

This Corporate Responsibility Framework represents an important step forward for VOW Wholesale. We are focussed on continuing our leadership of the market. Yes, we will be driving evolution, not revolution, but the changes we make will be wholesale and the benefits we deliver will be meaningful. This is more than just doing the right thing; it is about changing our culture and ensuring we have significant positive impacts upon all of our stakeholders.



www.vowwholesale.co.uk

EVOLUTION

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Our Environment



Our Supply Chain



Our Communities



Our People



DRIVING WHOLESALE CHANGE

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Adrian Butler

VOW Wholesale
Managing Director

Here at VOW Wholesale we are all proud of our company's heritage, having originally been established in 1852. Today we are the UK's largest Business Supplies wholesaler, with a stockholding in excess of £50m, over 350 vehicles within our own fleet and make over 18,000 successful deliveries each day.

As market leaders, we have the ability to reach the entire B2B business-critical supplies market providing a fully joined-up service. We believe that leaders should be responsible and work hard to ensure they are doing the right thing. That is why we have developed a Corporate Responsibility Framework to ensure a consistent and impactful approach across the business .

Our framework includes clear plans to act positively to protect the environment, improve well-being in all our workplaces and enhance the Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) performance of our supply chains; as well, as playing a full part in our local communities. We are going to start with the things we already do well and build them into an integrated programme that will have good governance and solid foundations. We have set ourselves targets, and will measure our performance against these to continue to be an accountable and transparent business.

We are in a position to evolve the market and drive wholesale change. The strength of our commitment comes from a recognition that 'doing the right thing' is the right thing to do. Moving forward, for VOW Wholesale and resellers to continue to thrive, we all need to operate in a way that is environmentally sustainable, reflects the changing expectations of our clients and respects our complex and diverse society. This means that, when we talk about our corporate responsibility, we mean the way in which our business sets strategy, makes decisions and engages with people.

Our operational aims:



Environmental Sustainability



Reflecting changing customer expectations



Respecting our complex and diverse society

How it connects





Our Natural Environment

Preserve & Protect

Discussions about how to better protect the natural environment have moved higher up the public agenda and this issue has long been on VOW Wholesale's radar. From single use plastics to greenhouse gas emissions, more people than ever understand the importance of protecting the environment, and we continue to play our part.

At VOW Wholesale we believe it is in everyone's interests - our customers, our employees and the global community's - to dedicate our time to finding ways to ensure a more positive environmental impact. It's the right thing to do. Being protective of our natural environment will help our customers to succeed, deliver better quality workplaces for our people and support our wider communities.



We have a large environmental footprint within our direct control and we are making a shared commitment to drive consistent, positive change.



All our warehouses across the UK are zero waste to landfill, which means all our waste is recycled.

We drive down our overall waste by providing recycling facilities across all our sites, this includes recycling all broken pallets through a dedicated supplier. We're identifying the current waste disposal routes, communicating them to everyone internally and encouraging innovation to design waste out of our system.

As part of our aim to reduce single-use plastics by 10% before 2022, VOW Wholesale has introduced eco-friendly packaging throughout its warehouses. The new packaging fill of recycled cardboard is used for small pick parcels, of which we deliver 6,000 a week.



Energy efficiency measures, such as LED lighting, have been introduced and other low energy devices are also being rolled out across our workplace.

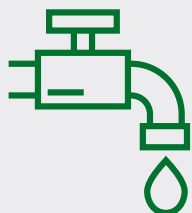


We also work with our customers to find innovative ways to reduce waste, such as our battery, toner and furniture recycling services.

Achieving the industry standard certificate, ISO 14000, demonstrates our commitment to designing and implementing an effective environmental management system.

