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# Sustainable development as a full strategic approach

## STEELCASE France

In partnership with:

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## Introduction

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### Company's Description:

STEELCASE is the world leader in office furniture. STEELCASE is a global company with approximately 10,400 employees distributed across 20 factories, 850 outlets and centers of developments in Europe, USA and Asia. STEELCASE has a factory in France in Sarrebourg, one in Spain in Madrid, one in Germany in Rosenheim.

Products & Services. For STEELCASE, The science of sustainability is complex and the art is imperfect, but opportunities to create positive change are limitless. STEELCASE recognize that pushing oneself to preserve and renew shared planet is a catalyst for innovation in business as well as product portfolio. Their approach is holistic, research-based and measurable and their commitment is long-term.

STEELCASE aims to reduce their environmental footprint by 25% by 2020 in 2007, Steelcase announced an aggressive environmental strategy to reduce its environmental footprint by 25% until 2012, and then by 25% by 2020.

Made in safe, healthy and sustainable materials, thanks to an in-depth analysis of the chemical composition of products and manufacturing processes - at the molecular level - and evaluation of these products under 19 environmental and health criteria. Moreover the environmental impact of products is minimized through the life cycle analysis (LCA). In 2002, Steelcase Europe was the first company in its sector to systematically approach 'cycle of life' in the design of its products. Finally products are designed to be removed and thus easily recycled. They are available with services for increasing the service life of the product, or making possible a responsible life purpose. The ideal conditions are created for the recycling and reuse of products and materials.

### Sub-sectors affected:

STEELCASE works with hundreds of suppliers to meet our sustainability and lean goals - and theirs partner on critical sustainability initiatives like materials assessment, worker safety, chemicals of concern avoidance and elimination, energy and material reduction and technology and process improvements. Major waste, cost and impact reductions result as they learn from each other and advance new processes and materials.

Working with suppliers is a long term proposition requiring a great deal of collaboration and cooperation, but one that is critical to results. They rely on their supply chain partners to collect information on materials, recycled content, worker processing, and transportation. They created a lean and green program in their manufacturing operations - aimed at eliminating waste, and expanding and further embedding sustainable practices in their facilities as well as their supply chain. Through their work, they aspire to generate momentum and influence change in practice standards through the partnerships they form.

### **Implementation Process:**

STEELCASE +: beyond an approach of good environmental practice including environmental analysis, eco-design and the anticipation of the end of life of products, establishment of a material library. Continuous research of new materials and new technologies of production or assembly, which can feed an ongoing project or inspire a new product. Constitution of a material library internally as well as a subscription to a materials Library online. Materials that allow us to glimpse new forms but above all the new experiences.

### **Initiated practices:**

Vision on the complete life cycle: realization of LCA and environmental labelling (Blauer Engel; NF environment) and indication of origin and species of wood - chain of control - PEFC or FSC labels full of sustainably managed forest.

Choice of the essence of wood based on visual, technical qualities but also supply chain and evaluation of the energy used in the production (Criteria emission in indoor air (rate of VOC and formaldehyde))

Analysis of the chemical formulations of varnishes and additives. (Toxicology) and sensitivity to the reduction of the losses: adjustment of supply to second life for disposal/waste wood internally or externally

### **Results:**

Between 2001 and 2008 : reduction of 64% of the water consumption, reduction of 49% of greenhouse gas emissions, reduction of 71% of waste and reduction of 95% of the emissions of VOCs (volatile organic compounds)

### **Recommendations:**

Today for the dynamics of sustainable development is completely rooted in organization of the enterprise, the Executive Committee must seize this topic to define a strategy long term and ensure its support to the operational teams. Collaborate with competent independent companies to meet the challenge on the development of products and processes.

## Conclusions:

Sustainable development is a full strategic approach for the company, including all partners, purchasers and suppliers.

## More information :

<http://www.steelcase.com>

<http://www.steelcase.com/en/Company/sustainability/Pages/planet.aspx>

## Keywords:

- X Energy
- X Recycling
- X Processes

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