

Case Study: Winner of the Management (Large) Award



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The Scottish Leather Group Limited (SLG) is the largest manufacturer of leather in the United Kingdom. Their specialist leathers are produced for a wide range of industries including automotive, aviation, bus & coach, rail, marine and contract furniture. SLG has established a 'zero waste policy' which drives the implementation of energy efficiency measures, good industrial practices, recovery of energy from waste and the creation of oil for use in heat and power generation.



The VIBES Management Award recognises businesses whose management systems deliver continuous improvement in environmental performance. The category is aimed at businesses that are taking a holistic approach to environmental improvement and can demonstrate the associated economic and social benefits that have been achieved. The judges considered that SLG is well ahead of its competitors in terms of sustainability and their efforts since 2004 in developing Low Carbon Leather is evidence of how enhanced sustainable practices leads to economic advantage. SLG are worthy winners of the management large award.

Highlights

- Largest manufacturer of leather in the United Kingdom and the only leather company in the world to produce Low Carbon Leather.
- Installed unique Thermal energy plant as part of their process which includes an oil recovery system.
- Reduction in Carbon footprint from 10kg CO₂/m² of leather produced in 2003 to less than 1kg CO₂/m² in 2019.
- Re-use 40% of their wastewater.
- Environmental and Sustainability policy with top-level management support cascaded throughout the organisation.

SLG is committed to sustainable operations and minimising the impact of their process. They target towards zero waste by 2020. Continuous Improvement is built in to the company's operations and there are a number of ongoing initiatives to improve sustainability in SLG's own operations as well its customers.

The objectives of the low carbon leather project underpinned by their technology:

- Avoid waste disposal to landfill (27,000T/year)
- Avoid road miles (100,000/year)
- Avoid fossil fuel purchase (45 million kWh)
- Avoid unsustainable resource use
- Reduce carbon footprint
- Internalise activity within a circular economy
- Establish low carbon leather as a commercial point of difference based upon sound environmental performance
- Eliminate use of compounds of concern in accordance with consumer driven standards

SLG has put in place environmental dashboards (Red, Amber, Green) to monitor against targets. Real time information is displayed on monitoring screens in the Thermal Energy Plant. Their product carbon intensity has fallen from 10 kg CO₂ per m₂ of leather produced in 2003 and following group wide renewable electricity use, will fall to globally leading < 1 kg CO₂ in 2018/19.



An employee suggestion scheme using T Cards is in place. All suggestions are considered monthly and feedback is given on all suggestions, with vouchers awarded for the suggestions that are implemented.



The judges were impressed with the maintenance of the local environment by the company, including 11 hectares of land with some protected species; and a river and loch on site, which the business cleans. They have also introduced a number of beehives on site.

We are very proud to have won the VIBES Management Award this year. We ensure our product is produced as environmentally responsibly as possible. Collecting a VIBES Award is a real testament to the hard work and commitment from everyone at Scottish Leather Group towards reducing our impact on the environment and we are proud to take our place amongst many excellent companies working hard to deliver a sustainable future.

- Dr Warren Bowden, Group Sustainability and Innovation Director, Scottish Leather Group