

Welcome to
EVOLUTION

VOW

Doing the right thing

It is our responsibility

It is VOW's commitment to offer every organisation in the UK and Ireland a wide range of business supplies, when they need them, at the best value and quality of customer experience available. Through VOW, we market, sell and distribute everything required in vibrant and effective workplaces.

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 that 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 will set ourselves targets, measure performance and 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 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.

How it connects

Our Natural Environment

Environment Policy
ISO 14001
FSC accreditation
FORS accreditation

Our Supply Chain

Modern Slavery Act Policy and Statement
Health and Safety Policy
Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy
Quality Policy
ISO 9001
PCI Accredited
Cyber Essentials Accreditation

Our Responsibility

EVOLUTION
VOW

Our People

Health and Safety Policy
Drug and alcohol Policy
Family Friendly Policy
Whistleblowing at Work Policy
Off Payroll Workers Policy
ISO 9001
ISO 18001 & 27001

Our Community

Tackling Tax Evasion Policy
Information Security Policies
ISO 9001
ISO 18001 & 27001
FORS Accreditation
Members of Social Value UK

Our Supply Chain

Trust & Transparency

VOW'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 on-line retailers, we will not tolerate counterfeit or substandard products.

We already have strong policies and governance but transparency means gaining real visibility into our extended supply chain – understanding the way in which suppliers operate and ensuring products meet appropriate standards. We have, therefore, embarked upon a risk based assessment based on the origins of the manufacturer, the location of the distributor, the category of product and the volume we take.

Our approach to supply chain management will go beyond the requirements of our ISO accreditations and represent a commitment to have, by 2021, drawn up a comprehensive overview of our entire supply chain which will allow us to embark upon a process of risk led assessment. In this way we can keep the promises we make to our clients, protect our brand and ensure we can be proud of the legacy we are creating.

One of the most significant parts of our environmental footprint is our operations model and VOW is committed to continual improvement to support the environment. As part of this commitment we have recently introduced a number of initiatives in our Arrow warehouse including:

- The introduction of a third box size for customer deliveries, creating less waste as it ships less fresh air and overall we are delivering in better packaged boxes.
- VOW have also stopped using plastic void fill, we now recycle our cardboard through our investment in a new Shredding machine which creates less plastic and waste across the site.
- Suppliers are now delivering to us in our totes, reducing the amount of waste and packaging for disposal.
- The introduction of Pallet collars to reduce the amount of shrink wrap required for pallets.

Targets

By 2021 establish a comprehensive database of the ethical credentials of our entire range and supplier base

By 2021 we will double the no. of environmental and ethically sourced product ranges

Our Natural Environment

Preserve & Protect

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

Environmental concern has become mainstream. It features around the boardroom discussions of our clients and the general public has woken up to the need to become more responsible as consumers. Creating a positive environmental impact is not just the right thing to do; it will make us a more efficient, cost effective business and will deliver a better quality working environment.

Targets

As part of our commitment to our natural environment we will, upon completing our baseline assessments, focus on the following priorities:

- Reduce our electricity and gas use by 30% on our 2018 baseline by 2022
- Reduce our water use by 10% by 2022
- Reduce our dependency on single-use plastics in our operations (packaging etc.) and office spaces (watercooler cups, catering practices etc.) by 30% respectively by 2020
- Maintain zero waste to landfill and reduce overall waste (by volume) by 20% on 2018 baseline by 2022

- **Increase our biodiversity at our sites**

We will undertake biodiversity and feasibility assessments during 2019 and review possibilities to support increased planting and habitat in VOW locations e.g. insect hotels, bird feeders, planting, vertical gardens and similar. Where possible we will seek to create environments that make a contribution to both bio-diversity and the wellbeing of our people. We will explore the potential to connect this initiative to Third-Sector partner and link it to our own volunteering.

- **Reduce our Greenhouse Gas production by 20% by 2022 (using a intensity ratio of Kg CO2e per £1m turnover)**

- **Innovation**

VOW is committed to innovation and recognises that early stage businesses often find it a challenge to gain 'real world' data by testing innovations in-situ. Where possible, we will make our asset base available for use in research and development so we can lead innovation in logistics and distribution.

Our Communities

Respect & Reputation

VOW is committed to an active and inclusive engagement with the local communities which support our Trading Businesses and within which many of our colleagues live. We are active members of industry associations, including the Boss federation and actively support foundations such as the climb of life.

We have signed long leases on our major warehouses bringing employment stability to many families in the surrounding areas. We focus on the creation of full time roles and continue build a reputation as a preferred employer and an aspirational place to work.

We have industry competitive rates of retention and strive to offer our VOW workforce opportunities to improve their skills and advance within VOW. For instance, new roles are offered to workers across VOW before they are advertised externally.

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

However we do appreciate there is more that can be done. In order to appropriately understand the impact we have on our communities we first need to establish a comprehensive baseline of our activities and impacts. Just like in our natural environment pillar, we are assessing this under broad categories so that 2018 can become our baseline year.

Targets

In 2019 donate 1000 hours to not-for-profit organisations

In 2019 increase monetary and non-monetary donations by 20%

Our People

Wellbeing & Workplace

The culture of VOW 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 are encouraged by the aspiration of VOW to 'live' a positive culture where colleagues, customers and suppliers respect each other and our surroundings, regardless of our 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, therefore, already in place and available to our employees.

- Employee Assistance Programme (Free counselling service called LifeWorks)
- Pension & insurance schemes
- Flexible working including home working
- Management 'open door' policy

Targets

In 2019 increase the number of training hours by 25%

In 2019 we will invest a minimum of £200k in training



Driving Wholesale Change

This Corporate Responsibility Framework represents an important step forwards for VOW. 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.

**VOW**