



## 14 Best Practices

*Gathered from 2008 Award Candidates*

We are committed to environmental excellence in all of our business activities—from the design of our products and manufacturing processes to instilling high environmental values in all our employees. We have increased employee awareness and involvement in our environmental objectives exponentially by:

- Including environmental statements as part of monthly safety training
- Using bulletin boards, murals and signage to make environmental statements
- Keeping employees posted as to the status of our goals
- Recognizing folks who contribute ideas or do good works

**—Bernhardt, Furniture Manufacturer**

We contribute to local communities by acquiring and renovating abandoned buildings to house our showrooms, giving life and preserving the history of our neighborhoods while providing a space for artists, non-profit organizations and community groups to pursue their goals. This includes retail and designer showrooms in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and High Point. After the 1992 Los Angeles riots, our founder Cisco Pinedo decided to keep our manufacturing center in the heart of South Central Los Angeles. It was a risky business decision, but he saw the need to revitalize his ailing childhood neighborhood. The success of the company has been a critical component in the redevelopment of the entire area and has provided training programs and secure employment for many families in the vicinity.

**—Cisco Brothers, Furniture Manufacturer**

Our organizational policies and procedures throughout the company promote recycling and conservation efforts wherever possible. All office and plant employees are encouraged to recycle and reuse paper, plastic, and aluminum, recycle printer ink cartridges, preserve water, and to switch off lights and computers during lunch and at the end of every day. Our management staff regularly holds company-wide meetings, in which we discuss and promote environmentally responsible practices with employees.

**—C.R. Laine, Furniture Manufacturer**

We are systematically reviewing our office and retail-related environmental impacts to reduce our environmental footprint. These actions include:

- Establishing a company-wide recycling program
- Screening all vendors against an agreed list of environmental performance criteria
- Providing incentives for employees to carpool or to purchase hybrid vehicles
- Purchasing carbon offsets equivalent to the emissions generated by employee commuting
- Applying LEED® principles of sustainable design to new buildings
- Adopting environmentally friendly paper use and printing policies

**—Environment Furniture, Furniture Manufacturer**



In 2007-2008, our environmental impact programs included:

- “Waste teams” that identified areas for waste reduction
- Improvements to soil erosion
- Reductions in compressed air usage by identifying and repairing air leaks
- Improved preventive maintenance for boilers
- Increased recycling/repurposing programs
- Adjusted production schedules to better utilize systems that use more energy (i.e. dust collection, air compressors, etc.)
- Improved employee training related to environmental awareness.

**—Hickory Chair, Furniture Manufacturer**

In our warehouse, we only use battery operated loading equipment like forklifts and tow motors to help eliminate fumes and exhausts. At the manufacturing shop, we recycle sawdust for animal bedding and wrap our furniture in blankets during shipping. The air in our staining and finishing shop is exchanged once every minute (far exceeding industry standards) and the air is exhausted through three filters before entering the atmosphere.

**—Homestead House, Furniture Manufacturer and Retailer**

A key factor in our recently built state-of-the-art warehouse is that it was engineered to be cooler and reduce energy consumption. It incorporates skylights to limit the use of artificial light, thermostatically controlled exhaust fans to remove hot air through the roof and draw in cooler outside air, 14-foot high-volume fans to circulate the cooler drawn-in air, and motion detection sensors to control lights in aisles when in use. We are now recycling approximately 95% of all the solid waste produced by our company. The landscaping throughout our company uses low-water maintenance plants, trees, and shrubs. We promote a carpooling program by providing employees a place to communicate and make contact with a potential carpooler(s).

**—Lack’s Valley, Furniture Retailer**

In our upholstery, we now offer high resilient cushions that are 20% soy-based, reducing the amount of petroleum-based ingredients; we use 100% recycled fibers for our back and throw pillows; we use 80% regenerated fibers for our seat decks and trim pads; we use 30% soy-based padding for our arm padding; we offer over 30 organic fabrics, over 500 natural fiber fabrics; we use certified sustainable harvested wood panels for our frames; we use 80% recycled metal for our springs; and we use only water-based stains for our wood finishes. These are not options for our customers—this is the standard product that leaves our manufacturing facility at no additional cost.

