



Urban Planters London West

Background

Urban Planters London West (UPLW) is a small business operating under a franchise. The company designs and supplies living plants to businesses and provides ongoing care. It is based and operates in West London. Urban Planters London West employs 11 staff.

Sustainable purchasing

Whilst UPLW has to operate within the constraints that are placed on a franchisee by its parent company, it has been able to show some real progress in the field of sustainable procurement. Some are very significant and others are smaller but equally impressive. Examples are:

- A totally LPG van fleet and all new vans bought are LPG powered
- All sales activity is undertaken by public transport
- All energy is procured through green suppliers
- All office stationery is purchased against green and cost criteria
- All tea and coffee is FairTrade
- New suppliers (that can be

chosen independently from Franchiser) have to complete an environmental questionnaire

- Wooden containers are supplied from companies with a sustainable timber strategy.

Implementation

Senior management have strong environmental credentials and lead and support all environmental initiatives in the organisation. A strong focus on the environment is made in interviews and like minded individuals are recruited.

UPLW is always looking for good guidance and where to make the next set of improvements. To help it with this it has sought advice from a number of quarters e.g. London Remade, Envirowise, GreenMark.

Policy

UPLW has an Environmental Policy, which refers to purchasing, and a Purchasing Policy, which includes details of its green procurement commitment.

UPLW always makes reference to its environmental activity when submitting proposals,

whether the client has asked for this or not, and has actually won work as a direct consequence.

A full Purchasing Log is maintained, divided into Green and non-Green purchases. A review of non-Green purchases is held to see if, and how, they could have been purchased as Green items.

A procedure is in place to ensure that all office waste is visually monitored to ensure that waste streams are optimised.

Communicating with stakeholders

UPLW communicates in a number of ways with its employees on sustainable issues; through regular updates, where guest speakers are invited, quizzes held at its staff meeting, and through posters promoting green energy and energy saving. The company has also arranged discounts for staff on green energy. UPLW has introduced a staff incentive scheme for any green initiatives suggested.

Customers are kept informed in a number of ways. An Annual Report to customers is produced, which details environmental initiatives. A standard quotation on UPLW

environmental commitment is included in all proposals.

Business benefits

Real business benefits have been achieved by UPLW through its approach to Sustainable Procurement. Some examples are listed below:

- A large saving on congestion charges from running its LPG fleet
- Energy bills have been reduced by changing to a green supplier
- Reduction in landfill charges through careful waste management
- Work won through demonstrating real sustainability credentials.

Results

UPLW has received the following recognition for its sustainable approach:

- Greenmark in 2007 and 2008
- Finalist in MGPC awards – best performing SME
- Finalist in Business Commitment to the Environment Awards 2007
- Finalist in Parcel Force small business of year awards 2003
- Features in media: BBC news; Radio4 Today; Daily Telegraph for the environmental actions taken by a small business

Looking to the future

Pressure to be exerted on Franchiser to vet suppliers' environmental credentials to a greater degree.

BS8555 accreditation is being considered and continuing to be assessed for Greenmark with a view to aim for the next level.

Contact

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