

CASE STUDY: BOON EDAM

BACKGROUND

Boon Edam Limited turnover in excess of £10 million per year in the supply, installation and maintenance of revolving entrance doors, security doors, low level turnstiles and barriers. They employ 75 people in the UK and over 950 worldwide, with a UK office in Ashford, a head office in The Netherlands, and overseas production in The Netherlands, China and America. Their client base is broad, including large corporates, airports, leisure centres, Schools etc, however it is more common for them to work as a supplier to main contractors rather than directly with the end user.



The Netherlands based head office is one of the driving forces behind sustainability within Boon Edam, and in 2012 listed sustainability as one of its core values. In the UK the sustainability leads are the Operations Director and Geoff Firth, Technical Lead in Business Support. Geoff is also the company environmental representative - there is no dedicated sustainability manager. The company has had a sustainability policy for five years, and in general staff motivation around sustainability is very high.

According to Geoff *"Our biggest challenge lies in understanding what drives our clients. If we have a clear understanding of our customers' priorities we can position ourselves accordingly and ensure that we are communicating the right message down to our own supply chains. The problem lies in knowing if the contractors are looking for substance or just working through a simple tick box exercise"*.

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

The Operations Director attended the School launch event in London in June 2012 after being invited to attend by one of their main contractors. The event made an impact in that Boon Edam registered as a member, and worked through the self-assessment. However due to time constraints and a lack of resource the resulting Action Plan lay dormant for a few months.

SELF-ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan created in summer 2012 was passed on to Geoff in autumn, at which point he began to work his way through the recommended actions. It became apparent that even though this is high on their agenda, they were still at the early stages of their sustainability journey.

Their action plan signposted to some of the e-learning modules (materials and sustainable construction) which Geoff found user friendly and effective in communicating the key issues in a way that highlights the commercial benefits and drivers. Geoff also attended two of the workshops on timber Chain of Custody and on Selling Sustainability, the latter being the one that has had the most significant impact.



IMPACT

As a result of engaging in the School Boon Edam has:

- ✓ Reviewed and updated their sustainability policy and is currently in the process of collating some baseline data so as to facilitate the setting of appropriate targets.
- ✓ Started to ask their key suppliers more questions about sustainability, particularly around environmental management systems. They have also encouraged their supply chain to register with the School.
- ✓ Started to plan a wider engagement strategy for the business as to ensure that awareness of key issues is widespread throughout the company and that sustainability is embedded in all key processes.
- ✓ Developed a presentation (as part of a tailored education programme for their employees on ISO14001) all about sustainability, drawing heavily on the slides used in the e-learning modules and at the Selling Sustainability workshop.
- ✓ Developed the knowledge of the sales team regarding general knowledge of sustainable construction.
- ✓ Developed the knowledge of the procurement team who now have a greater understanding of what practical steps they can take to embed sustainability considerations into the procurement process.
- ✓ A better understanding of some of the more generic issues in relation to sustainable construction such as Chain of Custody, BREEAM, CEEQUAL etc.

BENEFITS

The School provides a structure to help address an otherwise complicated and broad subject – it has helped Boon Edam make best use of minimum resource to maximum effect by providing a focus and a clear pathway to develop sustainability knowledge. Without the action planning tool Geoff believes that they would still be dedicated to sustainability, but would be wasting time trying to understand where to focus efforts, which sustainability issues they should prioritise, and would have spent valuable time and resource on things which may have little impact.

Networking – Geoff insists that meeting other suppliers in similar situations, and sharing knowledge and discovering mutual frustrations / challenges is a key benefit as this can often incentivise a company to change or reconsider their approach.

Future new business opportunities - Geoff expects to discover new business opportunities in the future as a result of the progress they are making through the School. He recognises the marketing potential of School membership and the opportunity to reference their involvement in the School in the tender and bidding process.

More in depth understanding of client priorities and requirements – the School events and resources available have helped Boon Edam start to understand more about what is driving their clients, what the key issues are that they are expecting their supply chain to address, as well as finding out what the future issues are likely to be. They believe this takes out an element of risk from the client relationship and helps Boon Edam communicate more effectively with their own supply chain.

LESSONS LEARNED

Don't be afraid to admit you don't know - there is a wealth of resources and knowledge available in a clear and easy to understand format within the school's library.

Attending the workshops is an excellent way of networking with other companies who are at various stages in their journey into sustainability.

THE FUTURE

In order for the School to continue to be of benefit to Boon Edam it is important to:

- ✓ Continue to engage more partners in the School
- ✓ Continue to deliver high quality workshops and e-learning modules
- ✓ Consider how the School's e-learning modules could be used by a company in a structured and measured way to help train staff
- ✓ Ensure that the main contractor partners continue to evidence their commitment to this agenda through their attendance at School events