

Challenges:

One of the challenges Howard Bros Joinery Ltd has faced is the specification of products by clients, regardless of sustainability. They offer sustainable solutions at the tender stage; however, the client has the final say on the materials used. For example, Howard Bros Joinery Ltd always suggests FSC/PEFC timber as this is sustainable, but occasionally a client may request a product which is not FSC/PEFC, requiring Howard Bros Joinery Ltd to obtain a waiver which informs the client or Principal Contractor of their decision. Brexit and Covid-19 have also caused sourcing issues.

Sustainability is relatively new to the construction industry, and like most companies, Howard Bros Joinery Ltd has one person managing sustainability out of 65 people so it is difficult to educate the team when they do not have involvement as part of their day-to-day work tasks. For instance, their joinery factory has 20 joiners who only connect with sustainability during training or through witnessing the FSC stickers.

Impact:

Engagement with the Supply Chain Sustainability School has provided Howard Bros Joinery Ltd with a range of e-courses, webinars, and resources that help educate the team regularly. Having a contact from the Supply Chain Sustainability School to assist with any questions has been very useful. The impact of using non-FSC or PEFC products can be costly and time-consuming as it will take a long time to get a waiver accepted through all the channels to which the programme will become tighter should the end date not move. The Supply Chain Sustainability School assists with educating the client on sustainability and why Howard Bros Joinery Ltd is pushing for a sustainable future.

Brexit and Covid-19 initially caused sourcing delays across the industry, however, with assistance from the Supply Chain Sustainability School's procurement sector, Howard Bros Joinery Ltd was able to educate their team to advise longer lead times at the tender stage to manage expectations.

Engagement Events: Howard Bros Joinery Ltd participated in various webinars and workshops including the Fairness Inclusion and Respect webinar, Lunch n Learn workshop, and Developing a Wellbeing Strategy that Works workshop, alongside various e-courses. These events were highly engaging and beneficial, providing an opportunity to share experiences and learn how other companies tackle similar challenges. The knowledgeable hosts of each workshop provided valuable insights and answered all questions effectively.

Fact box



Company

Howard Bros Joinery Ltd

No of employees

65

HQ

East Sussex, TN330DE

Website

<https://www.howardbros.com/>

Main contact

Sonja Altern-Bance,

Saltern-bance@howardbros.com

Services

Bespoke sub-contract and supply only specialist joinery contractor, with an enviable reputation for the manufacture and installation of all aspects of bespoke joinery and associated trades including metalwork, glass, stone and solid surface.

About

Originated in 1938, Howard Bros Joinery is led by a team of Directors, each specialising in their independent field. Our site-based teams consist of experienced Contract Managers and Supervisors who undertake the role of guiding and developing their respective fixing teams. In our factory we have skilled joiners and machinists who have specific training for each machine they operate. They regularly employ new apprentices and over the years have trained in excess of 100 apprentices.

Resources

Assessments: Found to be very useful, the assessments are easy to use and quick to complete. The assessments cover all bases, prompting considerations that may not have been previously thought of. The resulting documented assessment allows for immediate action planning.

Action Plan: The action plan is clear and concise, highlighting areas of strength and weakness, such as well-being and diversity versus biodiversity & ecology. Having 16 different sections allows the company to delegate sections to individuals for focused improvement.

E-Learning Modules: Each module is clearly outlined with difficulty levels and expected time frames, making it easy to allocate appropriate time and personnel. The journey through each module is straightforward, and certificates are easily obtainable at the end.

Value gained:

Achieving Gold with the Supply Chain Sustainability School has differentiated Howard Bros Joinery Ltd from competitors and enhanced their tendering profile by showcasing their commitment to sustainability. Regular reviews of benchmarks and action plans have increased efficiency and reduced unnecessary costs, enhancing competitiveness. Additionally, being part of the Considerate Constructors Scheme, which emphasizes fairness, inclusion, and respect, complements their Supply Chain Sustainability School Gold status.

Future proofing:

Howard Bros Joinery Ltd plans to extend training throughout the company to improve sustainability education across all levels and tailor training to specific roles to maximize benefits. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance overall sustainability knowledge and implementation within Howard Bros Joinery Ltd.