

## CASE STUDY: JABLITE

### BACKGROUND

Jablite is the UK's leading supplier of expanded polystyrene insulation, employing 80 people across two manufacturing sites, their head office in Kent with another in East Yorkshire. They supply to each of the School's current partners, with 80% of their turnover from building and 20% from civil engineering.

The sustainability agenda is not new to Jablite – they have been working towards reducing the sustainability impacts of their manufacturing process for quite some time, and have made significant progress in areas such as minimising the use of virgin raw materials in their products and closed loop recycling of production waste. They have a programme in place to reduce water and energy use in the manufacturing process, and have been recycling steam for the last four years.

Jablite explain the principal drivers for their commitment to this agenda in simple terms - it helps reduce cost, makes the manufacturing process more efficient, and it encourages customers to buy from them. In terms of responsibilities for sustainability, the Managing Director is ultimately responsible; however the Manufacturing Directors, Factory Managers and New Product Development Team also play key roles in ensuring that sustainability is addressed in both their products and throughout the company processes.

Neil Marsden, Business Development Manager, together with Damien Pooley, Business Analyst have led Jablite's engagement in the School to date. One of the key challenges they face as an organisation is engaging their employees on the sustainability agenda and ensuring that sustainability is really embedded at all levels within the organisation.



### INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

Willmott Dixon recommended that Jablite sign up to the School in October 2012 after they worked together on a site recycling project. Consequently both Neil and Damien registered with the School and attended the Cambridge Supplier Day in October. They were surprised by the range of companies in attendance which represented all parts of the supply chain, and were enthused by the senior level commitment from the main contractors. They found the presentations encouraging, particularly regarding the updates on building regulations and the long term commitment to reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN

After the supplier day Neil and Damien decided to work through a self-assessment. In order to get as broad a perspective as possible on the knowledge of the company, they selected key representatives from across the business to work through the assessment together – the marketing manager, technical manager and the innovations manager.

The resulting action plan provided useful steer and helped highlight some key issues, namely the need to develop a sustainability policy and strategy, and advice on how to engage staff throughout the company together with appropriate resources. The Action Plan signposted to a few of the e-learning modules which have proved to be useful in helping engage other parts of the business.

Jablite have attended two workshops in the last 6 months - Sustainable Construction and an Introduction to Carbon Footprinting. It was felt that the sustainable construction workshop was not particularly relevant to Jablite as it talked mainly about construction on site; however the one on carbon footprinting had a significant impact as detailed below.



### IMPACT

As a result of engaging in the School Jablite has:

- ✓ **Recognised the need to develop a comprehensive sustainability policy** together with embedded targets and corresponding timeframes. This is currently under development with an expectation to have this finalised by the end of 2013.
- ✓ **Started to consider the social impacts of their business** in more depth, for example their impact on the local community. This will be reflected in their sustainability policy.

- ✓ **Developed an internal engagement strategy** to ensure all parts of the business are aware of the sustainability issues relevant to their roles. For example the sales team are now working through the e-learning modules, with priority being given to those who are in direct contact with customers.
- ✓ **Begun to develop carbon footprints of their biggest impact products** – this has been done as a result of attending the workshop on carbon footprinting.
- ✓ **Been shortlisted as finalists in manufacturer of the year building awards** – in their entry they talked about their sustainability journey and the sustainable innovation in relation to their products.
- ✓ **Gained good press exposure** – Skanska have circulated a press release relating to Jablite’s engagement in the School and a selection of other online media have written articles about their involvement.
- ✓ **Been reassured on the importance of continuing to invest in sustainable innovation** - they believe this will help them continue to develop their competitive advantage.

## BENEFITS

**Better understanding of customer requirements** – Neil believes the School (through supplier days, workshops and the resources available) has helped Jablite gain an insight into the pressures on, and priorities of their customer base.

**Enhanced reputation leading to new business opportunities** – Recent press coverage of Jablite linking to the School has helped to enhance Jablite’s reputation and Neil expects this to lead to new business opportunities.

**Stronger client relationships** – Jablite have been pro-active in telling their major customers about their involvement in the School and have written their membership of the School into their formal service agreements. They have also spoken about their involvement in the School at face to face client meetings, and believe that their customers are impressed by this, and that this helps differentiate them from their competitors.

**School membership helps evidence commitment to continuous improvement in sustainability** – Jablite believe that their activities in relation to the School is helping them demonstrate their commitment to this agenda both formally (through pre-qualifications and tender processes) and also informally. For example at a recent environmental audit conducted by a customer, Jablite included information about their engagement in the School in their presentation.

## LESSONS LEARNED



It is important to take into account social implications of sustainability as well as those more obvious environmental issues

It is useful to open dialogue with customers about sustainability, the fact that Main Contractors are active in the School helps to encourage action

Membership of the Supply Chain Sustainability School has helped Jablite to gain credibility as it demonstrates our commitment to sustainability

The pro-active yet practical – and realistic - approach of the participants of the Supply Chain Sustainability School sets a good example for Jablite

## THE FUTURE

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

- ✓ **Continue to grow the number of main contractors** involved in the School – getting major house builders on board would be a key advantage.
- ✓ **Ensure the news feeds are kept up to date** and that the School continues to act as a portal to update the industry on future issues, latest innovations and changes to regulations and legislation. Jablite also recommend that the School’s partners use the School website as a route to communicate key news / messages to the wider construction supply chain.
- ✓ **Develop and share case studies** via the website.
- ✓ **Ensure that content continues to evolve** and is representative of the most up to date resources in the marketplace.
- ✓ **Expand the breadth of information available** so that more resources are available for manufacturers and distributors as well as for those working on site.