

CASE STUDY

CROWN WORKSPACE: SLOWING MATERIAL FLOWS

This case study outlines how Crown Workspace has slowed the flow of materials by refurbishing, repurposing, and recycling office furniture.

What is the issue?

Reuse, repair, and recycling are important parts of the circular economy's contribution to reducing carbon emissions. These processes slow the circle – this occurs by slowing the consumption of new materials and products, keeping existing ones in use for longer. This in turn reduces greenhouse gas emissions from the production of new items.

What did Crown Workspace do?

Crown Workspace's Renew Centre is the UK's leading office furniture remanufacturing, refurbishing and repair centre, which employs a growing skilled team dedicated to sustainably extending the life of furniture. Despite the far-reaching effects and business continuity issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Renew Centre has had its highest throughput yet.

Two key trends have caused the business to grow and flourish. The first is an increased demand for sustainable refurbished furniture in the workspace. The second is the massive upsurge in home working, leading to a significant increase in the sale of office chairs for home use.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO CAPTURE AND COMMUNICATE CLEARLY THE FINANCIAL, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS.

In 2017, Crown Workspace launched Renew IT to provide more sustainable options for used IT. Increasing customer interest in buying less and using for longer means that this part of the business has also grown significantly. Renew IT maximises the financial, environmental, and social value of IT assets by reconditioning redundant IT equipment to keep it in use for longer. Following significant investment in 2019, output doubled in the space of a year. Workshop capacity was increased further in 2020, improving both workflow and productivity.

15,000

items of furniture were remanufactured or refurbished in 2020

1,031 tonnes

of CO2 emissions were saved compared to buying new furniture

What has Crown Workspace learnt?

- To develop successful circular services, it is important to involve all stakeholders in a consultative way to identify what the challenges



could be, to help overcome them as part of the service development.

- It is important to capture and communicate clearly the financial, social, and environmental benefits.

ultimately ensuring equipment is returned to them to be refurbished and reused elsewhere.

What's next for Crown Workspace?

Crown Workspace is innovating to develop a new 'Furniture as a Service' model – offering furniture to procuring organisations without them needing to own the equipment. Fundamental change to traditional business models can, understandably, create some resistance or reservations from those used to doing things a certain way.

To overcome the reservations from those procuring these services, Crown Workspace offered options that included a guaranteed buy-back and a more flexible service-based model to meet the different needs of customers whilst

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