Visual Impressions Demonstrates Commitment to the Environment Through Continuous Improvement

Efficiency is important for a business, and Visual Impressions, Inc. has utilized the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership to become a more efficient company. The garment printing company is located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Visual Impressions, Inc. uses screen-printing, embroidery, and digital direct to garment printing processes to decorate T-shirts, hats, and other apparel. The company services the promotional item industry, and is on track to ship over 40,000 orders in 2015. In March of 2013, the company was first certified by the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP) with about 100 employees.

In March of 2013, the company was first certified by the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP) with about 100 employees. In addition, the company is a member of the Specialty Graphics Imaging Association (SGIA), a trade association for screen printers and digital imaging facilities. SGIA provides its members with the resources they need to become certified by SGP. SGIA is a resource for screen printers to get information about the industry. SGIA encourages its members to be certified by SGP by explaining the benefits and providing guidance in the process of being certified by SGP. Every year, certified members of SGP must complete one continuous improvement project. Visual Impressions Inc. not only has used their SGP certification to create a more sustainable working environment, but to become a more efficient company as well. In fact, Marshall Atkinson, COO of Visual Impressions Inc., says one of the biggest benefits of the SGP certification program is the improved efficiency.

“lt is always interesting to find products that work better or eliminate a step,” Atkinson said. Many of the sustainability projects that the company has been working on have done just that. The main goals of many of these projects have been to improve the quality of products and consumables that go into the products (ink, shrink wrap, etc.). Switching out many of the products used in the production process, such as packing tape and shrink wrap, for more sustainable ones has been a big focus for the company over the past few years. The shrink wrap they used to use, for example, was cheap. But Atkinson says it wasn’t saving them much because you would have to wrap it around a product about three times. The company switched this out for a stretchy, more sustainable shrink wrap that in the end is more cost-efficient. The company also began a recycling program soon after certification in 2013, and currently has recycled over 87 tons of plastic, cardboard, metal and paper. These changes have had a huge impact on costs in the company. Every shirt made has one or more “impressions”, or graphics, put onto it. For every impression, Visual Impressions, Inc. has seen over a 400% reduction in consumables cost. The company’s carbon footprint has decreased by 83%, and energy cost per imprint has decreased by 33%.

One of the projects Visual Impressions, Inc. has been utilizing a process called bioremediation. Bioremediation is a sustainable way to clean the company’s squeegees and flood bars that after they are used during the screenprinting process. The process uses microbes that consume oil, similar to how oil spills are cleaned up in the ocean. Since many inks are petroleum based, this can be a great way to reduce VOCs. The process lowers VOCs because it uses organisms rather than any kind of chemicals. In addition, the byproduct of bioremediation is Carbon Dioxide and Water, so no harmful chemicals are released in the process. With bioremediation, Visual Impressions, Inc. has been able to save money and become a more sustainable company.