



## SHERRINGTON WASTE MANAGEMENT – AN ENVIRONMENTAL CASE STUDY

Sherrington Waste Management Ltd (SWM) is an example of how a business can successfully integrate increasing company value and growth with showing environmental concern. A family-business based in the heart of Birmingham, SWM have a long history of showing an awareness of their environmental responsibilities which is translating to increasing their capacity and service offering for their clients.

In March 2010 SWM joined the Green Achiever Scheme – an environmental award scheme aimed at supporting companies to improve their environmental awareness and practices and also to enable them to get the due recognition for the achievements made in this area. Having been members for only one month SWM aimed for and achieved the Silver Level Award. In 2011 they progressed to Gold and when they were re-assessed in April 2012 they retained their Gold status – the only waste management company to do this.

Some key headline figures that go to show some of the reasons why the Awards have been achieved and maintained year on year, include the high and improving percentage rates of the amount of waste that they either recycle or re-use. In

- 2009/10 this was 85%;
- 2010/11 this had increased to 90%; and
- 2011/12 it was regularly 93% with occasional hits of 95%.

(Many other waste management companies have recycling rates of between 80% and 91%). More impressive still is that SWM are continuing to look at options for how they can improve this further – and they are likely to achieve this.

We can say this because having conducted environmental audits of SWM for the past three years E4environment Ltd (the company that run the Green Achiever Scheme) have identified underlying management processes that promote good environmental practices as the expected day-to-day way of doing things. SWM also continually invest in ways that can make things better – be it plant or people. Some examples of the underlying good practices include

- Providing monthly waste reports for contract customers outlining the breakdown of wastes collected and recycled;
- Providing customers with separate collection bins for printer cartridges and batteries to make it easier for them and to reduce the contamination of waste;
- The use of grey-water for regular damping down of the site to reduce fugitive dust emissions;

- Use of reclaimed materials for building new, more energy efficient employee canteen and accommodation;
- Regularly training staff on accredited courses;
- Use of e-invoicing and e-ordering to reduce paper use.

These are some of the everyday and on-going actions that SWM do. Alongside this they have also looked for, and taken advantage of, opportunities to improve as they have arisen – for example, the purchase of a new compactor has enabled them to increase to recycling 6 tonnes of cardboard per month. With additional staff they are now recycling their own hard plastics and with yard improvements they anticipate being able to recycle textile waste streams also.

The management look ahead and anticipate where they may be able to make improvements – for example they attend SustainabilityLive, the major UK environmental management show for ideas; they look for plant alternatives that could reduce water usage, or fuel or energy consumption so that when a replacement is needed it is not done so on a like for like basis but rather on an improved environmental impact.

Furthermore SWM spread the word about their good practices – they encourage others to think about their own environmental performance and show how being “green” can be a successful business model, not simply a nice badge for display.

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