

B&Q makes the Sunday Times best green companies list

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B&Q has been awarded a place on The Sunday Times Best Green Companies List 2011. The UK's leading home improvement and garden centre retailer made the top 20 coming in at 18th place, thereby reinforcing its commitment to sustainability. It is one of only three retailers to make the list. The award comes as the retailer continues to make significant changes to its operations and to reducing its absolute carbon emissions by 20 per cent, a year ahead of schedule.

In store B&Q has made significant changes to its lighting which has greatly reduced electricity output. Stores have been installing light shafts to increase natural daylight and ensuring that lighting in store is on a timer. B&Q has also created skip-less stores to reduce waste to landfill by 80 per cent. The retailer also continues to reduce packaging and increase the amount of double-decker lorries used to substantially cut road miles.

As well as making the business greener, B&Q is increasingly making it easier for customers to lead greener lives. Earlier this year B&Q became the first major UK retailer to only buy 100 per cent of its wood from well managed forests to ensure that every timber product purchased is Forest Friendly. This milestone was achieved over a 20 year period by the business and is a leader in championing the industry's need to know where its wood is from.

Last summer saw B&Q team up with HRH The Prince of Wales and Project START to create an eco festival. START aims to educate and entertain visitors about how they could cut their carbon emissions in the home and B&Q was on hand to showcase how easily it can be done. The festival was held in the gardens of Clarence House which housed six B&Q installations which each highlighted a way to live a more sustainable life. B&Q is again involved with START this year as it looks to educate the nation on the need to buy only Forest Friendly timber.

As well as this, the company is now a partner of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation which looks at creating fully sustainable, closed-loop product design. B&Q will play a big part in the project as it looks for more sustainable

products for its customers.

B&Q believes that energy saving products should carry a reduced VAT to make them more affordable. The company has been collecting signatures from customers, staff, MPs and celebrities to petition the Government to cut the VAT as the retailer believes that this will encourage customers to choose the greener option. The petition will be presented to Number 10 later this summer.

There are now three eco shops within B&Q stores across the UK which includes Sutton, New Malden and Bolton. The stores within a store are fronted by qualified eco-advisors trained to NVQ level two standard. The specialist advisors offer tips on how customers can lower their eco footprint at home and recommend products from the company's 5,000 One Planet Home eco range.

Euan Sutherland, CEO of Kingfisher UK and Ireland and Chairman of B&Q said:

"Being included in The Sunday Times Green List 2010 is a testament to our employees who are working hard to create a more sustainable environment across all of our stores and HQ. We're especially delighted as we're one of only three retailers to be included on the list and are the only retailer within the DIY industry to be recognised. Our efforts to make it easier for our customers to create greener homes, is also a priority for the team."

The green awards, which are now in their fourth year, aim to celebrate British businesses making a concerted effort to improve their environmental performance. Each company enters one of five contests dependent on their size and whether the business operates in a high, medium or low environmental impact industry. This is verified by environmental experts using the FTSE4Good definitions.

The awards team then survey company employees to find out if all of the procedures are executed throughout the entire company and award the company an overall green rating and rank within the list.