

Environment

In association with



Cartridge World

Keeping you
green &
in the black

Recycle revolution

By John Highfield

Making much less of polystyrene

Below: Before and after and Filling the machine



■ email: john.highfield@sheffieldnewspapers.co.uk

POLYSTYRENE...great for filling boxes, not so great for filling tipping sites. It's been around for so long now that we can't imagine what life would be like without Polystyrene to protect everything from delicate china to bulky white goods, TV sets and sound systems as they are packaged and delivered.

In this country alone, though, there is enough waste polystyrene to fill 15,000 Olympic-sizes swimming pools being tipped into landfill; sites every year.

Most of us have simply got used to the idea that the stuff that fills our packing cases - and also makes the millions of disposable coffee cups the nation gets through every day - is to lie in landfill for centuries to come, another inconvenient truth of 21st century life, one of those things we know we should do without but which we're not prepared to give up.

But one Rotherham company has come up with a revolutionary and ingenious new system that recycle the one thing most of us believe is unrecyclable.

Purex, the Wath-based company that produces a range of economic and environmentally friendly fume purification systems used worldwide in everything from the beauty salon business to an extensive range of industrial uses, has come up with Styromelt, a revolutionary polystyrene densification system.

Although many companies are now recycling products like paper, cardboard and glass, one of the principal problems with polystyrene is that its bulk, even



Purex employee Eric Butcher with the Styromelt machine, and a block of melted Polystyrene

Photographs: Dean Atkins

though it is so light, makes it expensive to transport in large quantities and takes up a lot of space in landfill.

"It is a big issue, the handling of polystyrene because it is bulky and a headache to dispose of, but we have solved that," says Purex managing director Paul Priestley.

The Styromelt system, developed in partnership with Taylor products Ltd, reduces the volume of polystyrene by

when pressure is mounting for landfill volume to be reduced.

The secret of Styromelt, of course, lies in the name - the machine has a loading area of approximately 2.5 cubic metres and two temperature controlled thermal plates that heat the polystyrene to melting point, at which point air and other gasses are released and safely disposed off by the Purex extraction system.

What remains forms a thick liquid which is collected in a tray, cools and becomes the solid block which is then removed and stored ready for removal and recycling.

Delighted with the initial response to the system, Paul explains: "There are people who are buying these machines from us, setting up a collection service and taking away the polystyrene, establishing themselves another business, melting it down and selling the bricks on.

"You can't keep putting polystyrene in landfill because it takes up too much space and it stays there so this is a very exciting product which can be used in so many different areas.

"At the moment, when you buy yourself a new plasma screen TV, companies like Currys and Dixons will take away all the packaging but what happens then? If they have one of these machines at the depot, they've solved the problem.

And although there is an initial cost involved in the purchasing of the Styromelt machine, Paul points out that the long term savings can be enormous.

"People tend to be environmental if it doesn't cost them anything," he says. "But potentially this doesn't cost anything - and it can even save a company or local authority money!"

approximately 95 per cent, creating small blocks of material that are completely sterile, easy to handle and can be sold for use in new products or fuels.

The benefits are immediate - companies, for instance, can save on expensive skip hire, waste management and transport costs while local authorities can save on landfill costs and achieve important recycling targets, particularly important at a time

Words From The Chamber

In association with

DONCASTER



MAKING THE
DIFFERENCE
TOGETHER

NOWHERE is Doncaster Chamber's strap line, "making the difference together", more appropriate than at Board level. Your Chamber derives enormous benefit from the commitment and input of its Directors, all of whom devote time, knowledge, experience and skills to the development of the Chamber.

The Chamber Board is made up of a Chief Executive and sixteen Non-Executive Directors and is led by your Chamber's President.

The Board of Directors works through the Chief Executive to develop and deliver the Chamber's Strategic Plan for the benefit of Members and the wider business community in which Members operate their business.

Directors are nominated by our Member businesses and elected to the Board because Members believe they can offer their knowledge and experience to the Board coupled with a commitment to represent and act in the best interest of Members' businesses at all times.

Doncaster Chamber is the only credible voice for business in Doncaster and the Board plays a key role in this function. The Chamber's Board is therefore extremely proactive and Directors involve themselves in a wide range of the Chamber's activities.

The Chamber's Directors are drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds representing businesses of all sectors and sizes.

Kelvin Fitton, Smith Craven, said: "As a prominent accountant within the borough for a number of local businesses in Doncaster, I feel I can act as a voice to represent their views and with support from the Chamber 'Make the difference together'. Being a Director has allowed me to gain a greater understanding as to how the Chamber can influence and support change within the borough and help local businesses to succeed."

Closing date for receipt of nominations is 12 noon on the 15th November and the results will be announced at the Annual General Meeting on 20th December 2007. Nomination forms have been distributed to all Members.

If you require any further information, please contact Sheila Fearn, PA to Chief Executive, on Tel. (01302) 640134 or E-mail: sfearn@doncaster-chamber.co.uk.

HOW GREEN IS MY COMPANY? With Helen Rana, Policy and Representation Manager, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry

1. How interested are you in green issues?

I am interested but in all honesty I could probably make more of an effort.



from one side of Sheffield to the other because I drop my two children off at nursery on the way. Sometimes I bring the car but I don't usually feel it's worth sitting in a traffic jam by myself - especially when we have pool cars we can use for business meetings. I would rather travel on the bus where I can relax, ignore the traffic and read a good book!

4. Recycling - do you think it's an important part of business life?

Definitely. It's an important part of life all round. Businesses can have a hugely positive or detrimental impact on the environment and this should be a major consideration for all of us. Businesses are in also in a position to provide a collection point and impetus for recycling on a wider scale through their networks and contacts, for instance initiatives such as Bright Finance supporting Sheffield FC's Boots for Africa campaign which has donated over 2,000 pairs of boots for people in South Africa.

5. And at home?

We recycle paper, bottles, jars and plastic at home and put all our food scraps into the compost bin.

6. Do you buy organic?

Mostly. My husband is a keen chef who likes to use organic, local produce and buys a lot from our nearest farm shops as well as local greengrocers. We never buy prepared foods or ready meals and really enjoy delicious, home-cooked food.

7. Lightbulbs - traditional or energy-saving?

Energy saving. However, they don't fit some of our light shades properly and look unsightly, so I hope that energy-saving lightbulbs will be produced in other shapes in the future.

8. What's the worst thing you and your company are doing to the environment?

As a typical business in leased premises, we have not invested in energy saving light fittings or sensors, and we use unnecessary

energy because of the poor heating and ventilation systems, although steps have been made to improve this, eg. with increase in awareness and shut-down procedures.

9. Would you consider energy-saving devices like solar power?

Yes, it would be really interesting to find out about this for my home. It's more difficult at work because the Chamber leases its building, so any investment in renewable energy is really out of our hands.

10. What will happen to your company in a post-oil world?

Luckily, I think the Chamber is beginning to see the advantage of a greener approach, both from a financial and PR point of view. My organisation's business is generally focused in the Sheffield City Region and so electric, bio methane or even hydrogen-powered transport would allow us to survive and contribute to the change in mind set which would be needed in such a climate.