

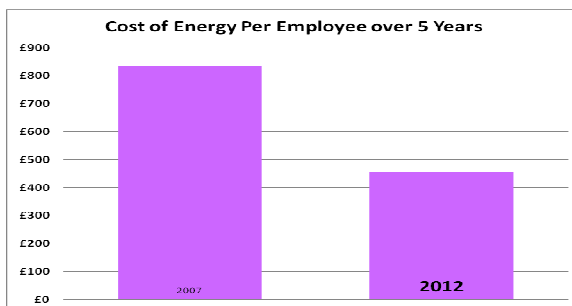
LANYON BOWDLER SOLICITORS – ACHIEVING SYNERGY OF COMMERCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESS

Many companies who 'Go Green' are able to make impressive impacts when they start on their journey. But how many can keep it going and make on-going demonstrable improvements year-in year-out? Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors is one such firm. And they've got the figures to back up their claims in energy savings, resource and fuel consumption.

While environmentally conscious as a firm, having stickers on light switches to remind staff to turn off lights etc, Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors first got serious about their environmental performance in 2008 and joined the Green Achiever Scheme to support them move forward. Initially driven by employees, the evidence of positive commercial impact soon made itself felt and the environmental agenda is now closely monitored by the Board with key performance indicators in the area being reviewed alongside other of the firms' targets. So what are the achievements made?

Energy Savings

In 2008 Lanyon Bowdler had 3 offices across Shropshire with 120 employees. Now the firm has 6 offices and 220 staff – and yet the energy costs have remained the same over the last 5 years. Reducing energy consumption was one of the key concerns for Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors and having monitored their energy consumption at each of their offices for the past 3 annual cycles it is possible to see the correlation of action to impact.



For example, the firm installed a new more energy efficient air conditioning system to their Wellington office in 2010 – 2011 and have a recorded decrease in energy consumption of 21% over the previous year. In financial terms the system paid for itself in reduced energy costs in a 7 month period. This was on the back of introducing virtual servers and fitting thermostats to the heating system – overall over the three year period the electricity consumption in Wellington has decreased by 19%.

Further impressive results include a 4% decrease in energy consumption at the Ludlow office (an office deliberately chosen for its location on the EcoBusiness Park). This while there has been a 66% increase in staff numbers at the office with the resultant increases in number of computers and monitors, etc. This has been achieved through the purchase of more energy efficient computers, changing from halogen to LED lighting and importantly by investing in splitting the lighting circuit to allow for those areas near the windows to have lights off while the darker areas in the centre of the open plan offices to be lit. Again, by considering where the saving opportunities were possible – ie. in investing in the lighting in particular – Lanyon Bowdler have dramatically impacted on the energy use.

Since 2010 the firm have had a rolling programme of replacing all the halogen lighting with energy efficient LEDs. As well as directly reducing energy usage the savings to Lanyon Bowdler has also been in the time and cost required for maintenance – a change from a 3 monthly to a 12-15 month cycle. Simply working out the costs involved for replacing the lighting in the 3 reception and toilet areas at the Shrewsbury office, over a 12 month period there is a direct saving of around £40. Perhaps not a huge amount until you then multiply this up for all the other lights in the office and multiply that by 6 offices. Further, adding in the maintenance costs for more regularly changing the bulbs it's possible to see the return on investment again adds up on commercial as well as environmental criteria.

Reducing Paper Use

Solicitors are renowned for their files that contain tomes of paper. While not moving to the totally paperless office, Lanyons has implemented various IT solutions to support their drive to reduce resource use. While letter-headed documents still print single sided, in 2010 they set a forced duplex printing for supporting documents. There has been an on-going programme of electronically archiving documents since 2009, and new photocopiers have a greater capacity for scanning, again enabling employees to view on-screen rather than move documents on paper. The latest move this year has been the addition of a mandatory field in new file documents for email addresses. Perhaps a simple measure but it was previously so often missed, forcing hard copy letters to be sent – increasing costs as well as resource use. With these moves, across the practice as a whole in the past three years, there has been only a 1.95% increase in pages copied despite the increase in the size of the firm. Reduced paper has clear savings in purchase needs but also in the costs of archiving documents, and the transport and fuel costs to move files around the county from office to office or to the archiving storage facility.