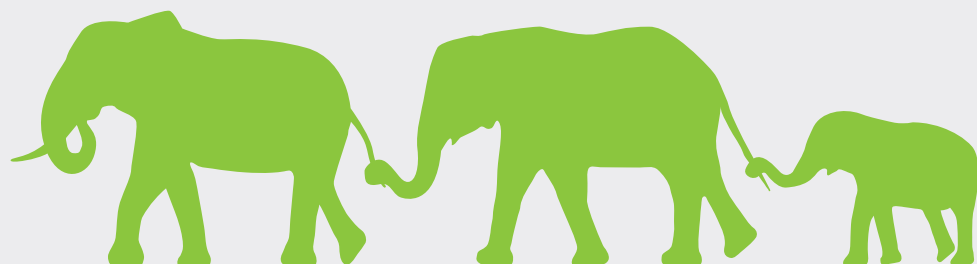


Investing in our delivery fleet is an ongoing focus. During 2020 we are continuing the process of **replacing all our vehicle fleet with the latest fuel and emission efficient diesel engine**. The expectation is that these vehicles will deliver up to a **7% improvement in mpg**.



We are installing **water usage efficiency measures** wherever possible in our operation. We've introduced water meters and run education campaigns to **reduce water usage**. Additionally, we have set ourselves a challenge to reduce dependency on potable water for our toilets and gardens.

By recycling our used or damaged cardboard boxes into shock absorbent netted material, we are currently shredding and recycling over **16,000 cubic square metres** of cardboard per year, which is equivalent to the space needed for **3,200 Asian elephants!**



Our targets

By the end of **2022** VOW Wholesale will have:

Reduce the consumption of single-use plastics by

10%



Maintain zero
waste to landfill

By the end of **2022** VOW Wholesale will have:

Reduce electricity and gas consumption by
30%



Reduce our water use by 10%



Reduce waste by
20%



Increase biodiversity at our sites

Reduce greenhouse gas production by

20%



Our Supply Chain

Trust & Transparency

VOW Wholesale's client relationships and understanding of market preferences, along with strong partnerships with our suppliers and manufacturers make us the market leader.

This leadership role puts us in a unique position with regard to ensuring appropriate standards, influencing behaviour and increasing the transparency of our supply chain. Although our supply chain is highly complex, it is the most significant part of our environmental footprint and social impact. For this reason we are committed to exerting the correct levels of control - selling products that have been produced illegally or unethically is not just the responsibility of the supplier, it is ours too. Unlike some online retailers, we will not tolerate counterfeit or substandard products.



Responsible sourcing

Our supply chain is highly complex, and it is the most significant part of our environmental footprint and social impact. Ensuring the right levels of control is vitally important.

The standard of goods is not the sole responsibility of our suppliers, and we do not accept products that have been produced illegally, unethically, are counterfeit or of inferior quality.

We work to gain a thorough understanding of our extended supply chain, including how our suppliers operate and ensuring all products meet appropriate standards. We will risk assess products on the origins of the manufacturer, the location of the distributor, the category of product and the volume we take.

At VOW Wholesale our preference for **suppliers who offer high environmental and ethical trading standards** goes alongside a continual drive to source sustainable and ethical product ranges.

Other ranges include biodegradable plastic cutlery, recycled plastic desktop and filing products, and a **new copier paper from the Woodland Trust**, which is produced using energy from waste material and involves no carbon dioxide.

We offer Ecolabel cleaning products, which have to pass strict tests, on biodegradability, packaging to in-use ratio and performance, to achieve accreditation. We recently introduced Clover Eco five-litre containers, which reduce packaging waste by dispensing more, thus using less of them.

3,000 of our products carry a recognised eco label. We evaluate sustainable products by:

- **Product lifecycle**
- **Product accreditations**
- **Company accreditations**





Our Supply Chain

Trust & Transparency

Tackling modern slavery

VOW Wholesale is committed to eradicating modern slavery throughout its supply chains, in line with our disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.



All our suppliers are subject to our **Anti-Slavery Policy**, which has been built into their contracts with VOW Wholesale. As part of our contracting process, we include specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children. It is **mandatory for all suppliers to sign this commitment**, which is contractually binding.

We **strive** to ensure that non EU manufacturers of our private label products have been **audited to set standards**, including confirmation that they comply with the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code.

