

Case Study: Rapanui

Sustainable Business Awards Winner:
Micro Business Winner 2010
Business Sector: Fashion and clothing

Company Background

Rapanui Clothing Ltd are manufacturers of organic, fair-trade fashion wear. The company was founded on the Isle of Wight, in 2008, employs 6 local people and provides 10 other island-based companies with work.



Summary of Key Achievements

Rapanui's certified organic, fair-trade fashion wear is manufactured in factories powered by renewable energy. The company have developed the worlds first full 'traceability' of their entire fashion range allowing customers to use interactive maps to find out exactly where their clothes come from.











Social Achievements

Rapanui have recently taken part in Hampshire County Council's Future Jobs Fund scheme to provide jobs for young people who have been out of work for more than 6 months. They have also offered several places to work experience students including offering work experience to a less abled youngster who is being supported by the Headway brain care charity.

Last year Rapanui sponsored the local charity Leonard Cheshire Football cup, they printed T-shirts for the event, which raised money for the local Leonard Cheshire care home.

Last year, Rapanui organised a beach clean up on the Isle of Wight in aid of the Marine Conservation Society. A representative from the society told them it was the largest beach clean up they had ever witnessed, in a non-disaster situation.

5% of Rapanui's before tax profit is donated directly to an environmental charity – The Marine Conservation Society. Rapanui have recently been invited to lecture and sit on a panel of experts at Plymouth University and the 'All our Futures' conference, on the subject of sustainability.

World's first full traceability of entire fashion range, using interactive maps	
All printing and warehousing in UK	
Arranged the UK's most successful beach clean-up project	
Sourced entire fashion range from natural, organic and ethical fabrics	
Created and financed the Isle of Wight Surf Club.	
KEY	
 Economic Achievements	 Social Achievements
 Environmental Achievements	

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Environmental Achievements

The entire Rapanui range is ethically made from natural organic fabrics, sourced specifically. Materials have to be imported as cotton cannot be grown in the UK, however, air freight is never used and goods are transported using camels overland and ships on water. All suppliers worked with are Fair Wear, Soil Association and Beyond Organic recognised. One of the overseas factories is powered by 32 Vesta wind turbines and another is partly powered by solar PV panels, through these measures Rapanui have reduced the carbon footprint of their core men's range by 90%.

Action to improve sustainability within Rapanui's offices include: knocking down walls to increase natural lighting; installing a master power down switch to minimise power loss out of hours; segregating waste for re-cycling; climate change as part of staff induction process. All electricity is sourced from a green supplier and the company van is run on vegetable oil, members of staff are also offered free bikes to commute to and from work.

Rapanui package the clothes in simple, recycled, rip-stop waterproof envelopes which customers are encouraged to re-use. Rapanui also choose to refrain from producing printed media or marketing material, preferring to use IT based systems, leading to a 95% paperless office.



Team Rapanui | L-R back row.. Norbie, Will, Pam and Simon, Front row - Rob, Dan and Mart

Economic Achievements

The growth of the companies profits has been more than 100% year on year and they now employ 6 local people.

The company works with 10 local island based businesses who provide printing, hand finishing and packaging services. This ensures that approximately 60% of the revenue from the garments stays within the islands economy.

The two founding brothers of Rapanui were also recently runners up in the Daily Mail's 'Enterprising Young Brits' competition, having been recognized for their extraordinary contribution to the Isle of Wight's economy.

A film crew for Virgin 1 have recently spent time at the offices of Rapanui detailing their business ethos and economic achievements in order to create a documentary on successful young ethical companies in the UK.

Rapanui created three local jobs in the first 12 months of trading, a 100% increase in staff numbers.

Directors of Rapanui recently visited Downing Street to deliver a petition asking for a national agreement to force manufacturers of fashion and clothing to 'eco-label' their products, in the same way that buildings and electrical equipments are required to.

All marketing is online and most advertising is purely through word of mouth, proving a highly successful strategy.

