



Name of Organisation: Pallas Foods

Introduction

Pallas Foods has evolved into one of the leading food service distributors in Ireland under the leadership of the Geary family since the 1980s. Pallas Foods now part of Sysco since March 2009. Sysco are an Irish company that provide integrated business solutions to organisations that work. It employs fifty people in Ireland. Pallas Foods employ five hundred people that are mainly Irish and local in my hometown of Newcastle West and its neighbouring villages. They currently service over seven thousand customers with more than seven thousand products. One can only imagine the amount of waste involved in this organisation every day.



Pallas Foods use different tactics to work towards a better environment. They use responsible sourcing which means they source their fish in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner. Their packaging is required to be manufactured using a minimum of thirty-five per cent post-consumer waste. They also:

- Conserve energy by introducing timers and sensors on lighting throughout the warehouse and efficiency was increased by reducing open accesses on refrigerating and freezing.

- Operate a hundred and thirty eight vehicle fleet, which is equipped to achieve the highest standards of efficiency.

But Recycling and waste disposal was where the problem arose. When I researched this organisation, I found on its website that it had implemented companywide conservation and recycling programme in warehouse operations and the administrative function. It also said that cardboard is collected at the point of delivery and returned to Pallas Foods for recycling and all plastic and organic waste was segregated for recycling. It also said that the organisation had established a Recycling Committee. All these implementations seemed very environmentally sustainable and looked as though they were playing their part. But to my advantage I personally knew a Supervisor there who is in fact a member of the Recycling Committee. I shared and discussed my research with him and asked him to elaborate:

- He told me that the Recycling committee was made up of him and one other lady, who he had spoken to her two to three times about the committee in the last six months.
- We then discussed the recycling situation. He said that customers would have to ask the distributor to take the cardboard, cardboard and organic waste at the time of delivery, which means the customer would have to worry about being forward.
- He told me 'in his honest opinion' that the research I had gathered from the web was somewhat exaggerated.
- Lastly he said that during my assignment, not to reveal what I know about the organisation's information.

Aside from these minor issues this organisation has been great to our town in employment, status and sponsorship so it is in my best interest to attempt on contributing to improving these minor flaws.

My Plan

- To encourage the recycling committee to assign at least three more members and have meetings at least once a week, either before or after their shifts to discuss domestic matters and how they could improve them environmentally.
- Next I got an email address of the supervisor I know and emailed Mr. Geary who is the commercial director of Pallas Foods. In this I told him about my assignment and how I would like to get involved in the environmental issues of sustainable recycling at Pallas Foods. I also asked him the possibility of his employees collecting the cardboard, plastics and organic waste on deliveries. I told him that his organisation had delivered to a member of my family recently and left her with all of the packaging. To my surprise I was very pleased with the reply from his secretary.

- Lastly, I would like to visit the organisation on a working day and get a better understanding of how much waste and packaging is produced on a daily basis and how broad the topic is.

I know my challenge will not be an easy one and feel that because of my plan and how enthusiastic it is, my challenge will most likely not be fully concluded but I intend to try my best.

Email

Mr. O Sullivan,

Thank you for your email and choosing us in your college assignment. Mr Geary was extremely pleased to hear that a local student would volunteer to assist in the environmental issue here at the factory.

In your email, you acknowledge our cardboard contract with customers and all supervisors are frequently asked to collect cardboard on deliveries and Mr Geary was appalled to here that your family was left with our cardboard packaging but this is not the first complaint we have got on this issue. Mr Geary has taken it as a main priority to collect all cardboard delivered otherwise penalties such as suspension will be played on the delivery men. Also Mr Geary would like for you to come visit the factory on Saturday the 10th of March, if at all possible.

Please email back your decision on the visit as we would have to have you in the sign in book. So from all of us here we wish you the best of look with your assignment and if you have any more anymore enquiries please get back to me.

Hope to hear from you soon,
Yours thankfully,
Miss Lisa Moore.

My Challenge

The challenge of Pallas Foods is a lot broader and more hands on than my recent challenge.



I started with talking with the supervisor at his house and discussed expanding the committee and making it more consistent and legit. He agreed with me and eventually we came to an agreement. We decided that because of the fact we know many of Pallas Foods employees in the town, so we could ask them to join the committee. It was a slight long shot but worth the effort. My first candidate was my brother-in-law who works in the fridges at Pallas foods. I discussed it with him and he was not too convinced but I told him it would just be as a trial. So after a shake of hands and a couple of nights babysitting my nephew, he agreed.

My second candidate was my Gealic Football manager who is also a supervisor there. He agreed with what I had to say and decided to join because he said “that if we improve our sustainability, because of our success smaller, local organisations will follow and it also improve public relations.” He is a ‘living legend’ in our town.