We also employ staff in the Far East to visit factories unannounced to **conduct snap inspections of working conditions** and report any issues to our merchandising team. We insist that any required **corrective action is undertaken** promptly and effectively, or we will no longer use the factory in question.

We include specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour.

Our targets

By the end of **2021** VOW Wholesale will have:



increased the number of environmentally friendly product ranges

Established a **comprehensive database** of the ethical credentials of our entire range and supplier base





Our Communities

Respect & Relationships

VOW Wholesale is committed to an active and inclusive engagement with the local communities across our sites and within which many of our colleagues live. We are active members of industry associations, including BOSS Federation, and actively support industry events such as the Climb of Life and Ride of Life.

We have signed long leases on our major warehouses bringing employment stability to many families in the surrounding areas.

We have industry competitive rates of retention and strive to offer our VOW Wholesale workforce opportunities to improve their skills and advance within VOW Wholesale.



We are building relationships with national charity partners that support each of our four pillars and which operate on a regional basis so that all colleagues have the opportunity to engage.

We support initiatives to utilise the apprentice levy and encourage staff to get involved in local charity and fund-raising activities.

We partner with Sheffield Business Together initiative to give back to local charities in the Sheffield Area.

Our targets for 2020

Donate 1000
volunteering hours
to not for profit
organisations

Increased our monetary
and non monetary
donations by

10%



VOW Wholesale Marketing Team team volunteering at Bluebell Wood

Bluebell Wood is a home from home for families facing the toughest of times, with eight bedrooms as well as bedrooms for parents also. Every day, the charity needs to raise £11,000 to remain open, and only around 10% of their funding is from the government. Everything else is paid for by the wonderful work of volunteers.

The day was extremely rewarding for all involved, and it was fantastic to make even a small bit of difference to such an amazing charity.



VOW Wholesale Customer Experience Team spent the day volunteering at Wakefield Hospice! They spent their time restoring benches, gardening and a spot of DIY!



Our People

Workplace & Wellbeing

The culture of VOW Wholesale encourages people to be the best they can. We recognise that our business will only create value if we have engaged, healthy colleagues working in good quality environments with access to appropriate levels of training and development.

We aspire to 'live' a positive culture where colleagues, customers and suppliers respect each other and their surroundings, regardless of religious background, cultural heritage or gender.

We take the aspects of 'wellbeing' seriously and understand that wellbeing goes beyond just 'wellness', important as that is. It's a complex blend of the physical, psychological, social and relationship aspects of employees' working lives.

A series of initiatives are already in place and available to our employees;

- Lifeworks: Our Employee Assistance Programme provides emotional and practical support every day, for every issue
- Pension & insurance schemes
- Flexible working including home working
- Management 'open door' policy



Our targets

In **2020** VOW Wholesale will:

Invest
10,000 hours
in training

Invest a minimum of
£200,000
in training and development



Our targets

Training

Some of the ways we do this include:

- **Percipio:** Our new e-learning training and development platform which holds a vast number of online courses, books and video's on an array of professional development topics.
- Ongoing appraisals and personal development plans
- Lunch and learn sessions
- Management training
- 300 operational team members trained in 20 different skills using a site skills matrix
- Shop floor to top floor programme, with 95% of our warehouse leaders starting on the shop floor.

Safety

We are pleased to hold OHSAS18001 accreditation, but we also recognise that managers and employees are vital to our health and safety. **We believe strongly that everyone has a legal duty to co-operate in safety related matters** and we make compliance with our safety procedures

Diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities

As an **equal opportunity employer**, VOW Wholesale is committed to observing employment legislation and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

VOW Wholesale is a Disability Confident Employer, which means **we are committed to recruiting, retaining and developing disabled people** and those with health conditions.

All employees and job applicants are given equal opportunity irrespective of their sex, sexuality, culture, race, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, age and any other factor.

We are committed to treating all our colleagues equally and fairly and in line with the Government's commitment to tackle gender inequality, VOW Wholesale will publish data showing the pay gap between our male and female employees.

We're investing in our people by recruiting the best and **training them to be even better.**

