

# sustainability is wrapped up

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR LONG HISTORY OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

by Jonathan Couper, packing and one planet living manager, B & Q

It's also been central to our business success – helping to improve efficiencies and drive down costs across the different departments of our operation.

What we've realised through our activity is that there needs to be a clear economic benefit to sustainability, especially in the current economic climate.

A key concept we've been working on at B & Q is the 'One Planet Living' initiative, which is in partnership with sustainable living experts BioRegional.

If everyone in the world consumed resources and emitted CO<sub>2</sub> at the rate the average Brit does today, we'd need the equivalent of three planets to sustain us. We only have one. We've made creating a one planet business the long-term goal for our company, and helping customers to live within a one planet home is a key part of that strategy.

Under the One Planet Living global initiative are 10 guiding principles of sustainability developed by BioRegional and the World Wildlife Fund. These principles are: zero carbon, zero waste, sustainable transport, local and sustainable materials, local and sustainable food, sustainable water, natural habitats and wildlife, culture and heritage, equity and fair trade, and health and happiness.

## WASTE IS A MAJOR ISSUE

One key principle, zero waste, means we're looking at the environmental impact of the packaging we use as a business. Waste is a big issue globally and to date, especially concerning packaging, businesses have developed and shipped based on the notion that waste is free.

With the likelihood of significant taxes on the production of waste and the enforcement of targets for reducing landfill, however, excessive waste will



ONE  
PLANET  
LIVING®

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create compelling reasons to look closely at improving waste management throughout the supply chain. This includes goals to recycle 90 per cent of its waste by 2012, make all its packaging recyclable by 2013, and reduce its waste (by weight) to landfill to under two per cent by 2020.

The way we deal with packaging across our business includes reviewing the planning process for all packaging, and ensuring that all solutions developed use the least packaging required to do



B & Q's trial of a skipless store at Farnborough was a huge success, and the idea has now been extended

the job. For example, in 2007 we revised over 10,000 packaging artworks – and where possible decreased its complexity with really simple changes like using brown unbleached packaging or switching to monomaterials.

The benefits of simple changes such as this range from lower production costs to an easier recycling process and pollution reduction. Finally, and most importantly, our customers make most of their decisions to purchase based on the merits of the product itself at point-of-sale; so, there's no economic argument and a legal obligation not to have overly-complex packaging.

Our specifically-developed One Planet Home range, to help people make it easy to reduce their own environmental impact at home, now includes over 2,000 products – all of which have been independently verified by BioRegional. The packaging used in this range is one of the key criteria for receiving the seal of approval as a One Planet Home product. This gives our suppliers even more incentive to develop sustainable packaging solutions.

## A REUSABLE SOLUTION

A good example of the all-round benefits of sustainable retail can be seen in our innovative, environmentally-responsible Carrierpacs, which are a reusable packaging solution for our kitchen worktops. This successful initiative has been recognised by the industry, winning us gold awards in two categories at the annual Starpack event.

Carrierpacs are made from polypropylene with around 45 per cent recycled content, are fully recyclable at the end of their lives, and have delivered reduced product damage and cost savings of over £300,000 a year. They've also prevented 1,100 tonnes of board entering the waste stream annually, and have increased customer satisfaction by enabling first-time delivery through less damage and the elimination of inconvenient recycling of bulky packaging. Thanks to everyone's hard work to make this a success, some of our Carrierpacs have now been used more than 80 times.

## SKIPLESS STORE SUCCESS

We've also been working to reduce waste at store level, and last February began trialling a skipless store at Farnborough. The trial has been a huge success, managing to reduce waste going to landfill by an average of 70 per cent from about 120 tonnes in the same period in 2007 to just over 30 tonnes in 2008. Building on this success, we've also recently rolled this initiative out to trial it at our stores in Western-Super-Mare and Torquay and plan to roll it out further throughout our store estate.

As a leading retailer, we believe we have a responsibility to help our customers live more sustainably – and reducing packaging plays a big part in this. We're working with other retailers to come up with a solution to reduce packaging – joining forces for a more sustainable future.



Starpack-winning Carrierpacs, made of polypropylene, have delivered cost savings of more than £300,000 a year