

CASE STUDY: FORTICRETE

BACKGROUND

Forticrete is a manufacturer of a wide range of building products including roof tiles, Cast Stone, Architectural Masonry and Walling stone. They employ approximately 260 people in the UK across seven manufacturing units, and are a subsidiary of their parent company, CRH – a leading international supplier of building materials. The vast majority of their clients are House Builders, however they do a relatively small volume of work on commercial projects with main contractors.



Due to the nature of their business, some elements of sustainability are deeply ingrained in the business and have been for some time. For example Responsible Sourcing and environmental management are priorities for Forticrete and they have been BES 6001 and ISO 14001 certified for many years. Responsibility for sustainability sits with the Health Safety and Environment Advisor Karl Stevens, together with the Health, Safety and Environmental Manager.

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

Karl first heard about the School at a British Precast Federation Environment and Sustainability committee meeting in summer 2012. After initial research into the School he attended the Leeds supplier day in autumn 2012, primarily with the intention of finding out more about the resources on offer and with a view to building his own knowledge of sustainable construction. He was impressed by the structure and format of the School, and given that sustainability is high on the agenda of their parent company CRH and Karl thought the School would be a useful resource for him to ensure he is up to speed on the latest developments in sustainability.

SELF-ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN

Karl completed a self-assessment in September 2012. Rather than complete this from a company perspective, Karl used the tool to highlight his own gaps in knowledge with a view to helping with his own professional development. He has since re-assessed and is steadily working his way through the recommended resources. He also attended a carbon footprinting workshop and has viewed several of the e-learning modules.

Karl recognises that the self-assessment tool has been designed to be completed from a company perspective, however currently Health & Safety issues are a priority with the business, leaving little resource to dedicate to addressing the sustainability agenda in its widest sense, although pockets of good practice do exist.

IMPACT

As explained above, Karl has mainly used the School as a mechanism to develop his own knowledge with a view to feeding his learning in to the company where possible. As a result of engaging in the School Karl has:

- ✓ Improved his sustainability knowledge and competence in a range of different areas.
- ✓ Planned to use the knowledge gained from the carbon footprinting workshop in 2013 to develop some carbon footprints for key product families to share with clients / potential customers.
- ✓ Used the e-learning modules as a key resource when developing training packs for other parts of the business about key sustainability issues.



BENEFITS

To date, the company's engagement in the School has been limited to Karl's work on the self-assessment and action planning tool and his attendance at workshops. The benefits of engagement are therefore not yet being felt by the company as a whole, however Karl recognises the future potential of the School in that it could help Forticrete address the sustainability in a more structured and focused way.

Some of the key benefits that Karl attributes to his engagement in the School are below:

Better able to provide thorough responses to sustainability questions in the pre-qualification and tender process – Forticrete use Achilles Building Confidence for the majority of their bids, however some customers still rely on the completion of extensive pre-qualification questionnaires. The Health, Safety & Environmental Team responsible for completing the sustainability sections in such documents, and believes the School is helping them increase their knowledge and competence, and that this will ultimately result in improved scores in the tender process.

Cost savings – Karl uses the School and its workshops, events and tools to help progress his own professional development. Training budgets within the construction industry as a whole have been affected by the recessions, so the opportunity to access free training, e-learning modules and sustainability tools represents significant cost savings for Forticrete.

Efficient use of time – Before engaging in the School, if Karl or his colleagues needed to learn about a new issue in sustainability they relied on simple internet searches which often resulted in wasted time and effort trying to understand which links were the most relevant. Karl now uses the School as a key research tool, and trusts the quality of the resources contained within the School, and has the reassurance of knowing that they have been approved by the main contractor partners to the School.

In order for Karl to remain engaged in the School it is important to:

- ✓ Continue to value the School's key principles around confidentiality and the ability to develop at a pace that is suitable to the user.
- ✓ Continue to keep the resources fresh and up to date.
- ✓ See evidence of the School's growth and success stories.
- ✓ In order to secure senior level buy in and more fully engage Forticrete at a company level, the School would need to engage House Builders as they are a significant customer to Forticrete. Should House Builders be represented on the list of partners and use their buying power to encourage their supply chain to engage in the School, it would have immediate beneficial effect. A common message from their main customer base would also strengthen Forticrete's ability to influence the sustainability of their own supply chains.