My last candidate was my girlfriend’s brother, who is a driver for the organisation. I discussed with him how beneficial volunteer work is especially environmental work but he declined because he said he was always too busy. He would not be my biggest fan as of the relationship I am in. But I am still extremely happy with two more members to the Recycling Committee.

The supervisor and I then set out to consider the best time for a meeting during the week and what time would suit each member’s rosters. Thursday evening at seven in the evening seemed to be the only reasonable time for them all except my football manager who said he had our football training at half seven but needed to open the gates and set up the drills before the training. So in return I decided that I would collect the keys and ask him what specific drills to set up and arrive to training early, that way my manager could attend the Recycling Committee meeting and go to training a couple of minutes late.

My next step was to ask my family member from recently, to order her regular products earlier than usual and see if the delivery man would collect the packaging. Three days later when he arrived and on his departure he offered to take the packaging. He referred to it as a new scheme that Pallas Foods were undertaking. She was delighted and so was I. At this stage I was looking forward to my visit to the organisation, to see firsthand this huge asset to Newcastle West.

The 10th of March came about and I was almost nervous before arriving because I was under the impression that whatever I had tried to achieve, had faded away and things were back to the same phase as before my challenge. I arrived at Pallas Foods and was surprised with the actual size of the building itself as I had never drove the perimeter of the place and I first noticed the mountains of pallets stacked around the building and seen a bin full of unopened jars in boxes and so on.



At this stage I really felt my trip was pointless. I met then with the supervisor who helped my recently and he brought me to a storage room where he showed me some pictures of the yard a month or so before hand. They had sheds full of rubbish and they were split up into shed A, B and C.

This was one of the sheds.



After this he brought me to these three sheds and showed me what the committee had achieved. The contrast in capacity and organisation was immense.

- All the cardboard was nicely packed together instead of untouched cardboard that was taking up space.



- The plastic was compressed together and looked much better than the photos I had been shown. They stacked in rows waiting for collection the following day.



- The committee for its effort were given a grant only a couple of weeks before my visit. With this they brought in recycling containers and manual compressing machines which reduced waste capacity and decreased carbon emissions as no fuel was needed for the compressor. He told me that they

were planning on getting more manual machines with this annual yearly grant.



- Then he showed me the amount vehicles involved there on a daily routine and how the committee and himself discussed the issue of emissions and how they could be more reduced as the vehicles already had highly efficient engines. He brought me to the main building and showed me the routes the vehicles had to take. The committee decided to have the delivery truck drop other products to warehouses closer to the customers and deliver their load all on the same journey. This reduces driving time which in turn reduces carbon emissions.



- Lastly he told me that my brother-in-law was not making meetings so he eventually left. But just then he introduced me two more recruited members of the committee. I thanked him several times as I knew he had put much effort into this committee and left Pallas Foods a lot more relieved than when I first arrived.

I was ecstatic after my visit mostly because of the impact the committee had and the attitude they took towards environmental affairs at Pallas Foods. In my opinion, I had very little to do comparing to the committee and how they met more than my expectations. I was a little disappointed about my brother-in-laws disappearance from the committee. But

overall I am delighted with the outcomes of my challenge and amazed with how this one good deed can feel. I am hoping to get involved in much more challenges like this one in the future.

Results of my challenge

- Firstly, this challenge enhanced my writing, social and organisation skills but it also was a great boost to my confidence because of the feeling of achievement.
- Next is the fact that it brought four colleagues together to make close friends who volunteer their time for a good cause.
- My challenge also reduced carbon emissions, waste at landfills and created more recycled materials.
- This challenge reduced road traffic and contributed to the organisation receiving a yearly grant.
- It allowed me to interact with a great organisation and some great people also, who really gave it their all and I could not have looked for more.
- I now arrive to training a half an hour early and have stopped babysitting for my brother-in-law.
- Lastly from this challenge I have a great feeling of accomplishment which I believe has sparked a longing for this kind of job prospects.

Conclusion

I have taken a lot from this challenge and have got a great understanding of the term sustainable and how it is achievable. For example, I spoke with an employee of an organisation who cared for the environment and future generations and just by helping assemble a small committee, great things arose from our conversation. This transaction is what makes it all worthwhile.

This assignment has given me an understanding as to where we stand as humans and how little by little does make the difference, it is just about having the right attitude and people around you that have a passion and love for what they want to do and accomplish. It is a step by step process but after the success of my challenge I honestly believe that sustainable development is very much achievable for our little, overcrowded globe, we just need the right challenge, the right attitude and most importantly the right people.

