

CASE STUDY: ROOFLINE GROUP

BACKGROUND

The Roofline Group is a flat roofing and waterproofing specialist with 87 employees and a turnover of £10m+. Roofline has a long and successful history working with the UK's leading contractors, as well as working as principle contractor for local authorities and management companies. Their client base includes Willmott Dixon, Kier, Wates, BAM, Sir Robert McAlpine, Morgan Sindall and Lend Lease, all of which are partners to the School.

Steve Marsh, Commercial Manager for Roofline is the School's main contact and has been with the company since 2008. Steve is client facing, and is a passionate advocate of sustainability. He firmly believes that this is what differentiates their business from competitors. Environmental responsibility for the business lies with the Board of Directors, with the Managing Director being the sustainability lead. The Directors meet monthly, with Safety, Health and the Environment (SHE) being a standing agenda item.



INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

Steve first heard about the School from Lend Lease, and consequently attended the School's launch event in London in June 2012. Steve was initially sceptical about the School, and wondered how this would differ from previous initiatives. At the event itself Steve was impressed by the apparent Director level commitment to the School from the partners and could see the potential benefits of the School, but still questioned how this would be cascaded through their businesses.

SELF-ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN

After completing the first self-assessment at the Supplier day, Steve recalls feeling both nervous and overwhelmed by the 10 action plan points that were raised as a result of the assessment, particularly as some of these were about regulations, policies and procedures. He admits to thinking that it would take years to complete the first action plan effectively! Nevertheless, Steve recognised the potential benefits of the tool and decided to commit to using it on a regular basis.

Since the initial assessment, Roofline have worked their way through 4 action plans, the most recent assessment being completed in the monthly Directors' meeting. Steve recommends this approach as it is effective in helping secure senior level buy in and commitment. For example, Steve is not able to complete all 10 actions himself, but getting the Director-level 'go-ahead' for another member of staff to take responsibility for an action provides assurance that action will be undertaken.

Steve has attended various training workshops on issues such as Responsible Sourcing, Developing Local Supply Chains, Making the School work for your Business, and has attended at least five supplier days. He has also viewed several of the e-learning modules.

IMPACT

As a result of engaging in the School Roofline has:

- ✓ **Won numerous contracts worth in excess of £1m.** Steve insists without their engagement in the School they would not have been in a position to win these contracts as many of the client requirements were met due to the improvements made within their business as a result of the School.
- ✓ **Secured senior level commitment to the sustainability agenda.** The resources available through the School have helped demonstrate the business case for sustainability, resulting in Roofline now considering sustainability as important as Health and Safety. This is being driven through the business from the top down, and is becoming fully embedded in the entire company.
- ✓ **Understood the importance of challenging main contractors and clients.** This is something that has been encouraged at School events, which has resulted in Roofline taking a more proactive approach to client management. They now take an environmental management plan to all pre-contract meetings and request a discussion surrounding this aspect.
- ✓ **Developed a sustainability section in their supplier pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ)** which not only asks suppliers questions about how they are addressing sustainability within their business, but also about how they are cascading this message through their own supply chain.
- ✓ **Requested evidence of FSC accreditation** from relevant suppliers of timber based materials after finding out more about Chain of Custody at a School Responsible Sourcing workshop.
- ✓ **Received invitations from clients to speak at their supply chain events** and showcase the work Roofline has done through the School.
- ✓ **Learned to challenge existing processes and ask the question 'are there better ways of doing things?'** - a message that is always communicated at School supplier days and events. Roofline's Carbon Zero and other environmental accreditations demonstrate just some of the improvements that have been made.

- ✓ **Promoted the School to their supply chain and encouraged them to register and self-assess.**
- ✓ **Invested in further equipment** to actively change the roofing systems that previously required chemical based adhesives, to alternative systems which have a reduced environmental impact, as well as providing a more effective solution. This was a result of learning to question if there are better ways of doing things.
- ✓ **Better systems and procedures in place**, particularly in relation to document management.
- ✓ **Been proactive in promoting their engagement in the School.** They are now Gold members of the School and are immensely proud of this. They put this on the website, letterhead and email signatures, and make a point of telling their customers and indeed their suppliers about the School.

BENEFITS

Increased competitive advantage / winning work – Steve has noticed how sustainability is becoming increasingly prominent in the PQQ process, and that contracts are no longer just awarded on best price. He is convinced that their sustainability credentials, evident commitment to embedding sustainability within the business, and their engagement in the School is what differentiates them from the competition, helping them recently in securing contracts in excess of £1M

Better understanding of client drivers and priorities - the resources available through the School, coupled with the networking opportunities with senior representatives of the School's partner contractors help to provide an insight into the issues faced by Roofline's customers. This in turn helps Roofline be better placed to address these challenges and increase their chances of winning work / retaining clients.

Mechanism to prioritise where to focus efforts – Steve has used the Self-assessment tool and action plan as a mechanism to provide steer on where to best focus efforts for maximum impact. Sustainability is a complex area, and without the simple step by step action planning process, Steve is unsure how much time and effort would have been wasted by focusing on the wrong things at the wrong times.

Reduced risk in the supply chain – with better supplier management processes in place, Roofline are confident in the suppliers they use and the standards to which they adhere.

Marketing opportunities - Roofline believe that Gold membership in the School highlights that they are not simply 'ticking the boxes' but instead are completely dedicated to ensuring continuous improvement. They plan to use every opportunity to communicate their Gold badge to clients, stakeholders and their own supply chain.

LESSONS LEARNED

The first action plan can be overwhelming. It is **important to break the action plan into bite size chunks, prioritise the actions (taking into account who will need to take ownership of each action), set deadlines where appropriate**, and work through this in a measured way, ensuring that progress is documented.

Always ask the question **'Is there a better way of doing this?'**

If you are looking to embed sustainability within an organisation it is **essential to understand the business case**. This will help secure Director level commitment which in turn helps to drive change with minimum resistance.

Suppliers / sub-contractors should be willing to challenge clients in relation to their sustainability targets. Clients will value an informed supplier who is able to offer expert knowledge on specific issues.

THE FUTURE

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

- ✓ Run interactive events, ensuring a balance of presentations / learning and interaction / discussion.
- ✓ Continue to run workshops for smaller groups - this provides an opportunity to network with others and speak to experts.
- ✓ Consider running topic specific forums which engage both beginners and advanced members. It is important that 'beginners', who may be sceptical about the School, hear from those who have been engaged in the School for some time about the potential business benefits.
- ✓ Continue to attract new client and contractor partners.
- ✓ Continue to run events throughout the UK.
- ✓ Continue to provide opportunities for School members to meet and ask questions to senior procurement and supply chain representatives from the School partners.

