

CSR case studies



3M

Streetwise, Worldlywise... Technology and Sustainability

● The organisation

3M is a \$25 billion diversified technology company which, since 1902, has been creating innovative products that help make the world healthier, safer and more productive. Operating in more than 60 countries around the world, with 79,000 employees, 3M products are sold in nearly 200 countries.

The company has long standing, strongly held values that are based on honesty and integrity; quality and value – and respect for the social and physical environment. In the mid-1970s, for example, 3M became one of the the first companies in the world to address the issue of its environmental impact.

In the UK 3M has launched its second web based learning tool for teachers; the first being 3M Streetwise (www.3Mstreetwise.co.uk), a child road safety resource, which has been in place since 2006. The learning tools are designed in conjunction with educational specialists, to help schools bring real issues to life for school pupils between the ages of 7 and 14.

● The drivers

The second programme, 3M Worldlywise, was developed because 3M believes strongly in the importance of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) in schools and in response to the decreasing rates of

school students going on to become qualified for the technology sector.

● Taking action

The new website – www.3MWorldlywise.co.uk - focuses on sustainability and the environment. The aim of the resource will be to educate pupils about sustainable living and to show them that society needs scientists, engineers and new technology to help solve the problems of the future.

The first phase of the three year programme focuses on the role of technology and the complexity of the issues in making sustainable decisions. *“By making the topics relevant to their lives, we hope to engage and motivate students to choose science, technology, engineering and maths when it comes to selecting qualifications and careers,”* comments John Klee, 3M’s Corporate Communications Manager.

Initially, 3M toyed with the idea of simply demonstrating the benefits of technological improvements for sustainability. Instead the programme highlights the wide range of issues that need to be considered when making ‘sustainable’ decisions, encouraging pupils to think about their own lifestyle choices. Says John Klee: *“The response to so many questions on sustainability starts with the caveat ‘Well, it depends...’. For example, in certain circumstances, an imported product*

could, counter-intuitively, have a lesser carbon footprint than a locally produced product.”

The second and third phases of the programme involve expanding the tool to other areas of the curriculum, such as geography, and increasing the mathematics content.

The programme is also designed to complement 3M's STEM Ambassadors by providing them with an accessible, easy-to-use resource which requires minimal advance planning, as the company believes that preparation time is one of the biggest deterrents to more employees becoming Ambassadors. As the resource is web-based, it will be freely available for not only by 3M's STEM Ambassadors, but those from other organisations, also.

● **Why is it CSR?**

The company has set up the 3M Worldlywise programme as part of 3M's three pronged approach to sustainability. The first is the company's own carbon footprint; the second is the promotion of 3M products that can help its customers to be more sustainable; the third is to gain the active involvement of its employees.

Some of the direct business benefits of the programme could be as much as a decade away, in the form of qualified and enthusiastic graduate recruits in the field of technological development and design. On a far wider scale, however, the programme has also been designed to build up the relationships between youth and their immediate environment, i.e. issues of sustainability.

Lastly, 3M sees the programme as an ethical responsibility; as a source of pride for its employees and peers.

● **What next?**

3M plans to promote 3M Worldlywise and have it recognised as a free, professional, user friendly tool, accessible for teachers and

STEM Ambassadors - both those working for 3M and for other organisations.

Contact us:

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For further information, please contact Article 13 on 020 8840 4450 or visit www.article13.com.

For more information on 3M, please contact John Klee on john.klee@mmm.com

Further reading on 3M:

www.3Mworldlywise.co.uk

[Life cycle management approach](#) to improving the environmental performance of 3M's products

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