

Challenges:

The biggest sustainability challenge by far for ceramic tile manufacturers is gas consumption. As Johnson Tiles uses gas-fired kilns, the company will inevitably consume a large amount of natural gas, and at present, there is no viable alternative. Johnson Tiles is a member of the British Ceramics Confederation and, through this, has signed up for their “British Ceramics: Towards net Zero” initiative, including the development of a hydrogen sintering process which the company sees as a promising alternative to natural gas in the future.

In conjunction with gas consumption, Johnson Tiles monitors their energy intensity to ensure they work as efficiently as possible. All the electricity the company uses is certified green, and Johnson Tiles is currently undertaking a feasibility study for the self-generation of electricity via renewable sources.

Another challenge Johnson Tiles faces is supply chain sustainability regarding the tile suppliers they partner with overseas. In order to ensure their suppliers meet the same high standards as them, the company must do thorough checks on any organisation they want to add to their supply base. To mitigate any risk, Johnson Tiles has a stringent supplier assessment which they send out to all new suppliers as part of their due-diligence process. This assessment has questions about audits, employment and social responsibility, the environment, and commercial and quality. The supplier is scored on their answers to these questions and rated A-D – there is also an option for a site visit if Johnson Tiles deems this necessary.

Water use is another sustainability challenge Johnson Tiles faces, as their process uses quite a lot of water. To reduce the amount of freshwater used in their manufacturing process, the company maximises water re-usage via filter pressing and recirculation – Johnson Tiles reuse approximately 22,000m³ of water per year in their body preparation areas.

Along with water, the company also considers their use of scarce resources. They include up to 20% recycled content in their manufactured product, which is made up of waste from their process that is fed back in. This also helps them to reduce their production waste as they reuse it.

Impact:

Collaboration: Two members of the Johnson Tiles team attended a Barratts PLC waste workshop that was held in connection with the Supply Chain Sustainability School. This event gave Johnson Tiles insight into what house developers are looking at regarding sustainability and waste and where Johnson Tiles can help them. Since this workshop, the company has held further discussions with Barratts in view of setting up a trial with them to see how they can deliver differently to leave zero waste footprint on BDW sites.

Fact box



Company

Johnson Tiles Limited

No of employees

244

HQ

Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent

Website

<https://www.johnson-tiles.com/>

Main contact

Sophie Massey (Purchasing & Sustainability Manager)

smassey@johnson-tiles.com

Services

Ceramic tile manufacturer

About

Johnson Tiles was founded in 1901 and became a division of Norcros Group (Holdings) PLC in 1979. The company design and make high-quality ceramic tiles, proudly staying true to the company's roots in the Potteries' heartland of Stoke-on-Trent. Johnson also sources complementary products from around the world to strengthen its offering.

Johnson Tiles has also attended events from other house developer clients, such as Lovell, which has helped them better understand where these customers want to be in terms of sustainability and allows the company to think about where they can help.

Staff training: Johnson Tiles has found the resources available through the School beneficial, especially with the different levels of competencies targeted at employees at different levels within an organisation. The company has also reported that the fact that there are overview resources, as well as deep-dive ones, is helpful as an individual can take a brief look at a topic that they might be interested in but do not need to go into major detail on.

Benchmarking: Johnson Tiles has also found the assessment tool valuable as it indicates where an individual or the organisation sits within the sector and the School itself. This gives Johnson Tiles an insight into where it might be best to focus learning attention, which is also aided by the action plans set out.

Value gained:

Mechanism to monitor and benchmark progress: The School's self-assessments and subsequent action plans allow Johnson Tiles to monitor and benchmark their sustainability progress and understand where they can best focus their efforts to achieve maximum impact.

Competitive advantage: By engaging with the School and communicating this to their customer base, Johnson Tiles believe this has helped keep the company as a key supplier to their current customers and helped secure new ones.

Understanding of customer objectives: The events and resources offered by the School have helped Johnson Tiles focus on the sustainability areas important to their key customers.

Future proofing:

Johnson Tiles plans to continue proactively engaging with the School and take advantage of the vast resources offered.