

Corporate
Social
Responsibility:
HSS Hire.



CSR Report 2008

Keeping Businesses Working

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HSS: Corporate Social Responsibility

HSS Hire is the original tool and equipment hire company, providing complete tool and equipment hire for over 50 years. Today, our 300-strong network of massive supercentres, branches and agencies ensures easy access to our extensive range of tools and equipment.

Committed to keeping businesses working, HSS is transforming from a high street player to a logistical and technical partner to businesses of all sizes. Dominant in the “maintain and operate” sectors, we provide fully outsourced managed services and traditional hire contracts to major players in infrastructure, utilities, FM and corporations as well as with tradepeople and consumers.

We do all this with a real and sincere commitment to our corporate and social responsibilities too.

As a large and growing nationwide business, we are very aware that we play a significant role in the well being of the people that work with us, the environment and the local communities. We make every effort to ensure only a positive contribution in these areas and will continue to invest in our corporate and social responsibilities.



This report outlines our policies and objectives and measures our progress against them, considering:

Our Marketplace: We make customer service a priority and actively search for suppliers with values similar to our own. Where possible, we look to introduce products and services in response to environmental issues.

Our Environment: We commit staff and resources to meeting or exceeding environmental legislation and particularly to reducing polluting releases and unnecessary consumption of natural resources. We are actively working towards ISO14001.

Our Workplace: Our employees are our most important internal resource and we work hard to make sure they are happy at work and well equipped with the skills they need to do their job. Training, communication and recognition are key features within our positive and inclusive workplace.

Our Safety: We're serious about safety – of our colleagues, our customers and our products. We are Safe-HIRE and ISO9000 certified and are the only tool and equipment hire company to have been awarded four stars from the British Safety Council.

Our Community: We like to help a good cause and offer discounted hire rates to all registered charities and community projects, providing over £125,000 of free hire in the last 12 months. Over the next year, we plan to further formalise our community activities, including a programme of employee volunteering.

HSS: Our Market Place

Our corporate social responsibilities extend to the relationships we have with our customers and suppliers. We have made customer service a priority and actively search for suppliers with similar values to our own.

Customer Service We invest in ensuring that we offer our customers a friendly, flexible and tailored service, delivered by people who are trained, knowledgeable and ready to help. Every employee is provided with the HSS Customer Service policy during their induction and will undergo thorough training during their career to ensure they have the skills required to deliver it.



We also publish the HSS Service Guarantee on our website and in every copy of our catalogue so that all our customers know the level of service we strive to deliver and what to do if they don't get it. Our dedicated Customer Service team will deal with any queries.

To ensure we're on the right track, we regularly ask our customers what they really think of us so we can continually refine our business offer and ensure that, when we say we're great, we can back it up.

"Over 90% of our customers say we are good or very good"

Our six monthly TNS Customer Satisfaction Survey revealed that over 90% of our customers say we're 'good' or 'very good', putting us in the top third of the thousands of companies they surveyed across Europe. Feedback is equally positive from the daily customer surveys conducted by our account development team and the feedback forms supplied with every piece of kit.

Improved Customer Communication

We make a point of making all customer communication easy, constantly reviewing and improving our efforts. We offer customers a variety of ways to transact with us – in person, by phone, by text call back, online or through a dedicated account manager. We have developed our online facilities in response to customer demand and seen subsequent improvements in our web trade. Our website and our catalogue won hire industry awards for their ease of use and effectiveness. Our pricing, promotions and terms of business are always clear, comprehensive and fully transparent.



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Supply Chain Management

We advocate corporate responsibility within our supply chain too. We make a point of trading with the most ethical suppliers and audit all prospective partners, requiring them to complete a pre-qualifying questionnaire to validate their ISO policies and Quality Audits.

New Products and Services

Where possible, we will work with our suppliers to introduce new products and services to address environmental issues. This year we've seen an environmentally friendlier patio heater join the range and have just launched the smallest noise compliant diesel generator in the UK, an exclusive product offering only currently available from HSS.

HSS: Our Environment

Our world is a beautiful place and at HSS we intend to help keep it that way with a sincere commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable consumption.



We will meet or exceed any relevant environmental legislation and aim to minimise any negative environmental impact whilst enhancing our positive contribution in a way that balances cost-effectiveness, quality and environmental issues with the views of staff, customers, suppliers and regulatory bodies.

"Energy efficient technologies are fitted as standard to all new premises"

We will commit staff and resources to ensure that we reduce or eliminate polluting releases to the environment and reduce the consumption and waste of natural resources.

