

CC: Co-ordinators' comments

Project launched to clean up Bay of Plenty's businesses

Sarah McCorkindale, Environment Bay of Plenty's Regional BusinessCare co-ordinator

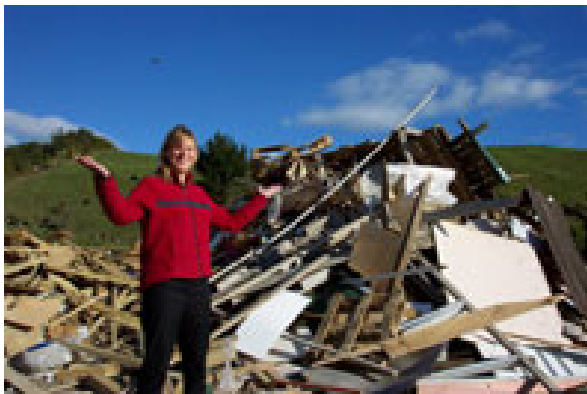
Seven Bay of Plenty local authorities will be working with key industries this year in a major initiative aimed at reducing the impact of local business on the environment.

Environment Bay of Plenty has formed partnerships with the area's six main district councils to provide a free service that will help small and medium-sized businesses improve their environmental performance. This cleaner production service is promoting waste reduction, the efficient use of energy and resources and the production of environmentally sound products and services.

Environment Bay of Plenty has earmarked \$80,000 for the first year of the three-year project. This will be matched by contributions from the district councils of Western Bay of Plenty, Tauranga, Rotorua, Kawerau, Whakatane and Opotiki, increasing the total spend to \$160,000.

Environment Bay of Plenty chairman John Cronin says Bay of Plenty industries produce large amounts of solid waste which ends up in local landfills. "We have to move away from the attitude that we can produce waste continually without it having any effect on the earth."

Mr Cronin describes the proposed work as supportive rather than regulatory. "We are not waving the stick but are actively helping businesses through the process of environmental improvement." Businesses are also likely to benefit financially from actions taken, particularly if they reduce spending on rubbish disposal.



Construction and demolition industries are being targeted for Cleaner Production support in some areas because they produce a fairly significant proportion of waste sent to landfills, says Sarah McCorkindale.

Last year, the regional council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Tauranga District Council contracted Cleaner Production advisors to start working with selected businesses in the booming building industry.

Environment Bay of Plenty's environmental education coordinator Sarah McCorkindale says that construction and demolition work produces a fairly significant proportion of the waste sent to landfills, yet individual builders often have few alternatives.

However, en masse, "there may be efficiencies", she explains. "So that's one area that's being explored." Best Practice Guidelines will be set up for the industry, she says, to make it as easy as possible for businesses to introduce changes.

Over the next few weeks, the region's other councils will decide which industries they want to target for Cleaner Production work, basing their decision on the priorities of their own districts.

To find out more, contact Sarah McCorkindale on 0800 368 267 or look at the information about other Bay of Plenty cleaner production programme info on the Council's website, www.envbop.govt.nz.



New on the website!

BusinessCare's final report to the Ministry for the Environment in conclusion of our three-year funding period – and a big thank you to the sustainable Management Fund Team! Find the full report at

<http://www.businesscare.org.nz/bookshelf/articles/index.htm>

Also new – lots of cleaner production case studies on the Envirowise website www.envirowise.gov.uk, dealing with water, electroplating, vehicle painting, swarf and metalworking wastes from the aircraft sector, as well as some useful tips for co-ordinators working with any sector.

RR: Recommended Reading

Product Ecology, an Australian company formed by well-known industrial design guru John Gertsakis, has just published a new book about Design and environment, on environmentally oriented product development. Entitled 'Design + Environment: A Global Guide to Designing Greener Goods'.

John's new Melbourne-based company focuses on sustainable product development, product stewardship and environmental communications. To find out more, contact John at: john@productecology.com.au.

In forthcoming issues ...

