

# Targeting Sustainability

You probably don't realise it, but there are companies and people out there, working behind the scenes and without fanfare, that are pushing the envelope as far as setting targets for sustainable products and services goes. One such is Kimberly-Clark Corporation. You may never have heard of them until a moment ago, but if you've used a public loo of virtually any description in recent years, then you've almost certainly used their products.

This company, maybe best known as the makers of Kleenex tissues, launched its global environmental program as far back as 1995 to 'improve sustainability in our products and processes, making the corporation a pioneer in this field,' says Operations Director Mark Russell.

Their program sets out ambitious goals for reductions in energy and consequently in carbon dioxide emissions as well as the reduction of water usage, landfill and packaging wastage. A significant multi-national player, Kimberly-Clark has two manufacturing facilities in South Africa and, says Russell, the company continues to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability in the following ways:

- Reducing energy consumption (and thereby CO<sup>2</sup> emissions) by improving energy efficiencies through various projects over the past 13 years, resulting in a 24% reduction in energy usage per ton of tissue produced – enough to power 2000 homes for a year. The corporation has ambitious plans to cut this amount by a further 29% over the next five years.
- Reduced fresh water consumption by improving process efficiency over the same period, resulting in a 20% reduction in water usage per ton of tissue produced, a saving equivalent to 260 Olympic-size swimming pools. Plans are afoot to reduce this by a further 10% over the next five years.
- Reduced the waste sent to landfill by 70% since 1995 – Kimberly-Clark now sends less than 2% of the waste that it generates to landfill. Among the most significant of their sustainability undertakings is the 'sludge to bricks' project, which alone accounts for a reduction in landfill of 50%. This, in turn, has the added advantage and benefit of reducing the energy required to fire bricks, as well as reducing the actual weight of the bricks by 20%, which means another saving in CO<sup>2</sup> emissions because of improved transportation efficiency. As an added benefit, the thermal insulation property of the 'slug bricks' is vastly

improved, which, in turn, means that a lot less energy is required for heating the homes or offices built with them.

During 2008, Kimberly-Clark collected an average of 5 000 tons of waste paper per month. For each ton of paper that is recycled, 3m<sup>2</sup> of landfill space and 17 trees are saved, sufficient energy is saved to provide electricity to 512 homes for a year, there is a reduction in coal-based emissions of 1.8 tons of CO<sup>2</sup>, 10kg of sulphur dioxide (SO<sup>2</sup>) is not emitted and water consumption is reduced by 50% and waste water by 35%, which equates to a reduction of 8m<sup>3</sup> of waste water discharges.

These measures have resulted in Kimberly-Clark South Africa achieving ISO 14001 International Environmental Accreditation for its manufacturing facilities, which, says Russell, gives consumers the reassurance that you are partnering with a company which takes sustainability seriously. This is all in line with the company slogan on sustainability: Reduce today, respect tomorrow.

In addition to its ISO14001 certification, Kimberly-Clark SA is taking environmental sustainability a step further by becoming Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified, for which it is currently undergoing assessment.

'This is in accordance with the requirements of international customers, who also want assurances that their chain of supply is in the loop,' says Russell.

With Kimberly-Clark SA owning the largest waste paper recycling plant in Southern Africa, they are able to transform the lowest grades of waste paper into useable products, recycling some 250 tons of waste paper each day. The company says it is being FSC approved in two categories:

**Mixed** – for products containing virgin fibre originating from FSC-certified forests, or products using a combination of virgin fibre and recycled waste paper; and

**Recycled** – for products containing 100% recycled waste paper. **SG**

**HOW GREEN IS YOUR OFFICE?** Your office offers yet another step in the process of going green Kimberly-Clark Professional is calling on its distributors and end users to discuss how they can help them along the path towards meeting their sustainability objectives. They are asking you if they can assist you with your workplace waste paper recycling efforts. This will include your hand towel waste as well as your office paper waste. 'Wally Wastenot', the face of the company's waste collection drive, will be encouraging you to recycle your paper. To this end, Kimberly-Clark will be making bins available for its waste paper recovery program.