**—Lee Industries, Furniture Manufacturer**



Our aggressive reuse/ recycle program for office and production waste includes:

- Wood skids and excess fabrics are donated to charitable causes for reuse and excess wool and latex production scraps are reused to make new products
- Product packaging is made with recycled paper/cardboard and printed with earth-friendly vegetable inks and we have modified all of our retail displays with interchangeable graphics that can easily be updated
- We purchase refillable pens and pencils, non-toxic markers and recycled coffee filters and buy natural soaps and cleaning supplies in bulk
- Coffee, milk and sugar are purchased in bulk and reusable coffee mugs and dishes are used by guests and employees
- We use dry erase boards, projectors and company-wide teleconferencing to reduce the need for paper in meetings and we have automated all of our communications using online ordering, electronic order confirmations, and an electronic proofing/approval process for marketing

**—Naturaworld, Bedding Manufacturer**

Our sustainable approach to the design of work processes, use of eco-friendly materials and energy reduction practices includes:

- Compressed work week systems, use of bio-fuels, and a green procurement policy
- Rainwater collection and water conservation systems
- Use of natural ambient light through the use of skylight roofing and glass windows for buildings and conversion of all incandescent lighting systems to CFL
- Production areas constructed with wide open spaces and high ceilings to provide a well-ventilated workplace without the need for industrial fans

**—Nature's Cast, Furniture Manufacturer**

In addition to nurturing the environment, we believe that giving back to communities around the world is also just as vital. Our support includes:

- Striving to preserve the cultural heritage of craftspeople that help make our products by investing in schools and local arts programs in the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries
- Providing aid during the Asian Tsunami of December 2004, where we made and coordinated donations and supplies to a community of people whose village on Sumatra's Northwest coast had been completely destroyed
- Coordinating and organizing support to victims of 2005's hurricane Katrina through employee contributions, matching corporate donations, and the American Red Cross
- Working with our local fire department and donating a large quantity of home furnishings to victims of the devastating Northern California wildfires of 2008

**—Palecek, Furniture Manufacturer**



It is the policy of all of our distribution centers that we are devoted to recycling as much of our waste stream as possible. We currently recycle over 90% of our total waste stream in the distribution centers and are expanding our program to all of our store sites. Although we generate thousands of tons of waste stream in the annual execution of our business, only a trickle of that ever sees a landfill. We have an Industrial Engineer who works with our general managers to ensure compliance and work with our facilities department to reduce our energy consumption by constant review of our lighting, battery charging, hours of operations, and other details of consumption.

**—Rooms to Go, Furniture Retailer**

In addition to our FRESH™ (Fabrics Redefining Environmental Standards (for) Hospitality) program, we:

- Make recycling mandatory on company premises. This includes using biodegradable trash bags, re-usable plates, utensils and cups
- Influence our supply chain by encouraging low platform manufacturing, exceeding standards for disposal of waste and use of 100% post consumer recycled polyester regardless of the country of origin
- Replaced our roof (damaged by a hurricane) with solar reflective material resulting in up to 50% energy savings per month
- Give thousands of pounds of fabric donations per year to schools and other community outreach programs
- Sponsored an environmental awareness campaign at the largest local South Florida School

**—Valley Forge, Textile Manufacturer- Hospitality**

We are a leader in the “Buy Local” movement and over 99% of our lumber comes from within 500 miles of our factories, with 80% coming from within 200 miles—thereby reducing the carbon footprint of transporting our primary raw material. Our tree replenishment program is designed to replace the trees we use and in 2007 we contributed 150,000 tree seedlings to the Virginia Department of Forestry. Last year we installed a veneer grinder which has eliminated the need to landfill our veneer trim, which amounted to 328 tons last year. In addition to saving us money in tipping fees and diesel fuel for transportation, the output from this grinder can now be used in the replacement of coal fuel or can be sold to a particleboard plant.

**—Vaughan-Bassett, Furniture Manufacturer**