We have a dedicated team of HSEQ auditors who complete comprehensive environmental audits and risk assessments across the entire business. Our internal Environmental Management System is set up in line with ISO14001 and we are actively working towards complete ISO14001 registration.

Sustainable Consumption

To live within our resources, we need to achieve more with less. As a result, we've changed the way we purchase, use and dispose of the products and services we own, hire and consume. We also take steps to minimise pollution to natural resources.

We monitor and reduce energy consumption wherever possible, targeting areas of high usage. Energy efficient technologies including energy efficient light bulbs and automatic light controls are fitted as standard to all new premises, supplementing general good housekeeping practices in force across the business.

We are reducing water consumption by using water saving technologies such as water meters. We also use rain water wherever it is feasible to do so and have introduced water butts to feed pressure washers when cleaning kit and vehicles. We have some minor releases to sewers from cleaning equipment but this is processed through interceptor pits to remove any solid and oil residue to prevent water pollution.

CO2 emissions are potentially the single largest impact we have on the environment and we have made significant efforts in reducing this, as detailed on the following pages. Other emissions are relatively small within our business but where they do occur they are well managed using the best techniques – for example, Local Exhaust Ventilation systems are used whenever we test welding equipment. We also make every effort to prevent or reduce noise pollution, ensuring that noise emitted from all of our premises is kept to a minimum.



Reducing CO2 Emissions

We are committed to reducing CO2 emissions caused by unnecessary mileage and any other emissions that result from our business activity.

All 872 of our service fleet and company vehicles are diesel powered and conform to EU4 regulations, using the cleanest diesel technology currently available. All corporate vehicle drivers are briefed to ensure standards of maintenance and best practice driving approaches that maximise fuel efficiency.

"An improvement of just 5% will reduce our fuel consumption by 250,000 litres"

When we need to move equipment around the country, our PRISM stock management and route mapping system ensures that kit is transferred in a controlled and fuel efficient manner.

In addition, our new fleet of transit vans have been designed with an aluminium frame, not only making them lighter and reducing MPG fuel consumption but also optimising the maximum payload and reducing the amount of journeys required.

In 2009, we anticipate that all new company cars will be <160g/km CO2 and all service fleet vehicles will be <200g/km CO2. We also intend to introduce GPRS to all our service fleet to encourage drivers not to map read with the engine idling and to ensure only the most efficient routing. Achieving even just a 5% improvement in this area will see a reduction in our fuel consumption of 250,000 litres.

Recycling

The very nature of our business is one of recycling - we purchase robust equipment that is hired, returned, tested and rehire over and over again.

We minimise where possible the generation of waste to reduce the need for recycling. This includes encouraging paper free administration processes wherever work can be carried out electronically and using double sided printing/photocopying where it can't. We also established good housekeeping procedures to ensure that goods are not over ordered, over used or allowed to go missing. We request reduced packaging for all delivered goods.

Where waste does occur within the business, we recycle wherever possible. In practical terms this means:

- We have recycle bins in every branch for 'Special Waste' including oils, filters and batteries. Over the last 12 months we achieved 98.5% recycle of this Special Waste
- We recycle aluminium alloy towers and ladders sending them back to the manufacturer for repair or for 100% recycle into new components
- We trade in old equipment for recycle when we purchase new equipment. Over 30 of our old mobile elevated working platforms have been returned to the manufacturer to be repaired, upgraded and made available for resale
- Plastic, wood, metal and paper and recycled wherever possible. Office paper recycling bins have been introduced into all our support office locations this year

*"We recycled
98.5% of all
special waste"*

HSS: Our Workplace

Our employees are our most valuable internal resource. We work hard to make sure they are happy at work and well equipped to do their job.

At HSS you'll find comprehensive training programmes, an ever improving recognition programme and a fair and equal approach to employment.

A Positive and Inclusive Workplace

We insist on a positive and inclusive, well diversified workplace with equality for all. We were reaccredited with Investors in People status and all our workplace policies have been reviewed to ensure they reflect modern good practice. We advocate equal opportunities in every area of employment, tackling discrimination head on.

Colleague Communications

We believe that an essential part of our corporate responsibility is to ensure our colleagues know what's going on. As a result we've formalised colleague communications, issuing monthly business updates and a regular newsletter. There is also a colleague consultative committee that meets quarterly and our board of directors visit the branches on a regular basis to listen to and help resolve key operational issues.



Training and Development

We believe that proper training is absolutely essential to unlocking talent within the business and demonstrating our long term commitment to enhancing employees skills.

All employees undergo a rigorous training needs analysis during their induction and throughout their career.

