

Case study: Friends Provident



“Williams Lea has played a key role in improving the corporate responsibility status of our marketing print, from initial testing to show me how good recycled products can look, through to final print trials that demonstrated this to print specifiers. We’ve also improved the environmental status of our print and warehousing services, meaning that improved corporate responsibility is now very much business as usual.”

Denis Bayle – Marketing Services Support Manager

Overview

Friends Provident is a leading UK financial services group and a member of the FTSE100 Index with a history dating back to 1832.

Friends Provident has a Corporate Responsibility programme which includes a wide ranging and well established environmental component. The goals for this programme include the support and setting of high environmental standards for key suppliers. Thanks to Williams Lea’s own progressive environmental policy, working in partnership, the two businesses have made major leaps forward in driving higher environmental governance standards into the supply chain. A goal was introduced in 2006 to introduce an ISO 14001 certified print supply chain.

Integral to this challenge was upholding the status of the brand and the quality of the print output.

What is ISO 14001?

- ISO 14001 is a blueprint for how to be an environmentally responsible organisation. To date, only 6000 businesses in the UK have successfully achieved the certification, which involves a year-long process and performance to stringent, independently audited standards.
- ISO 14001 requires that an environmental management system has the following key elements:
 - An Environment Policy, objectives and targets with supporting management plans

A high level of environmental governance becomes a cornerstone of a Corporate Responsibility programme for leading financial services group

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- A methodology for identifying and evaluating the environmental aspects of an organisation's activities
- A process for ensuring the organisation can demonstrate full compliance with legal and any other environmental requirements to which it subscribes
- Documented processes for assigning environmental roles and responsibilities, as well as processes for activities that can have significant environmental impacts e.g. waste disposal and energy management

Environmental roadmaps

This drive for higher environmental governance standards is one of a number of environmental initiatives being delivered to Friends Provident. Williams Lea identifies these initiatives through a process it calls environmental roadmapping.

The starting point for the Friends Provident Environmental Roadmap was to analyse the entire print outsourcing lifecycle and identify options for more eco-friendly solutions.

Moving to high-recycled content paper was the first element of the transformation, but key concerns over quality and consistency of the finished product had to be addressed, before changes could be implemented.

Extensive trials with alternative products in various print presses, finishing and mailing equipment were undertaken to ensure materials were fit for purpose. Technical challenges in achieving tight tolerance colour matching were overcome, allowing for absolute brand consistency across multiple materials and products.

Bi-annual meetings with the Friends Provident CSR team review progress and determine future strategy to ensure that standards are maintained and exceeded.

Key facts

- In January 2006, only 2% of Friends Provident's print spend was with ISO14001 companies
- By September 2007, 75% of spend was with ISO14001 companies, due to Williams Lea achieving higher environmental standards within its supply chain
- Friends Provident use approximately 500 tonnes of paper annually for marketing print. The introduction of an 80% recycled content paper has likely resulted in a total reduction of CO₂ equivalent in excess of 500 tonnes*

* Research by WRAP shows that 100% recycled content papers can save on average 1.32 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per tonne of recycled paper

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