



‘Aim high or don’t bother’: A leading bank tackles climate change

Client’s objectives

Carbon Smart has been working with a leading bank based in the heart of London on ISO 14001 compliance and waste management support for the past 6 years. Since then, the Sustainability Manager in the bank has been continually improving the environmental performance of its London sites, so much so that they have now become the flagship sites in terms of sustainability. Having made many steps towards being sustainable over the years, the client was keen to make additional environmental and waste management improvements.

The bank was interested in developing a waste strategy with a significant impact across its sites, yet choosing the right direction to steer the sites next was unclear. To put it in the client’s words: ‘it should be a go-big or go home strategy’. Carbon Smart was asked to develop an ambitious waste strategy with clear and measurable targets as well as a framework to help achieve them.

The project

To understand the current waste management performance of the flagship sites, Carbon Smart carried out a waste audit first to establish the key areas that need to be addressed. These were plastics, food and paper. As often is the case with large offices, the review highlighted that plastics and food waste were causing much confusion amongst staff, with both materials entering all waste streams.

Once the key areas had been identified, we led a **series of workshops** with relevant stakeholders within the bank including facilities and catering teams to further identify the level of ambition and possibilities with the current set-up of the bank. This resulted in developing a set of ambitious targets for each key area. **The targets were in turn linked to the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supporting the bank to align its internal strategy with international development objectives recognised by the international community.** Each goal was linked to a framework, which included a set of prioritised actions to help the bank meet the three targets set for each material.

Project’s impact

The bank has now officially adopted the waste strategy which focuses on three key pillars. Each target will help the bank to improve its waste management and achieve a meaningful impact, which include:

1. **Plastics:** phasing-out all single-use plastics from the bank’s restaurants - the bank aligned itself with the UN’s SDG to protect ocean life, aimed at making a significant reduction of plastics used. To achieve that, the bank is now embarking on a mission to **phase-out any single-use plastics by 2020** and replacing them with reusable or compostable materials



2. **Food waste:** the bank is implementing a proactive food waste campaign which aims to engage all staff in reducing food waste as well as on how to set up the waste infrastructure. This aims to achieve a 50% reduction in food waste by 2020
3. **Paper:** using ONLY sustainably sourced paper products across the bank's branches. This means that all paper based products will be either recycled or come from a sustainably managed forest.

Following Carbon Smart's recommendations, the bank is currently improving the food waste caddies and promoting this effort using clear and effective signage across the branches. The bank has also launched a few communication campaigns in order to increase employees' awareness and flag key issues that need to be addressed. By focusing on the material issues that banks are facing when it comes to sustainability, and setting clear targets and a strategy to achieve them, this bank is continuing to champion excellent waste management and stay ahead of its peers.

For more information, please contact:

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