

# Alto Packaging Limited

## Auckland Pilot EnviroSmart® Programme Achievements

Alto Packaging Ltd joined the Auckland EnviroSmart® pilot programme, in 2005, to achieve a number of environmental objectives.

The two-year programme provided assistance to businesses to improve their environmental performance by reducing solid waste, using energy, water and raw materials efficiently, and purchasing environmentally sound products and services, as well as achieving environmental certification to the Enviro-Mark®NZ Gold level.

### Key achievements

- Water usage reduced by 45%
- Waste to landfill reduced by 80%, with savings on disposal of \$10,000 p.a.
- Savings from reduced energy use of approx \$70,000 a year
- Gained Enviro-Mark®NZ Gold certification

### About the business

Alto Packaging is a large rigid plastic moulding company, with eight plants throughout New Zealand, a sales team in Australia, and over 800 employees. The company makes a wide range of packaging and containers for different industries including the food and beverage, agricultural, and medical sectors. It was the company's plant at Henderson, which has 160 employees, that undertook the programme. For more on the company see [www.alto.co.nz](http://www.alto.co.nz)

Before joining, Alto had already done considerable work to recycle waste material and reduce its oil use, and it was using the "20 keys" continuous improvement system. However the programme appealed because it had a process to it that meant the company would be taken through a number of stages, and was not ad hoc.

### Programme achievements

#### Resource efficiency

- Replacing faulty valve chillers reduced water usage by over 45%.

#### Waste reduction

- Waste disposed of to landfill dropped from 9 tonnes to 2 tonnes a month which was achieved by:
  - providing bins for items such as hairnets, cardboard and plastic bags so they could be reused or recycled;
  - collecting plastic scrap from the blow moulding machines and feeding the scrap back into the machine, reducing waste and the amount of material being handling;
  - converting all pallets to returnable pallets;
  - tracking wastes being put into the compactor by type rather than just quantities.
- The compactor was 25m<sup>3</sup> and is now 10m<sup>3</sup> which is saving some \$10,000 a year.
- A cleaning team is vacuuming up plastic beads to ensure that they do not create litter on the premises or reach the stormwater system.



*Nick Guy  
Alto Packaging's EnviroSmart Project Champion*

### Energy efficiency

- Approx \$70,000 is being saved a year from reduced energy use as a result of the installation of power factor controls, variable speed motors and adjustments to lighting.
- A reduction in air leaks resulting from changes to compressors accounted for nearly half of these savings, and more are expected.

### Suppliers and contractors

- The company is working towards including environmental requirements for its suppliers and contractors.

### Environmental purchasing

- Alto changed office products suppliers and now uses paper with 50% recycled content.
- Energy efficiency is now a formal aspect of purchasing criteria.
- Bags and wrapping materials are being purchased which have thinner walls.
- Bulk buying is being introduced so raw materials will come in one tonne rather than 25kg bags which will not only reduce waste but will also make handling easier.

### Best practice

- Alto developed an environmental policy, and introduced a risk assessment document, including pollution prevention and spill response plans.

## Other benefits

- The programme complemented existing projects implemented through the "20 keys" system.
- It furthered the company's efforts to remain competitive while being a good corporate citizen.
- Participation in the programme has improved relationships with staff, customers and councils.

## Challenges

- The pressures of meeting regional council requirements to prevent stormwater pollution, to have spill response planning, and to introduce an environmental management system.
- Engaging the right people to run the teams and manage environmental initiatives, and in getting staff to adopt better environmental practices.
- Time required – the programme champion averaged four hours per week on the programme, and the environmental officer 1-2 days p.w. for six months to get to Gold level certification.

## The future

Alto intends to continue to implement what it has learned from the programme, in particular with regard to energy efficiency when it buys new equipment. It sees this as "future proofing" as it anticipates that pressure from government to be environmentally responsible will increase. A carbon tax may impact on the business in the future, as could the cost of oil-based resins.

## Advice for others

Project champions Christine Koeleman and Nick Guy stress the need to gather a good team of "enthusiastic people" from different parts of the factory. "Communicate the requirements well. Get time and commitment from management. Over time, you will see the hard work pays off as environmental practices are embedded into the company."

If you would like more information about the programme, please see [www.envirosmart.co.nz](http://www.envirosmart.co.nz)



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