

Roche on a Roll

A Steady Journey Toward Sustainability

By Candace Gwaltney

While some companies dabble in the green movement, Roche Diagnostics continues to grow its well established sustainability initiative.

Seven years ago the company created a sustainability committee to focus its efforts, explains Kevin Gara, director of safety, health and environmental protection at Roche. Since then it has made significant strides in reducing energy consumption, increasing recycling and involving employees in sustainability efforts.

"It's not an overnight thing," Gara notes. "In fact, we like to think of it as a journey that we're on toward sustainable development. We make incremental progress."



The safety, health and environmental protection department at Roche Diagnostics assists customers in making informed decisions that focus on a sustainable culture and environmental excellence.

In 2008 alone, the Indianapolis facility recycled 568 tons of cardboard, 243 tons of paper, 21 tons of plastic and 70 tons of cans and bottles.

That's approximately one ton of recycled material for every four employees on campus (Roche employs about 3,900 workers onsite and 1,500 in the field). The recycling rate of general materials

increased from near 25% five years ago to 50% last year.

"We have a very strong employee participation component," Gara adds. "In fact, I think in a sense we've reached a critical mass where it tends to feed on itself a little bit where people are coming up with their own ideas."

For example, workers have offered recommendations to reduce packaging so less material is needed. A poster in each conference room provides simple guidance for holding a sustainable meeting. Tips include turning off the lights after leaving the room and recycling materials used during the meeting.

This spring the information technology department offered employees a smart travel fair. Employees learned about options that would reduce waste – both in energy and productivity. Booths provided information about video and audio conferencing and other ways technology can be a benefit.

Energy initiatives

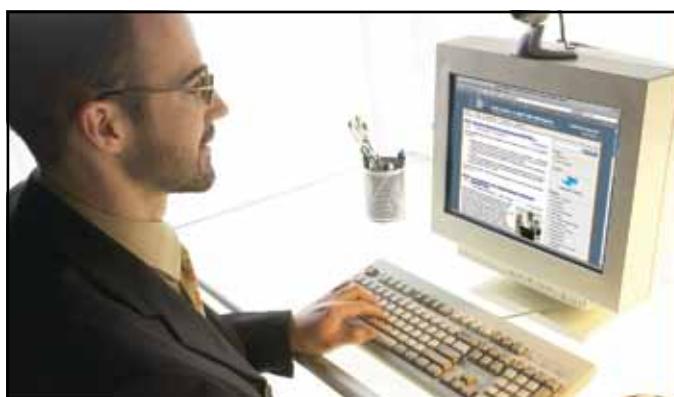
Those are just some ways Roche Diagnostics is working to meet its sustainability goals. The company hopes to reduce energy consumption per employee by 10% by 2010 (the program began in 2005), Gara asserts. Other efforts strive to decrease environmental impact, lower the accident rate and limit absences due to better health or lifestyle choices.

Metrics help the company figure out where it stands in energy consumption and how to reduce waste. Roche was able to save \$18,000 in yearly energy costs after analyzing usage in just one of its buildings, Gara shares.

Still, the company faces challenges. Since the economic downturn, it receives a much smaller return for its recycled cardboard – translating to less money for new sustainability programs, Gara surmises.

INFORMATION LINK

Resource: Kevin Gara, Roche Diagnostics, at www.roche-diagnostics.us



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