☞ *What other topics would you find helpful? Let us know by email to enquiries@businesscare.org.nz, or call Carole Inglis on 09 - 486 6722*

Facilitation – another tool for the cleaner production co-ordinator's toolkit

The previous e-news highlighted some of the difficulties of getting companies to buy in to sustainability and cleaner production. An even greater challenge is keeping companies on the sustainability pathway. This article looks at some of the reasons why companies buy in to a cleaner production programme and how facilitation skills can help coordinators keep them on track.

Why do companies sign up in the first place?

There are a range of reasons why companies sign up to a cleaner production programme, including:

- potential savings
- desire to be more environmentally/socially responsible
- curiosity
- freebie from the council

So for some there is a genuine desire to reduce environmental impacts, while for others extra cash might be the motivator. Whatever the reason, once they have signed up, it's up to the coordinator to keep them on the sustainability journey.

At the very least keeping companies motivated can be difficult, at worst impossible. No matter how upfront a coordinator is about the required commitment, the most common reasons for dropping out of a programme are time, resources or other priorities. Sometimes the reasons are real, sometimes they are just another way of saying – it's too hard to change!

Work with the willing

It is so much easier for cleaner production co-ordinators who are still developing skills and confidence (and indeed, the rest of us, too!) to work with willing partners than reluctant ones. So, if you've spent enough of your valuable time and energy time trying to get reluctant participants to meet their end of the bargain, try taking a 'tough love' approach! Be upfront about telling these people you are screening them out of your programme while you focus on the keen ones – while making it clear that the door is always open for them to come back, and that you will drop by sometime to see if they want to pick up the ropes again.

Keep them on track

Comments from business leaders in the previous e-news give some insight into organisational qualities that help to keep companies on track. In summary, these included:

- vision
- leadership
- learning and innovation

Having a clear purpose was a theme that came through in many of these comments. Which seems obvious – how can you have direction without a purpose? The question is how to create a meaningful purpose that sticks.

Is facilitation the key?

So what is facilitation? Facilitation is about process rather than content. The role of the facilitator is to guide a group towards a destination (or purpose) (Hunter, Bailey, Taylor, 2002, *The Art of Facilitation*), using a range of tools and techniques to make the process easier. Sound familiar?

Co-ordinators play a facilitation role as they guide their companies along the sustainability pathway. They use the tools from the Toolkit for Change to identify opportunities for improvements, relying on the clients for expertise in their particular sector.

So what's missing?

Facilitator's tools

Some of the tools or skills a facilitator uses to keep a group or client on track include:

- purpose: spending time on developing a clear purpose, that everyone contributes to developing and agrees with, is essential. It may take several sessions to fully develop a purpose that inspires, but a strong purpose will help to remain focussed. It also provides a reference point that the coordinator can bring the group back to if they become distracted or motivation starts to wane
- culture setting: this is about establishing how the coordinator and the group or organisation will work together, and essentially constitutes the ground rules. This also provides an opportunity for the group to challenge the culture of their organisation, if it is inconsistent with their new sustainability purpose
- recognising the skills and experience of the organisation: not being the expert will empower the group to take responsibility for coming up with solutions. This also frees up the facilitator to focus on the process and guide the group to improved triple bottom line outcomes
- powerful listening: what is not being said may be preventing the group from moving forward. Developing listening skills will create opportunities for the facilitator to 'intervene' and may be the key to breaking through resistance to change. Powerful listening also allows the coordinator to identify and ask the hard questions, challenging the group to come up with new ideas and solutions. Inevitably this will lead to breaking old patterns that might be inhibiting the group/organisation moving forward
- creativity: using creative (and fun) processes to identify issues and solutions will generate a higher level of energy and keep everyone motivated. If they are having fun they are more likely to continue with the process, and will begin to generate their own creative processes

BusinessCare encourages co-ordinators to learn additional skills as they need to – and facilitation can provide some valuable techniques for clarifying issues, coaxing participants and encouraging action.

Facilitation trainers Zenergy offer extensive facilitation training nationally and overseas. For more information on Zenergy's comprehensive and hands-on Diploma in Facilitation visit <http://www.zenergyglobal.com> or phone (04) 472 2603

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