



Melanie Teal, Chief Executive

Welcome to our fourth annual Responsible Business report.

In an increasingly challenging economic climate, we remain committed to improving our understanding of the impact we make on society and will continue to manage that impact in a responsible manner. We believe that, not only is this the right thing to do, it is also commercially sensible.

I am delighted with the progress we have made over the last year or so. The values we apply to the way we do things, and the people we recruit, mean that we can deliver on our ambitious responsible business agenda in genuinely practical ways.

We, therefore, remain committed to our responsible business agenda for 2011 and beyond and I look forward to reporting on our progress again next year.

Melanie Teal
Chief Executive
January 2011

Responsible Business Report 2010

What we mean by Responsible Business?

The success or failure of this business is dependent on the interplay between our customers, our suppliers, our employees and the community in which we operate.

If we manage each of these relationships with the long term in mind, taking the time to understand what matters to each constituent, we will build a stronger and more sustainable organisation.

That is the responsible approach to running a business and an approach which, all other things being equal, will ensure our future success.

In terms of managing and reporting on our performance, we have found it useful to group our activities into 6 categories:

Organisation

Customers

Suppliers

Community

Environment

Employees

Organisation

Values

- Be brave
- Innovate and inspire
- Be caring and understanding
- Be yourself
- “One winning team”

Which means:

Our employees feel able to share new ideas, and shout when they think something isn't right. They also seek to inspire customers and suppliers to trade with us and their colleagues to deliver of their best.

We highlight the importance of caring about and understanding the impact we each have on our customers, suppliers and colleagues.

We encourage everyone to be themselves, not to feel they have to put their “Consortium head” on when they come to work.

We trust in our recruitment process to ensure we recruit the right people.

Once they join us we want 100% from them – warts and all!

Departmental team spirit within The Consortium is very strong, sometimes that means people can forget they are working for the larger Consortium team. Hence we reinforce the view that together, we are “one winning team”.

Accredited Standards

ISO 9001:2000 - Quality

OHSAS 18001 - Health & Safety

ISO 14001 - Environment

Investor in People

British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA)

Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS)

Codes of Conduct

Ethical Trading Initiative/UN Global Compact

Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS)

British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA)

Prompt Payment Code

Office of Fair Trading (OFT) code of conduct

Commitment

UN “Caring for Climate”



FS 35430 • OHS R4897 • FMS R4896



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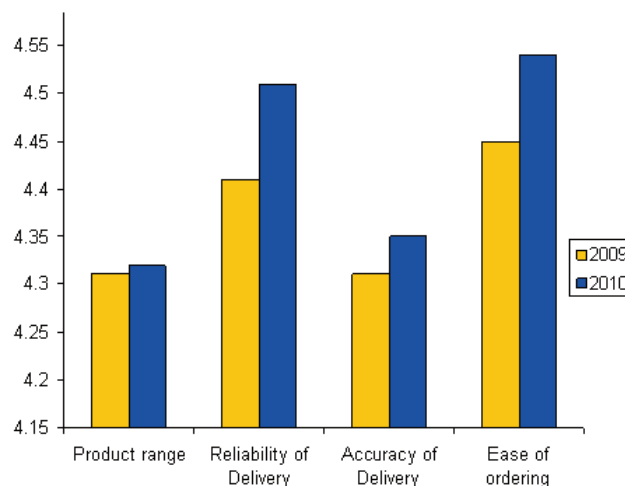
Customers

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

We encourage our customers to tell us what they think of us to help us identify ways to improve our service. We also encourage customers to complete an online survey rather than a paper-based one. This year's survey showed our service has got even better in many areas including:

- Product range
- Accuracy and reliability of deliveries
- Ease of ordering

We continue to grow our customer base and sales revenues with a strong core customer retention rate.



Suppliers

Launch of 'Going for Gold' programme

In 2010 we launched our 'Going for Gold' programme with suppliers to increase service levels and ensure that we are working with the best suppliers in the industry.

The programme encourages communication and collaborative working with suppliers to continuously raise the standards of products and service.

All suppliers have now signed up to our Global Sourcing Principles, based on the Ethical Trading Initiative.

As we have expanded our sourcing from overseas, audit visits have been made to Chinese and Indian suppliers producing products. These visits resulted in positive outcomes of the audits and stronger relationships with our overseas partners.

Development of Own Brand & Value Ranges

In response to customer requests to provide even greater value, we worked with manufacturers to develop a range of Own Brand and Value products. From cleaning products to stationery, we have included more of the everyday items that are purchased most frequently in these ranges.



Community

Our Chief Executive sits on the board of Transforming Trowbridge and our Chief Operating Officer sits on the Mid Wiltshire Economic Partnership.

We donated goods to a variety of customers and community groups throughout the year helping over 40 separate organisations, including preschools, schools and retirement homes, to raise funds and/or reward performance.

In addition we sponsored awards such as the Wiltshire Voluntary Community Sector Awards, to celebrate the achievement and hard work of community groups and volunteers who have helped to transform the lives of people in the county.

We supported the Westbury Music and Arts Festival by providing craft workshops where local children were invited to create and decorate their own unique projects, including Christmas cards, gift boxes, sun catchers and clay models.

The Consortium also helped out with a new series of the Welsh TV makeover show, 'Hip neu Sgip?'. We supplied a range of items to help add a little sparkle to the redecoration projects in schools.



