

CASE STUDY: THE DANNY SULLIVAN GROUP

BACKGROUND

Established in 1986, The Danny Sullivan Group provides skilled professional labour to the rail, civil engineering and construction industries. Employing more than 1750 people, the company turns over £70m and their customer base includes many of the School partners such as Bam Nuttall, Skanska and Balfour Beatty.

Dave Saxton, the HSQE Director is currently responsible for sustainability within the organisation, and is the only employee with a defined responsibility for the environment / sustainability. As a labour provider whose employees work under the management and supervision of their clients, the sustainability challenges for the company are rather unique. Social and ethical issues are clearly important to the business, but their main environmental impact is linked to transportation of the workforce in relation to petrol and diesel usage and carbon emissions. Environmental issues have been on the company's radar since 2009, however it is only since joining the School in 2012 that the company has started to understand how they can apply sustainability to their business in a more coherent manner.



INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

The Group joined the School in 2012 after having attended one of the first supplier days in London. Due to the nature of their business the Group were initially sceptical about dedicating resource to driving forward sustainability in the business as they felt that their ability to influence and impact this agenda was relatively insignificant. However after attending the Supplier day and starting to look at the resources on offer, they decided to use the self-assessment and action plan as a roadmap to looking at this issue in more detail.

SELF-ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN

After attending the supplier day in 2012, Dave took on the responsibility of doing the company self-assessment and working through the corresponding Action Plan. He answered the self-assessment questions honestly, conferring with colleagues where appropriate, but he acknowledges that is difficult for one person to provide an accurate assessment of such a large organisation.

Their first Action Plan directed them to the 'UK Strategy for Sustainable Construction', something with which the Group were unfamiliar. This strategy has proven to be instrumental in the development of their new sustainability strategy as explained under 'impact'.

The Group have attended two supplier days, and their action plans have also signposted them to training workshops on Sustainable Procurement and Ethical Business. Both workshops benefited the business, resulting in tangible outcomes such as the development of a new policy, and a more proactive approach to engaging their supply chain. In addition, Dave has used a range of the e-learning modules in the last 18 months for internal training purposes.

The Group has completed two assessments to date, and plan to re-assess early this year.

IMPACT

As a result of engaging in the School the Danny Sullivan Group has:

- ✓ **Developed a sustainability strategy** covering procurement, design, people, climate change and innovation.
- ✓ **Introduced a set of sustainability KPI's** for the business.
- ✓ **Built in requirements about the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code into their EDI policy.**
- ✓ Started to **embed sustainability considerations into the procurement process.** The Group has been working in partnership with one of their key suppliers of PPE to look at ethical issues in the supply chain. They have helped them obtain accreditations and assurances around ethical sourcing and consequently the SME is now developing its own branded products.
- ✓ **Trained key staff on the Site Safety Plus Site Environmental Awareness Training Scheme (SEATS)** which was a resource recommended through an Action Plan.
- ✓ **Installed solar panelling on their office roofs and light sensors** for office lighting. They have also agreed targets in relation to energy and fuel consumption and print.

BENEFITS

Enhanced reputation leading to new business opportunities – The Danny Sullivan Group is proud to be a Gold member of the School and promotes this on their website, employee handbooks and also includes in tenders / pre qualification questionnaires.

Client retention and recognition – One of the School's main contractor partners recently audited the company and made reference to them being impressed by their commitment to both the School and to developing knowledge and competence in sustainability. The Group hope that their commitment to this agenda through the School will help them to retain key clients.

Cost savings – the measures put into place to reduce energy usage will result in long term cost savings.

Reduced reputational risk – A greater understanding of their supply chain, in particular around ethical issues gives them the reassurance that their reputation is not at risk.

Greater understanding of client requirements - Dave believes the School (through supplier days, workshops and the resources available) has helped the Group gain an insight into the pressures on, and priorities of their customer base.

Time efficient, one stop shop for sustainability – the School provides a range of high quality resources all in one place. This saves the Group time and money searching on the internet. Knowing that the School is backed by the UK's top contractors is also reassuring.

LESSONS LEARNED

Sustainability is an extremely complex issue and it is impossible to be completely up to date on everything.

It is important to **'think outside the box'** when it comes to understanding your organisation's role and responsibility in relation to sustainability.

THE FUTURE

In order for the School to continue to be of benefit to The Danny Sullivan Group it is important to:

- ✓ Continue to grow the School, engaging more contractors and clients as School partners.
- ✓ Continue to grow the School's resources in relation to social issues as this is becoming increasingly important in the sector.
- ✓ Continue to deliver face to face training.
- ✓ Continue to provide support services to individual members – a person on the end of a phone to answer a question about the website or the tool or a specific resource is valuable.
- ✓ Encourage the School's contractor partners to start to ask questions about School membership in the PQQ and tender process.

