

## Sharp-aX Computer Systems Ltd

ORGANISATION SIZE / Small Business (up to 50 employees)

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### BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF YOUR CSR APPLICATION

Sharp-aX Computer Systems Limited is aiming to adopt a policy of Corporate Social Responsibility to formalise existing processes and practices. As a software development company much of what we produce is intangible and have therefore chosen to focus primarily on internal behaviours and how we interact with those around us, rather than looking to ensure that our product has a positive social impact.

To this end we have focused on our environmental impact - electricity use, waste products, and customer trips and what we can do for our local community via - food donations, offering IT support to local charitable organisations and what we can achieve for our staff in a health initiative & flexible working etc.

### OVERALL SUMMARY

#### 1.0 CSR Environment - Energy

Does your organisation implement and monitor energy saving initiatives? What are the financial benefits and measurable impact to your organisation? Have staff demonstrated their commitment? What ideas do you have to expand the scheme Can others adopt the procedures to their own benefit? (300 words)

One of the key areas of energy use for Sharp-aX has been their use of computing resources. A typical server will consume 0.5 KW per hour and we inherited a total of 11 physical servers when the company first went live. They were also older model servers which meant they were less power efficient typically using chips with a thermal energy output of 120 TDW (a measure of waste heat per Watt, affects energy needed to cool the server). The replacement server combined 7 of the 11 purposes in a single 2 CPU chassis, using newer 45 TDW processors, with 2 purposes being moved into cloud computing

As part of our focus on improving our energy resources, we identified all the separate core uses for the server infrastructure and planned to replace all the separate physical servers with a single physical server running virtual infrastructure. At the same time, we also planned to migrate the on premise computing needs to Cloud based

companies (which are some of the world leaders in energy efficient computing, investing millions in research to reduce the power usage of their servers through natural cooling etc.

We hope to push that further by re-evaluating our backup hardware and development environments in the near future with cloud-based solutions. Staff commitment was easily secured as the overall tasks were also necessary to ensure reduced maintenance in the future and better business continuity planning.

The changes implemented are perfectly suited to any company with internal computing resources. It requires an evaluation of existing IT processes, identifying anything that can be moved over to the cloud, followed by a check on the current efficiency of the internal IT equipment. Servers are the primary target, as they're on 24/7, followed by PC desktops and laptops.

#### 1.2 CSR Environment - Natural resources:

Within the company we've made two key savings in regards to natural resources in recent years. We replaced our water cooler with one that cools tap water on demand, thus negating the need for plastic bottled water to be transported and replaced tea urns with an on demand boiler to ensure

that only the necessary amount of water is boiled, and none needs to be discarded.

Neither of these choices required staff interaction beyond the initial implementation.

We chose to use recyclable paper cups rather than mugs and staff further help reduce their usage by reusing a cup for several days at a time. This further reduces our water usage, meaning we only need to put on the dishwasher every 3 days rather than daily and primarily for cutlery.

None of these policies has a significant cost saving for the business, as the water cooler and boiler require regular servicing to ensure that they operate in a safe and efficient manner so the overall impact has been solely to improve our resource usage.

We implemented corporate recycling, so that as much waste plastic, paper and metals can be captured and returned to the local council facilities for recycling. We did try and attempt direct pickups via our waste management company but found that there are significant barriers in terms of our company size and the costs involved, so instead make use of the local facilities at the end of the road (saves on transport costs and energy usage)

Exchanged a large waste bin from 1100 to the following

# Sharp-aX Computer Systems Ltd

1 x 360 liters (for non-recyclable) & plan to reduce further.

1 x 770 liter bin for recycling

We have only 1 x rubbish bin in the whole office which is located in the office for food waste & non-recyclable food+

## 1.3 CSR Environment - Travel:

Does your organisation have any travel policies in place?

Where possible to we plan round trips to similarly located customers over a week to ensure minimum mileage/travel. Our customers also support us in this policy.

In addition, all support calls are dealt with via remote dial-in to avoid unnecessary travel and faster solutions.

## 1.4 CSR Environment - Environmental supply chain management:

Environmental supply chain management: Does your organisation operate a sustainable supply chain policy?

We do not have a sustainable supply chain policy in place, as it is not relevant to the nature of the business. We purchase very few physical items within a year as our predominant output is intangible via software and services.