**Wiltshire Voluntary
Community Sector Awards**



**Westbury Music
& Arts Festival**

Working with Schools:

In 2010 we provided work experience for 7 students from local special schools, 5 from Critchill School, plus another 2 from Larkrise School. We continued our relationship with the Da Vinci School in Holland and hosted 2 Da Vinci students for 10 weeks work experience. We also provided work experience to year 7 and 11 students from local schools. All these students take part in our induction process and fire awareness training.

Nominated Charity

We are hugely proud to have raised enough money through charity events over the last 2 years to build a brand new school in Uganda for over 250 pupils!

Through the generosity of staff, suppliers and customers, and significant donations from the company, we raised a staggering £33,000!

The money was raised through quiz nights, raffles, golf days, product promotions and by encouraging customers to sign up to paperless invoicing and return customer satisfaction surveys.

The funds have been used by registered charity Build Africa to transform Kayela School in Uganda with brand new classrooms, sanitation facilities, desks, textbooks and a water supply.

This is providing a safe, clean and well equipped learning environment that will benefit hundreds of children, both now and in the future.

Our nominated charity for 2011 is Alzheimer's Support, a registered charity providing a range of flexible services across Wiltshire to support people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their carers.



Environment

Re-accredited to BS EN ISO 14001

Carbon Footprint

We continue to measure and monitor our carbon footprint for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. Unfortunately we saw an increase of 3.85% from 285 tonnes to 296 tonnes of CO2 last year - we are planning better use of thermostatic controls this year. Scope 3 emissions from our outsourced distribution providers have however decreased from 455 tonnes of CO2 to 446 tonnes of CO2, this is a decrease of 1.97%.

Waste Management

Across our business we recycle all paper, batteries, plastic bottles plus plastic cups from the drinks machines, aluminium cans, toner cartridges, light bulbs, wood (broken pallets etc.), metal, used catalogues and marketing materials. We also have a compost bin to recycle food waste. We continue to review our use of packaging, and have now replaced the plastic void fill with a more ecofriendly cardboard void fill. This has reduced waste collections from site and proved easier for our customers to dispose of our packaging responsibly. Our latest initiative is to recycle the backing paper for our picking labels.

Energy and Water Use

We use motion sensors in the corridors and offices to control the use of lighting. We source all our electricity from Green Renewable sources. Water sensors have been placed in the gents toilets to reduce refushing and reduced water usage by over 10%.

Pollution

No incidents were recorded and ongoing risk assessments have helped us improve our handling of liquids.

Promoting Electronic Documents

We encourage our customers to switch to electronic delivery notes, invoices and/or statements. A reduction of 10% has been achieved.

Staff Behaviour

Our environmental group includes representatives from around the company who raise awareness of opportunities to reduce waste, recycle and conserve resources. All printing has been set to duplex as a default. We are also investigating car sharing and shuttle bus schemes.

Sharing Good Practice

One of our directors is an active member of The Wessex Environment Business Network (WEBN) which is a partnership between the Wessex and Mendip Associations of Chambers of Commerce.

The network acts primarily as an information-sharing medium to aid businesses to operate in a more sustainable and cost-effective way.

Employees

Induction

All new starters undertake a comprehensive, tailored induction programme.

Training & Development

The organisation is committed to supporting appropriate professional development. We believe in "growing our own" where we can.

In 2010, 46% of our vacancies were filled by internal applicants – an excellent demonstration of the quality of our employees and their desire to progress.

Updated management development support has been introduced, tailored for needs of line managers, especially those new to management.

Investor in People

We continue to be accredited as an Investor in People.

Pension

The pension arrangements were reviewed this year and we introduced a new pension scheme to better meet the needs of the company and its employees. The new scheme was rolled out by the Chief Executive through staff briefings.

Communications

A combination of weekly, quarterly and annual briefings ensure that our employees are well informed and contribute to the development of the business.

Employee of the Year

The winner, chosen from among the winners of our employee of the month competition, was Nick Southern. Nick has been with us for 11 years and was chosen for his ability to consistently get on with the job in hand, rise brilliantly to new challenges and be a great team player both as a member of a team and as a team leader.



Employee Voice

For the second year we undertook The Sunday Times Best Companies Survey and were rated as one to watch. This year's Sunday Times Best Companies Survey has delivered some positive feedback but also some areas for improvement. Specific corporate actions are to reinstate company events, clarify more fully the pay review process, recognise long service more clearly and provide more support to managers when implementing structural change.

Consultation

10% of employees choose to belong to a union.

Our internal communications policy ensures we properly consult with our staff and follow clear procedures when implementing change.

At the request of our warehouse staff, we run a monthly staff forum for them to raise any issues and feed in ideas for improvement.

Diversity in the workplace

Our staff profile reflects that of our local area and around 30% have flexible working arrangements.

Health and Safety

Following our accreditation to ISO 18001 we have an active Health & Safety working group. Practical measures and targets have been established to clearly identify trends in accidents and near-misses.

Welfare

We retained our accreditation to BS EN ISO 18001 for Health and Safety.

We provide a subsidised canteen, a staff discount on our own goods and a childcare voucher scheme enabling staff to take advantage of the Government financial assistance available.

We introduced a subsidised healthcare scheme alongside our existing subsidised health screening for all staff in 2010. Around 60% of all staff have taken advantage of health screening in the last 2 years. All staff are able to take advantage of our subsidised healthcare scheme.