Finding answers and saving money in the complex age of green IT

As the world's largest corporations and governments haggle with technology vendors over how best to deploy more IT with less impact on the environment, some companies play the demanding role of making sense of it all.

CSC is one such consulting and IT services firm. Headquartered in the United States, it had about 91,000 employees and revenue of $16 billion for the 12 months ended April 1, 2011. CSC Australia, established in 1970, has more than 3300 employees and over 50 clients across Australia.

CSC Australia joined the Sustainability Advantage Program in February 2009. The firm already had a sustainability focus, but the Environmental Sustainability Lead at CSC, Charlotte Scallon, says CSC needed more.

'Our projects were ad hoc,' says Scallon. 'We knew we were doing some things well, and we had already made the obvious changes, but we lacked structure. We needed more engagement from the business, and we wanted to know what other areas we could tackle.'
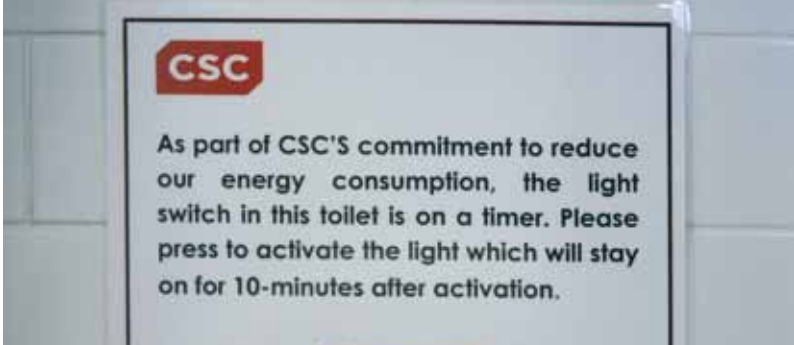
CSC developed a sustainability questionnaire that examines a supplier's social, ethical and environmental performance in addition to their quality and price.

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In brief

IT services firm CSC is at the vanguard of green technology, with plans to work with clients to identify and support sustainable best practices. CSC manages supply chain relationships to ensure responsible procurement, and invests in ways to improve carbon management, waste management, and energy-efficiency in its office buildings and data centres.

By analysing its own sustainability performance in recent years and making some changes, CSC has:

- cut carbon emissions from offices and flights by 23 per cent – over 3000 tonnes– between 2007 and 2010 by reducing its energy use
- achieved further energy savings of $15,000, primarily in car parking and common areas, by working more closely with its building owner
- increased the level of its sustainable office supply purchasing by 24 per cent during 2009/10
- pioneered integrated carbon capture and reporting by using new enterprise resource planning software.

As part of CSC'S commitment to reduce our energy consumption, the light switch in this toilet is on a timer. Please press to activate the light which will stay on for 10-minutes after activation.

▶ The responses to the questionnaire will provide a more holistic view of the supply chain, allowing CSC to identify risks and opportunities.

'Many of our customers are in the resources and financial services sectors and they want to ensure that their suppliers have a certain level of certification in sustainability,' says Derek Millngham, Director of CSC Supply Chain Management and Business Excellence.

'As a result, we're investing considerable time to evaluate our practices and those of our partners to ensure they meet certain standards.'

CSC also incorporated sustainability criteria into its tender process for a new e-waste contractor. The new agreement, signed in March 2010, covers recycling, refurbishing and redeploying the company's old IT hardware. Monitors, desktops, laptops, servers, and printers are now recycled and resold using ISO14001 certified facilities around the world.

At the beginning of 2009, CSC removed three waste bins from each bay of four workstations to reduce the number of plastic bin liners sent to landfill. The firm encouraged staff to scrutinise what items they were recycling and disposing as general waste. CSC reduced the number of bin liners used at its Sydney head office alone by 68,640 in the first 12 months. In 2009, CSC sent over 160 tonnes of food and other waste from its Sydney head office to the Woodlawn Bioreactor where biogas is captured and converted into electricity.

CSC established a resource-efficiency team for its Sydney head office. The team's initiatives – removing bulbs and ballasts from vending machines, and adjusting computer room temperatures – will save about 10 tonnes of CO_2 each year.

CSC pursues continual improvement in resource efficiency in its IT facilities. Today, all CSC's offices and data centres are ISO14001 certified and integrated into the company's environmental management system.

'This investment in processes and procedures is critical to maintaining increased power efficiency in our data centres,' says Scallon. 'The data centres consume vast amounts of electricity. Balancing the growth in computing power with the increased demand for electricity is a major concern for our industry.'

CSC also plans to work with major clients in Australia to help them reduce their carbon footprint. CSC recently piloted a web-based application from SAP that helps companies measure, monitor and report their environmental performance across all operations and product supply chains. CSC has developed a closer relationship with SAP on its sustainability solutions, which allows CSC to offer new expertise to clients.

'We are moving from a purely internal sustainability program to an external program through our supply chain questionnaire and our SAP offering for clients,' says Scallon. 'We want to be at the forefront of sustainable business practices. It is important to us that our employees are proud that they work for a responsible company.

Your next step

To find out how your business can join the Sustainability Advantage Program, contact the team:

Email sustainbus@environment.nsw.gov.au
Call 02 8837 6000
Visit environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus/ sustainabilityadvantage.htm