

Taking a leaf from Konica Minolta SA's sustainability book

While the concept of sustainable development steadily receives growing recognition, many organisations still find it difficult to take this business principle from an abstract form and integrate it into their planning and measurement systems.

By [Laetitia Coetzer](#) 24 Jan 2013

One local company, however, that has managed to weave sustainability - from an environmental, social and economic perspective - successfully into the very fabric of its business practice, is Bidvest company, Konica Minolta South Africa.

The key to sustainability becoming a priority for Konica Minolta South Africa was to change the mindset of our staff members so that they understood that sustainable business practices encompass much more than just the environment.

The economy, society and the environment

The three interdependent elements of sustainability are the economy, society and the environment, and a business needs to meet the requirements of all three to be considered sustainable.

From an environmental point of view, Konica Minolta South Africa has put a number of initiatives into practice, which all contribute to its status as a "carbon neutral" business, this aside from its environmentally conscious products. The recycling programme in place at its Joburg head office and sales branch, in conjunction with Hands-on-Waste, has resulted in less than one-third of the company's total waste generated being taken to landfill.

Furthermore, Desco Electronic Recyclers, as a preferred service provider of Konica Minolta South Africa, dismantles and recycles end-of-life electronic equipment, with Certificates of Destruction issued for 54 636 kg of equipment over the 2011/2012 financial year.

In order to use less fuel for travel, it has put effective and efficient route planning in place for all branches, using functionalities available within its SAP ERP system. Launched nationwide in December 2012, the new mobility solution allows a faster turnaround time on calls as our engineers have immediate access to more detailed information on the problem, including error codes and spares needed, before they are dispatched, thereby removing any diagnostic guess work on site and fewer site visits.

The organisation has also received final approval from Eskom to subsidise a planned energy saving project, which involves the replacement of conventional high-intensity discharge (HID) fluorescent tubes with T5 linear fluorescent lamps that employ a high-performance aluminium reflector system. All lighting at the company's head office, Joburg branch and respective warehouses has already been replaced, resulting in a usage saving of 54.6kW, according to an onsite inspection conducted by Eskom and Galaxy Projects. In addition, an energy management system has been installed by TST Power Utility Forensics, which will provide a monthly comparison on consumption, power factor and phase balancing.

New highs

What's more, Konica Minolta South Africa's corporate social initiative (CSI) programme has reached new highs during the 2011/12 financial year, with more than R1 million being donated to the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) African Rhino Programme and the conversion of a light commercial vehicle into a mobile library, entrusted to The Edu-Care Foundation, providing children who do not have access to books in their schools and communities with the opportunity to improve their literacy skills.

Our Life Starter Programme, in which we pay all school fees and related expenses on behalf of historically disadvantaged learners identified in Grade 10, has seen another successful year assisting two Joburg students and one learner in Port Elizabeth.

Konica Minolta South Africa has also donated 3000 trees, through the Food and Trees for Africa programme, to the residents of Lotus Gardens in Pretoria, Entokozweni in Nelspruit and Thembaletu in George. These trees will provide other environmental and social benefits, such as preventing water runoff and erosion, providing shade and shelter, and beautify the neighbourhoods. All of the trees donated have been planted and Food and Trees for Africa has trained community educators on how to look after the trees, basic climate change, the benefits of trees and clean and green suburbs, as well as the value of trees and how to plan and maintain this wonderful natural resource.

Konica Minolta South Africa is passionate about meeting and surpassing its social and moral obligations. We truly believe doing whatever is possible to ensure a sustainable future for South Africa, at whatever level that might be.

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