sustainability to stimulate innovation and encourage efficient business practice whilst reducing the region's ecological footprint.

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Dan: "We are only skimming the top of what is available across the country. The things people throw away is unbelievable. I want to expand nationally by creating a range of barrier sites separating the construction industry from landfill and turn them into reclamation hypermarkets. The potential is huge," he says.



Around half of the material Tiger sources comes from demolition works; the remaining 50% is surplus material from large construction projects. For example, Tiger clears all left over material for Berkeley Homes across the South East region. Collection is free and this is a key element of his success, he says.

Dan: "You have to remember you are dealing with people set in their ways. They can argue with a fee but not with free. Large contractors buy material in bulk and so secure a low price for them. Some would choose waste management over reclamation if a fee were charged, leading to valuable materials being lost to landfill."

Tiger will collect any non-architectural reusable material as long as it is in a working state. Concrete tiles, pavers, copper pipe, fireplaces, sea groins, bathroom fittings and clay pipes are some of the materials moving through the yard. The exact composition changes: "What people throw away is really quite random," says Dan.



Employing two full-time drivers, Tiger will travel up to a 10 mile radius to collect material as long as the project is small to medium-sized. Movement over this distance depends on the value of the material. The public also walk in to drop things off at the site as well as to buy materials.

Dan says he is surprised at how quickly the business has taken off. "It is incredible. We have gone from a back garden operation with a garden shed as an office to a quarter of a million turnover company in three years. It shows the demand that is out there for this kind of service.

"And the best thing is that everybody wins. Resources are saved from landfill, contractors get surplus material removed for free and builders get cheap products. It ticks all the boxes. Reuse makes good business sense while lowering carbon footprints and reducing waste," he says.

Contact Tiger Enterprises:

T 01273 270778

E info@reuseitdontloseit.co.uk

W www.reuseitdontloseit.co.uk

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Contact details:

Pathway To Zero Waste

Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading RG1 8DQ

Tel: 01189 535 932

Email: info@ptzw.co.uk

Web: www.ptzw.co.uk