

Manor Concepts Environmental training builds enthusiasm and morale



Business is brisk for Manor Concepts. Since the company decided to extend its design business into manufacturing and refurbishing commercial refrigeration cabinets in October 2000, all energy has been focused on expanding the business. And it's worked, with clients including major supermarkets down to independent retailers and convenience stores.

With the initial drive to get the company off the ground calming down, and the company's expansion plans going well, company director Graeme Barker began talking to local authority officers to see what Manor Concepts could be doing better. He says, "It's sometimes difficult because you're busy building the business and you don't look at anything else. A visit from our local authority officers confirmed that a few things were wrong, and the points they made were interesting, especially from a legal point of view."

As far as Graeme is concerned knowing legal requirements ranks as highly as any environmental benefits. He says, "As an employer of 80 plus people, we have an obligation legally and morally to make sure we get it right. If we get fined or sentenced to prison, these people's jobs are at risk."

Graeme was offered the chance to go on the BETI (Business Environmental Training Initiative) training course, and was also put in touch with the Green Business Network. "I attended some meetings and started to get something out of it," he says. "There was a lot of material that applied to us and it gave us a cross-reference to what other companies are doing."

Following the BETI course, Graeme was so fired up with enthusiasm for spreading the word about how people could improve environmental practices in the workplace that he trained all his staff. This was no mean feat; Graeme ran twelve



sessions for eight people at a time. And, as Graeme explains, the staff reaction to the training was extremely positive.

"It was really unexpected. The number of ideas generated immediately was overwhelming. While some of them weren't practical, others were good and we've implemented them. Perhaps the best outcome was that everyone is communicating, and wants to get involved," he says.

It is that desire to make a difference that will enable Manor Concepts to successfully implement any future environmental initiatives. For now, Graeme is concentrating on dealing with no-cost, easy options to get his staff used to working with an environmental policy. One benefit that is already apparent is the company's housekeeping, both internally and externally. "we've had no instances of damaged equipment because people are clambering over boxes to get things," says Graeme. "Our housekeeping has improved immensely and a lot of that is down to the initial training."

Manor's main product is already almost 100% recyclable at the end of its lifecycle. The company also refurbishes cabinets, and uses manufacturing techniques that make the best of cost savings and more than meet the requirements of environmental law.

It's now the other areas that Graeme intends to address such as reviewing energy supply and consumption, waste reduction, and even green energy to recoup some of the costs of the Climate Change Levy. He says, "The course has given us the knowledge and perspective to tackle all these issues. We've got a little bit of time now and the infrastructure to cope with addressing our environmental impact, so it will be easier to tweak it up."

Not content to rest on his laurels, and ever-mindful of environmental legislation issues that could affect Manor Concepts, Graeme has arranged for himself and his health and safety manager, to take the BETI CIEH Level 3 environmental management training. This will result in both of them being considered 'competent' for ISO 14001 and legal purposes.



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