

Lessons from Company X – some observations from Shaun Lewis in Hutt City

We began work with “Company X” early last year and implemented several initiatives over an extended period. These included;

- spill protection changes to the stormwater system
- process changes resulting in savings of hundreds of kilograms of processed product per week
- writing an environmental policy
- introducing recycling systems for paper and plastics that were previously landfilled

Significant savings were projected and made as a result of the changes, and further work was planned independent of the local coordinator and council.

However, when we contacted Company X recently to invite them to participate in a promotional campaign, all was not well! All but two of the initiatives implemented during the cleaner production programme had fallen over, and there was no ability for them to take part in cleaner production in the foreseeable future.

So what went wrong?

Firstly, the manager we’d been working with didn’t have the authority to access information needed to accurately assess successfully implemented initiatives. So reporting back to senior management was both problematic and very conservative.

Secondly, the main contact with Company X was through one manager – no “team” was established. Once that manager left, there was no “champion” or commitment from the company to continue.

Finally, rather than facilitating Company X through a process, I had done too much of the “doing”, including waste audits and energy audits. The result was there was no understanding or buy-in from other individuals throughout the organisation, including senior management.

(Note: I do need to say that Company X had a staff turnover of greater than 50% in the second half of last year, including many of the middle management).

So, my advice – make sure that

- you are working with a team who has a defined vision
- the team has commitment from senior management
- the team represents the whole company
- everyone has access to the information needed to make accurate measurements
- you don’t “do” too much for them – cleaner production is about continual improvement and they need to be able to keep it all going on their own

But you probably knew that already ;-)

Shaun

RR: Welcome to a new partner!

Environment Southland has just joined us. Gretchen Johnston says, “Things are moving rapidly down here, particularly because of the National Pilot TV Waste Campaign advertisements. I am going to start making businesses aware that Environment Southland will be offering businesses waste minimisation advice at the same time the Campaign starts. The intention is to take advantage of the Campaign/media coverage on waste and show what Environment Southland is doing about it. The Campaign starts in a month and we have put an article in our ratepayer magazine, called “It ain’t easy being green - especially when you’re in business!” As well as informing people that Environment Southland is making the corporate effort to walk the talk, we will be offering introductory/informal cleaner production help to those that show an keen interest through the advertising. Meanwhile the formal start date to engage business is July 1st (next financial year).’ Well done, Gretchen – you’re off to a flying start.

New on the website ...

We have added a raft of new documents onto the new documents to download and use for your cleaner production programme, including:

- information from nzwaste Yahoo discussion group
- FAQs: some frequently-asked questions
- leading questions: a step-by-step sequence of questions that will help you to work out if now is a good time for your Council to set up a business sustainability strategy
- sample job description: a basic outline of key tasks, responsibilities, skills and experience that you can adapt to meet your organisation’s waste minimisation programme needs
- council PowerPoint: a short presentation that you can adapt to highlight key issues from your own report to your Council meeting, with a commentary to help you speak to each slide

RR: Recommended reading

Wendy Evans [How to get new business in 90 days and keep it forever – the Wendy Evans guide to successful marketing](#). Wendy’s book gives you the magic 90-day formula that keeps you memorable to your sales prospects and your clients. It is full of a wealth of practical experience in sales and support. First published in 1993 by Millennium Books, a more recent edition is now available.

In the next issue ...

Marketing tips – PowerPoint presentations that really do make a powerful point! (we bumped this one from this issue to make way for the standard letters overleaf, which we hope you find useful!)

☞ *What other topics would you find helpful? Let us know by email to enquiries@businesscare.org.nz, or call Carole Inglis on 09 - 486 6721*

Leading up to a site visit
– a form letter that you can adapt to send to your firms

<Date> <name> <company> <address>

Re: An opportunity for your company to reduce waste and make savings from the [Your] City/District Council BusinessCare business sustainability programme

Dear <>

Council has developed the BusinessCare programme to help businesses identify opportunities for reducing resource use by minimising waste. The programme aims to reduce the environmental impact of our businesses while at the same time enhancing their efficiency and profitability.

Overview

The Council has identified that [_____] waste is an issue. During <month>, we visited several sites that generate this waste in order to explore a number of aspects of their operation. In general we found that the sites are well/poorly operated with managers very/not very aware of the systems and procedures in place to prevent environmental harm.

Differences between the sites also reflect the age of the investment and the nature of the technology installed. Recognising there will always be areas that can be improved, even on the best of sites, many of the comments that follow are in the spirit of continuous improvement.

The main inputs and outputs for a typical site are summarised below:



One of the objectives when working towards sustainability is to reduce environmental impact by improving resource stewardship. Any initiative to improve the way a business uses resources will generally need to include some of the following considerations:

- operating procedures that can also be used to provide on-going monitoring to help set and monitor resource efficiency targets
- installation of more efficient equipment, using less resources to do the same job, such as the more efficient New Generation tri-phosphor fluorescent lamps
- how equipment is operated affects resource use (e.g. leaving lights, taps or machinery on unnecessarily). Staff training and involvement in the improvement process is essential
- solid waste management, including contract management, covering, as well as auditing to highlight priority areas and assess cost and benefit of separation, reduction, re-use (e.g. by return to suppliers) and recycling
- raw materials delivery, storage and stock monitoring
- stormwater protection and spill management
- energy efficiency: lighting, refrigeration, air compressors, hot water, steam generation
- systems for daily, weekly and monthly quality, OSH and environmental checking

Experience from New Zealand and overseas suggests that for your operation, possible savings could be made from:

- <summary of relevant cleaner production case studies>

I will call you in the near future to discuss opportunities to take part in our programme and set up a preliminary walkthrough to identify similar savings for your company.

If you have any questions or comments about anything mentioned, please don't hesitate to contact me on <phone> or <email>.

Yours sincerely

<signed>

BusinessCare cordially thanks the Target Zero programme in Christchurch for allowing us to adapt one of their standard letters. For more on the Target Zero programme, go to www.targetzero.govt.nz. There will soon be form letters on the BusinessCare website www.businesscare.org.nz