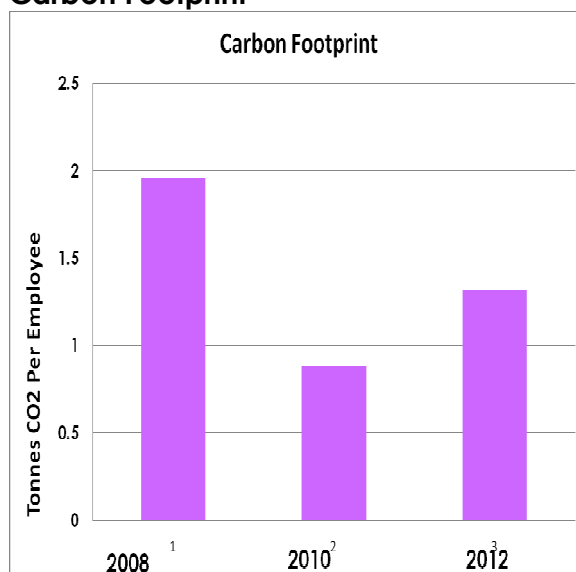
A lot of these changes have been made to the infrastructure of the Lanyon Bowdler buildings and equipment but going full circle, the green agenda started

with the employees demanding it and it is the employees who are continuing to achieve savings. While a member of the Board sits on the Group Environmental Committee it is largely constituted of volunteer Eco Monitors who represent their colleagues from each of the 6 branch offices. The Committee look at the results of the monitored data and discuss further options for improvements across the firm – large and small. The company has thought about the impact of Travel to Work and the car sharing policy is actively supported as is the Cycle to Work Scheme – the new Telford office has specifically had showers fitted to encourage cycling and walking to work. The company promotes the use of the additional 5p per mile HMRC fuel rate for travel costs if a passenger is carried – a win-win for employer, employee and the environment.

Further changes are afoot at the Practice too. A new office has been opened in Telford. Monitoring of energy usage in the previous premises had clearly indicated the building design was not conducive to energy cost savings – it had a glass roof that meant the heaters were on full blast all winter and fans were on full blast all summer. The cellular offices each required separate heating and the old lighting system didn't allow for differential lighting needs. On moving, part of the decision making criteria were for built-in energy efficiency options; i.e. on heating and lighting and room layout. The fact that Breeam "A" rated carpet has also been fitted is simply an added bonus.

The firm is closing its oldest, most energy intensive offices in Wellington and Hereford through the end of 2012 and it is taking the opportunity to think about the travel to work needs of the relocated employees and building in increased capacity for employees to remote work through licences.

Carbon Footprint



Lanyon Bowdler have been calculating their carbon footprint through the Legal Sector Alliance (an alliance of 235 members which includes over one third of solicitors in private practice in England and Wales) since 2008. The Alliance average is 3.75 tonnes CO₂ per employee – Lanyon Bowdler's is 1.32.

The rise in the average between 2010 – 2012 comes as a result of taking on 2 new offices in this time, one of which is recognised for its poor energy efficiency. Lanyons are moving premises later this year!

SUMMARY

Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors is an impressive practice that is able to show how focussed effort can result in both commercial and environmental success. By changing infrastructure elements where possible (setting IT defaults on document printing, lighting systems and even buildings) and encouraging and enabling employees to be more environmentally conscious (being members of and promoting the Cycle to Work Scheme and installing showers in offices for those who do cycle to work and providing good quality IT networks to support home or mobile working and reduce fuel consumption) they have achieved great results in reducing their environmental impacts.

They have attained the Green Achiever Gold Standard 3 years running, were awarded the Shropshire Business Awards Best Green Business in 2009 and were Highly Commended for the LSA Award for Excellence in Environmental Responsibility at The Law Society Excellence Awards 2010.

More impressive still though, is their continued outstanding performance and on-going environmental ambition.

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