"We delivered over 12,000 individual training events"

Our fully qualified internal training team deliver a comprehensive curriculum of training courses and workshops covering technical and behavioural skills including Health and Safety, Product Knowledge, Customer Care, Personal Effectiveness, Delegation and Debt Management. We also offer NVQs and Modern Apprenticeships.

In 2007 we delivered over 12,000 individual training events and over 8,000 training hours.

We have recently launched our GROW programme, currently focused on developing the skills of existing General Managers but it will also be aimed at training people for future promotion as we endeavour to develop and promote managers of the future from within.

Reward and Recognition

We issue Long Service and Customer Service awards and celebrated exceptional achievements at our annual conference last March.

HSS Heroes of Hire

In January 2009 we will be launching an industry leading colleague scheme. Heroes of Hire will recognise and reward the exceptional people that work for HSS Hire for their efforts towards the company, our customers and our CSR efforts.

Colleagues and Customers will be able to nominate HSS staff and all nominations will be scrutinised by our Operations Board. Winning 'heroes' will receive a commendation for their efforts and will be shortlisted for our annual hero awards where they will have the chance to win big prizes!

Our heroes will also form the basis of our employee volunteering projects.



HSS: Our Safety

We are serious about safety. When it comes to our colleagues, our customers and the products we hire to them; safety is paramount.

We like to demonstrate this commitment to safety with professional accreditations - we have an internal safety system based on HS(G)65 and are Safe-HIRE and ISO9000 certified. We are also the only tool and equipment hire company to have been awarded four stars from the British Safety Council.

Workplace Safety

We endeavour to provide a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health and welfare of the people that work with us. Responsibility for health and safety within the workplace is a line management function, supported by a team of HSEQ Advisors who are specifically tasked with auditing every location every year, compiling risk assessments and following through subsequent action plans to ensure continual improvement.

All colleagues are involved and trained in identifying, assessing and applying preventative measures to hazards and risks. Every workplace contains written safety plans and all our Supercentres feature newly appointed safety advisors.

"The only tool and equipment hire company with a 4 star British Safety Council Award"

Since the launch of a major training focus in August 2006, we have seen an impressive 80% reduction in all manual handling accidents.

Over the last 12 months, we have had a major focus on safe systems of work, training over 1800 colleagues. We also adopted new methods of achieving storage at height and introduced new competency control systems to eliminate the use of tools and machinery by untrained colleagues.

And for the times when accidents do happen, we have formalised our Occupational Health provision and upgraded our Minor Injury Management to cover the triage of all RIDDOR and more serious accidents, providing treatment and physio where required.



Product Safety

From procurement to pre-hire testing, a rigorous post hire maintenance regime and a full service training department, all areas of our product offering are governed and underpinned by a real commitment to safety.

All the tools and equipment in the HSS fleet are constantly tested for efficiency, durability and compliance so customers can be sure their kit will arrive in great shape and ready for use.

Every bit of kit is sent out with bespoke and comprehensive safety and operating guidelines, all of which are also available to download from our website.

HSS: Our Community

We like good causes and we like to help wherever we can. We offer discounted rates to all registered charities and community projects and have provided over £125,000 of recorded free hire in the last 12 months.

Amongst others, we have supported several blue chip organisations on their community days; supplied tools and equipment to a number of celebrity community makeover projects and helped a community art project with access equipment.

We've donated equipment to help a poorly donkey on the road to recovery and to help a dolphin rescue charity conduct night time rescue and we provided kit to an elephant charity to help raise money for the World Land Trust.

We provide free equipment to the HSE to assist their Safety at Height Awareness days for the farming community and are firm supporters of their Ladder Exchange, helping to remove dangerous and broken ladders from the workplace.

"We gave away over £125,000 of free hire to charities and good causes"

And we've also provided financial support to the Lighthouse Club and Well Child charities.

We encourage and support our staff in their own charity endeavours too. Over the last 12 months we've had staff running the London Marathon, taking part in Race for Life and Walk the Walks' Moon Walk. We also sponsored the son of a long serving member of staff in his quest to make it to the World Kick Boxing championships.

We have started an employee volunteering programme, offering time and skills as well as equipment to support the local community. To kick it all off, we sent a team to a City Gateway project to lend a hand in London's east end.

Big plans in the pipeline

We know that our formal charity activity is probably only the tip of the iceberg. We also have a lot of unsung heroes around the business helping local charities and other good causes on a regular basis. To capture the full extent of our charity and community activity, formalising our approach in these areas is a key focus for 2009. We will also be encouraging more employee volunteering. As a result, we have assigned dedicated internal resources to formalise our charitable endeavours, to set targets and introduce procedures to better manage and monitor community and charitable activities.

