



In Peoria, an Industrial Graphics Manufacturer Goes for the Green and Exceeds Expectations

Muir Omni Graphics is the small company that could. With 45 employees, the Peoria industrial and fleet graphics manufacturer produces decals and markings that reach the Midwest and beyond. Safety warning decals, reflective school bus decals and corporate identity markings like the Cat® logo on Caterpillar® machines are among the company's signature graphics.

The 47-year-old, family-owned Muir Omni Graphics likes to do things on a big scale, and sustaina-

bility is no exception. A few years ago, a casual talk about environmental awareness spurred a quest for ISO 14001:2004 status and resulted in the company's energetic approach toward protecting the environment.

"This was very employee-initiated," says Rebecca Zentko, Environmental Health and Safety Director. "I think we knew that we could actually do bigger things and that we needed to be more environmental about what we throw away, but it took this conversation to get it going." Zentko appra-

-ched Andrew Muir, president of the company, about creating an environmental task force. "He was immediately on board," she says.

Within a year, Muir Omni Graphics surveyed employees about their feelings toward eco-friendly efforts, developed the Muir Omni Graphics Environmental Management System, educated employees about the system and procedures and acquired ISO 14001:2004 certification.



Caterpillar and Cat are registered trademarks of the Caterpillar, Inc. headquartered in Peoria, IL.

Zentko attributes the successful completion of this in-depth process to total company participation. “You have to have top management support you,” Zentko says. “You also have to have employee engagement. Having a task force of different people throughout the company is helpful.”

To be considered for ISO 14001:2004 certification, a company has to develop and implement policies and procedures that relate to environmental aspects it can control and/or influence. ISO 14001:2004 is available to companies that want to establish, maintain or improve an environmental management system and ensure compliance with their stated environmental policies.

When the task force assessed the Muir Omni’s Graphics current situation, it saw that the company was already taking some really important, environmentally friendly actions. The goal, then, was to make these actions uniform throughout the company and expand the extent of its sustainable practices.



All of the processes the company established - setting up recycling bins for plastic and aluminum, participating in manufacturers’ programs for returning used printer cartridges, finding useful ways of recycling scrap materials - are relevant to the company’s task environmental policy, which takes the acronym REACH: Reduction of waste, Efficient use of resources, Awareness training of environmental impacts and continuous improvements, Compliance of all applicable legislation and regulations, Health and Safety of employees, the community and the earth.

The enhanced environmental policy not only garnered the graphics company ISO 14001: 2004 certification, but provided new ways to reach out to the community.

“We’re scheduled to participate in the Earth Day is Every Day event sponsored by the Peoria County Recycling and Conservation Department. We will be working with third graders in the area where we’re taking scraps and inspiring some imaginative stories and projects,” Zentko says. Muir Omni Graphics currently reports its recycling efforts to the Peoria Recycling Conservation Department in an effort to illustrate its commitment to local environment.





Continuous improvement is an ongoing goal for the company as it finds ways to maximize its recycling efforts. “We do have challenges,” Zentko says. “One of our biggest scraps is vinyl. At this point, we have been unsuccessful in finding someone who’s interested in trying to recycle it, so it goes to a landfill. But we try to make connections with others who could use the material.”

Regular employee meetings keep everyone on page with the program and communicate current or new recycling goals. It takes a team effort to make recycling and sustainability work, Zentko says. “The truth of recycling is it’s a little bit of work, but it’s worthy work.”



Muir Omni Graphics has more than 40 years of experience providing turnkey production and management solutions for OEM markings and decals, fleet and corporate vehicle markings, corporate identity, control panels and fascias, warning labels and signage, and specialty graphics. The company serves the off-highway, construction, transportation, and farm equipment markets. More information is available at www.MuirGraphics.com