

Challenges:

The biggest challenge Glidevale Protect has faced is related to culture and a traditional mindset in terms of how the factories operate – if it isn't broken, it doesn't need fixing! Therefore, improvements in terms of sustainability have required the creation of a Group Sustainability Board comprising key stakeholders across the business who can guide employees on this journey. Identifying a person to be the company's sustainability lead has also been crucial. Glidevale Protect has also faced challenges related to resources, both financially and in terms of working capacity, particularly when tackling key sustainability topics such as undertaking the full process of publishing product EPDs. It has taken some time to convey the message that marginal gains in improving the carbon footprint are more valuable than doing nothing at all.

Another challenge has been the limited time available for Glidevale Protect's employees to undertake learning resources on the Supply Chain Sustainability School's website. The sustainability lead has primarily undertaken most of the training/webinars, and along with one or two others, this forms the bulk of the company's activity on the School's website.

Impact:

The Supply Chain Sustainability School has been a primary driver of Glidevale Protect's sustainability journey. The formation of the Group Sustainability Board was initiated after exploring the School's website, which consistently promotes sustainability as a crucial area. The School's impact is also evident commercially, as selected Key Account customers enquire about the company's School membership. Additionally, insights gained from School webinars emphasized the importance of product Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for specifiers in the construction sector, prompting the company to publish three independently verified product EPDs, establishing itself as an industry leader. Future plans include the introduction of more EPDs on other key product ranges throughout 2024.

Another positive outcome resulting from the creation of the Group Sustainability Board and the continuous amplification of sustainable practices and valuable learning resources by the School is Glidevale Protect's increased drive to enhance employee engagement in sustainability. The company is actively promoting more environmental news through its quarterly newsletter, website, and LinkedIn channel than ever before. In an effort to involve employees, the company encourages them to submit 'Bright Ideas' suggesting ways to improve the environmental footprint in both offices and factories, offering a cash incentive in return. These suggestions are then regularly reviewed by the Group Sustainability Board on a monthly basis. This approach fosters a culture of active participation and innovation in promoting sustainability within the organization.

Fact box



Company

Glidevale Protect, division of
Building Product Design

No of employees

250

HQ

Sale, Cheshire

Website

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Main contact

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Services

Manufacturers of building products used as 'hidden protectors' within construction such as roofing and wall membranes and ventilation solutions. With two factories in the UK, we offer a full technical support service to all in the specification chain.

About

For 40 years, Glidevale Protect has been a leading UK producer of building products, offering solutions in condensation control and energy efficiency across the built environment. Our comprehensive range of products is designed for new build and refurbishment schemes for both traditional build and offsite construction. Our product portfolio includes construction membranes for walls, roofs, ceilings, and floors as well as roofing and building ventilation.

Previously, Glidevale Protect did not actively promote its environmental credentials. However, examples such as the closed-loop recycling of ABS materials back into new tile ventilation products through a local supply chain, reducing the volume of virgin polymer purchased, are now considered important to disseminate both internally and externally. This type of communication is now at the forefront of the company's strategy, emphasizing that continuous improvement of sustainable practices is a core value and priority for Glidevale Protect.

Engagement events:

Glidevale Protect's sustainability lead has actively participated in various events and webinars hosted by the Supply Chain Sustainability School, finding them valuable for market intelligence. For instance, presentations on build statistics from national housebuilders during these events have provided crucial insights. Specifically, webinars involving housebuilders have proven instrumental in keeping the business updated on current regulations, the sustainability objectives of housebuilders, and considerations related to specific build types (e.g., timber frame). The importance of key elements, such as product Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), has also been highlighted. This valuable information is subsequently disseminated throughout the business, aiding relevant stakeholders in decision-making, and informing the overall strategy.

Resources:

Assessments – The assessments have proven useful, as they could be undertaken online simultaneously by the members of the Glidevale Protect Group Sustainability Board during their monthly meetings. These assessments have highlighted both the focal points in the company's sustainability strategy where more could be done, as well as gaps in knowledge and areas that need attention for the business to progress.

Action Plan – The company learning plan aided in focusing the minds of Glidevale Protect's team on the areas of sustainability that required discussion and review, providing learning resources to gather relevant information. This information has been effectively cascaded to pertinent areas of the business.

E-learning modules – These modules have contributed to enhancing the skill set of the sustainability lead at Glidevale Protect, who has then disseminated relevant information to other departments. For instance, the tool for mapping out suppliers in terms of ethical procurement has proven useful in assisting the business to consolidate its supplier framework globally, helping identify risks in the procurement strategy.

Value gained:

By being part of the School, Glidevale Protect has gained increased visibility and prestige in the commercial arena, establishing a more prominent presence higher up the specification chain at the

developer or main contractor level. The company promotes its current silver accreditation as an added value element within tenders for new business and emphasizes this achievement with key accounts and customers. However, Glidevale Protect does not consider the accreditation as a mere token of commitment. Instead, it underpins this recognition with demonstrable examples of activities aimed at improving its environmental footprint. These activities include requesting packaging suppliers to confirm recycled content levels in all materials used, challenging them to enhance this aspect when necessary, implementing a closed-loop system for recycling ABS offcuts, and publishing three product-specific EPDs to provide clear and transparent life cycle assessment data. In addition, Glidevale



Protect have just attained certification to the energy management standard ISO 50001 for both their factories in Nottinghamshire & Merthyr Tydfil.

Future proofing:

Glidevale Protect expresses a desire for closer collaboration with the School, intending to continue using the website as a learning platform and to further develop its sustainability credentials. The company suggests that it would be beneficial if the School could undertake member features on companies actively embracing sustainability measures, promoting them through social media channels, e-shots, and the website.

As a supply chain partner, Glidevale Protect sometimes requires support in gaining visibility with major developers and contractors to strengthen product specifications. The company suggests the creation of a company index for the School's partners, indicating their accreditation levels (gold, silver, bronze) and the types of products they offer. This index could assist businesses in identifying opportunities with companies on the sustainability journey.