



Green Achiever Newsletter

October 2011

Dear Deb,

Welcome to the October issue of the Green Achiever newsletter.

With the recent Indian summer coming to an end, many owners of solar panels will be sad to see the last of the sunny spell as their energy generation reduces. The Department of Energy and Climate Change have revealed that for the second quarter of this year, renewable energy contributed to an all time high of 9.6% of the UK's energy supplied to the grid, a 50% increase from the same time last year. We are seeing many new installations of solar photovoltaic cells with a recent announcement that 4400 solar panels are to be used to provide energy for the new Blackfriars Bridge station in London. This month's Green Achiever newsletter brings you information about funding from Sustainable Routes and how to improve your energy efficiency and environmental performance as well as some of our new Green Achievers - Ecophy Cleaning Services who have achieved Silver status and the 4-Star Self Assessed marketing company, Cognition.

"Sustainable Routes" Project - reducing CO2 emissions from Milton Keynes to the Isle of Wight

Last year we ran an article about a European funded project called Sustainable Routes which was operating in the Thames Valley region. The project has now been extended to the South East of England so outlined below is an update about an innovative programme working with SMEs, offering grants to businesses who want to reduce their CO2 emissions through sustainable travel initiatives.

Applications are made through the Sustainable Routes website - www.sustainableroutes.co.uk A new tranche of applications is now being sought and funding is available for suitable projects for up to £1,000 if the total cost of the project is over £3,000. Applications should be from SMEs employing fewer than 250 people, who have been trading for at least two years, have a turnover of at least £75,000 and who are located in the South East of England - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Kent and Medway, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Sussex. Ideas about what we have funded are available on our blog.

Whether or not companies have a sustainable travel project in mind at present,

registering on the website and completing a few questions will ensure that applicants are immediately sent a free travel efficiency plan that will show how easily savings involving travel can be made. We also have a few grants available for 50:50 funding during October - so if you have a project in mind and can complete the application quickly and get it approved, you may be lucky enough to get a grant for up to £1,000 for a total spend of at least £2,000 - and applications are on a first come first served basis.

Improving your resource efficiency and environmental performance

Efficiency and Effectiveness are two key business words. Applying them to environmental performance is also advantageous to businesses. By reducing resource usage, energy consumption and waste, companies can greatly reduce expenditure, improve operations and boost their reputation. The majority of large companies now publicise their environmental performance as an integral aspect of annual reporting, reporting on improvements and targets and many will only buy services and materials from companies that can demonstrate similar high environmental credentials.

Identifying a company baseline performance is crucial so knowing resource, water, fuel, etc usage, is the place to start. From the baseline position members can then review the efficiency and effectiveness of their processes and identify improvement options to reduce waste, or water usage or whatever will create most benefit for the company. Designing (simple) monitoring processes then enables companies to keep track of the effectiveness of changes made and review the increasing efficiency aimed for. The Green Achiever Scheme can help with each element of this improvement process. Please contact us for more information.

In the meanwhile as an overview we outline a few ideas below.

Energy Efficiency Reducing energy consumption is often one of the easiest ways to reduce your costs and also your carbon footprint. Using more energy efficient equipment, changing processes in order to reduce energy use and re-educating staff regarding use of energy are all ways to lower bills. The purchase of energy efficient machinery, even if more expensive to buy upfront, may reduce energy consumption and use of raw materials. Regular maintenance of equipment may also save money and energy in the long term.

Water Use Water supply and waste water disposal is an expensive commodity. These costs can be lowered by monitoring water use and identifying areas where water use can be reduced (ie. identifying and fixing leaks, pressure reduced valves on taps to minimise flow, installing automatic taps to prevent water being left running, etc).

Minimise Waste We have run numerous articles in this newsletter recently about implementing the Waste Hierarchy - Prevent, Reuse, Recycle, Other Recovery, Disposal. Using packaging as an example, it is possible to see how using the hierarchy is not only good environmental practice but is also good business sense. Effective stock management can make it more possible to buy in bulk (if storage allows) and thereby reduce both packaging needs and costs. Re-using boxes or plastics used for delivery again makes

simple efficiency sense and once used to their limit recycle them rather than dispose of them in general waste. When choosing a supplier, check their environmental credentials and only buy products with minimal and recyclable packaging.

Eco-Design By redesigning products to be more environmentally friendly, it can help to minimise the product's impact on the environment both during production and throughout its lifetime. This can also be a very powerful marketing tool. Eco-design includes things like goods having replaceable parts in case of breakages rather than a whole machine becoming obsolete. Products can be designed to use fewer raw materials, to eliminate hazardous materials, reduce energy and water use, producing less pollution and waste, increasing life span and efficiency of the product and improving possibilities for recycling and reuse.

Once areas for improvement have been identified, it may be necessary to draw up a long term plan in order to realistically make changes over time. The steps being taken to improve the company's environmental credentials can be written into an Environmental Policy, which can then be used to show customers your commitment to the environment as well as help to win new business.

For support or guidance on any / all of these or other environmental good practices please just drop the Green Achiever team a note or give us a call on 01743 343403.

Company Profiles



For a cleaner, greener home! Ecophy go Silver

Ecophy Cleaning Services Ltd joined the Green Achiever Scheme in April this year and has been awarded Silver Status. Key to Ecophy is that their approach to environmental management isn't just about a written policy - it's about the overall ethics of the company. Ecophy believe that cleaning should be a clean business and having ensured the basics are right Ecophy have a track record of innovation and looking to technological solutions that bring environmental benefits using nanotechnology, ultrasound, and uv light all as alternatives to other more traditional (non-chemical) products.

Ecophy also consider the equipment they use to ensure they use as little water as possible, have replaceable parts so a whole machine doesn't become obsolete for the sake of one broken element, and plan the order of the use of their materials to achieve their maximum re-usability before they go for recycling. Carbon accounting is at the core of Ecophy's pricing structure and regular customers benefit from a 1 tonne carbon off-set.

Jamie Austin, Managing Director said "It is good to be associated with the Green Achiever Scheme and the Silver process is extremely good; it made me think about lots of things on the day and also makes me think about the future of our business and how we become more aware of our surroundings. Even though we have made many decisions on moving our business forward, this is by far the best one to date and I am sure it will change future decisions for us."

www.ecophy.co.uk



Cognition has recently completed its 3rd Green Achiever Self-Assessment and has confirmed its excellent environmental performance as a 4-star company. Cognition is a fully integrated marketing agency providing branding, PR and digital assistance to their clients from offices in the heart of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. As the company has expanded they have maintained their environmental practices, including the environmental approach as an integral aspect of their induction for new employees, moved to using laptop rather than desktop computers and have offset increasing amounts of carbon through the Sponsor a Tree Scheme.

Anthony Purkiss commented: "Our environmental approach is important to the Cognition team and we are keen to continue our improvement programme. We will be implementing our targets for this year and look forward to achieving the 5-star rating next year." www.cognitiongroup.com

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Sincerely,

Mandy Stoker
Green Achiever Scheme