



Case Study: Permanent Publications

Sustainable Business Awards Winner:
Leadership Winner 2010
Business Sector: Publishers

Company Background

Permanent Publications began operating in 1990, publishing books on topics such as sustainable business, renewable energy and self-reliance, long before it was fashionable to do so. In 1992, they were approached by a charity, the Permaculture Association, to publish their magazines and books teaching people how to live in harmony with the environment.

Summary of Key Achievements

It is the goal of Permanent Publications to educate the world in an interesting way about the principles of permaculture, and with the subscribers of 'Permaculture' Magazine now numbering 100,000 (from only 1,000 in 1992) and spread across 77 countries, they are clearly leading the way in promoting the benefits of sustainability. Indeed, it is currently the only "green" magazine available with a growing circulation.



Social Achievements

Permanent Publications has a very low turnover of staff. The company rewards this commitment by paying for them to attend any course run by the Sustainability Centre. Last year, Permanent Publications funded one staff member to go to Germany for a month to study environmental design.

Permanent Publications works closely with three charities to which they donate both time and money: Permaculture Association, the Centre of Alternative Technology, and the Sustainability Centre. In addition, they are affiliated with Good Energy, ecotricity, The Phone Co-op, and the Environmental Transport Association. In addition to this they also donate books, magazines and other resources to people in countries who do not have access to Western currency around the world. Locally, they champion events like the Portsmouth Green Fair, the Portsmouth Film Festival and the Hampshire Green Fair.

Electricity is entirely renewable and all water is heated by solar power	
Book sales to Amazon.co.uk have increased by 400% since 2007	
Work closely with three charities and donate both time and money	
Waste cardboard is used for mulching in the forest garden.	
Work experience students from the local colleges regularly employed	
KEY	Economic Achievements Social Achievements Environmental Achievements

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Environmental Achievements

As international publishers of Permaculture Magazine, and as environmental book and website publishers, Permanent Publications has been promoting sustainable best practice since its formation in 1990. The company is passionate about feeding their global audience with positive, practical and life-affirming information in all medias. Indeed, Maddy Harland, the CEO of Permanent Publications recently spoke at the London International Book Fair about promoting sustainability in the publishing world and the importance of supporting the local economy.



All the equipment in the office is purchased according to its low-energy consumption. There are no sensors for the lights but the strict "switch off" policy is easy to abide since the office is relatively small and makes good use of the large amount of natural light. Suggestions for environmental improvements are actively encouraged and approximately 95% of these suggestions are taken up.

In 2008, Permanent Publications won the Queens Award for Enterprise in the Sustainable Development Category for which they had to undergo a detailed economic, social and environmental audit. Internal audits are undertaken on all procurements to ensure that they are fairly traded, ethically sourced, and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) accredited. All magazines and book titles are printed on FSC accredited paper using only soy inks.

Economic Achievements

In October 2008 Permanent Publications called in an independent assessor to identify the profitable and loss-making aspects of the business to help them ride out the recession. While many other book publishers and magazines are struggling to stay afloat or closing altogether, Permanent Publications turnover increased by 17% between 2009/10 and by 16% the year before.



It is company policy to buy only UK-sourced ink, thereby reducing print-miles significantly and supporting a struggling industry in Britain at extra cost to itself (this is very difficult as there are very few colour printers outside of the Far East). Magazines are printed by Warners (Lincolnshire). Books are printed by, amongst others, Cambrian Printers (Environmental Printers of the year 2008).