## 1.5 CSR Environment - Waste:

Does your organisation have a waste management policy? Have staff demonstrated their commitment? What ideas do you have to expand the scheme Can others adopt the procedures to their own benefit?

We operate a recycling scheme within the company that ensures the majority of the domestic waste generated by staff (predominately food packaging, as well as paper) is recycled if it is in a fit state to do so.

We also aim to donate any unused computing equipment to a local charitable organization, though have been unable to find one that is able to offer a suitable service and guarantee regarding the data stored on the drives. If we are unable to donate the machines in working condition, we shall

instead aim to recycle the component parts through an approved scheme.

Our overall preference in our policy is to reuse, and then to recycle, and all staff are happy to comply with this concept.

## 2. CSR Workplace

As part of our overall corporate goals, we have been pursuing various levels of Microsoft partnership. Core to these partnerships are the concept of having various staff trained in particular areas and to encourage staff to uptake training in the areas that they are most enthused.

We have always had a policy in place that means that any training can be obtained related to your current or future job requirements and have it funded by the company, in return for a decreasing commitment should you chose to leave the company within 2 years of the completion of the course.)

We participate in a company benefit scheme that was part of our sign up to provide Childcare Vouchers (a now defunct government scheme), which means that staff can use a salary sacrifice route to free up money to purchase discount vouchers for a variety of products, that also include further enhancements to the value. For example, sacrifice £50 worth of salary, results in a nett deduction around £35 from your take home pay, and in return can be converted to around £55 worth of vouchers at leading companies, thus benefitting from both ends.

As a company we also provide an option for employees to join a local gym (same road) as a subsidised rate of £10 per month. This means that they have access to keep fit equipment that can easily be used before work, at lunch time or after work without having to incur a heavy level of investment or commitment.

In terms of other businesses adopting the policies, in particular the salary sacrifice schemes offer a large incentive for both the business and the employee due to the taxation rules that surround such schemes. All companies should investigate and deploy the options that best suit their employees as there is no nett downside (the

costs of the scheme comes from the savings the company would otherwise enjoy, so reduces but doesn't eliminate the corporate benefit)

## 3. CSR Community

What level commitment to do you have? How long have you been involved? What kind of support does your organisation offer? Do you provide volunteering, sponsorship, financial giving, partnerships etc.? Do the projects you support provide Impact reporting on your involvement? Value to the community: have communities or areas benefited? Can you provide evidence of support through supporting literature, press releases etc. ?

We acknowledge that in this pillar of CSR, that we are the weakest. Whilst we have ensured that any truly excess food in a fit condition is donated to a local homeless shelter in Hemel Hempstead, we have approached several local charities only to have our offers of help rebuffed. We believe we can provide both a space for the charities to use on a regular basis within our building that is spare capacity to us and offered IT expertise and free training as options to those businesses but were unable to find anyone who took us seriously.

Overall this is one area we would like to improve and we do contact local companies to that effect but have thus far been unsuccessful as the main aim of charities seems to be straight financial donations, rather than intangibles that we are better placed to provide at present.

## 4. CSR Philanthropic

Do the projects you support provide Impact reporting on your involvement? Do you communicate your support to your staff, customers and the wider public audience? Do you promote your support on your literature, website and via your organisation's social media channels? What level commitment to do you have? How long have you been involved? What kind of support does your organisation offer?

We are proud supporters of the Hospice of St Francis, and donate £100 monthly to them and encourage employees to do the same. We attend their monthly networking

# Sharp-aX Computer Systems Ltd

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and fund raising events and have already donated our premises for their use. We include a reference to the charity on our email signature to boost visibility and have worked to shift our business to other suppliers within their network to ensure that donations and support for the charity cover a wider number of local businesses.

We also regularly support Pink Day for Breast Cancer Awareness and Genes for Genes Day to support genetic research and donate generously to our customers' charities.

We will give serious consideration to any charitable causes championed by employees, and often work to implement ideas such as a McMillian Coffee Morning or host a donation box in exchange for "dress down" days.

Our Managing Director, Jean Freeman, has also sponsored and hosted charity golf events on behalf of the hospice, which offer a chance for more serious corporate fundraising oHospice monthly donation + hosting events + customer events

She is also a Member of New patrons club donating £450 pa to promote a government for pro-business, pro-people embracing different cultures, a Home Office sponsor for immigrants.

Our company promotes respect & kindness embracing all countries and cultures

We celebrate monthly office drinks and international cooking from our employees.