

# ASTRA SIGNS

## Sustainability Report 2010

### Introduction

This Sustainability Report describes the activities of Astra Signs during 2010. In 2009 Astra Signs set targets for 2010; this report details the progress made versus those targets and also identifies targets for 2011. The report is divided into six sections: Environment, Products, Suppliers, Employees, Customers, Community.

### Environment

Targets	
<b>2010</b>	
Target	Progress
Implement ISO 14001 and meet targets	<p>In May 2010 we achieved ISO 14001 certification. This formalises our existing environmental procedures and commits us to managing and improving our performance in the future.</p> <p>Our progress on the targets we set can be found in the table below. More details can be found throughout this section.</p>
<b>2011</b>	
Continue to meet our ISO14001 targets and achieve re-certification	
Sign up to the 10:10 agreement to reduce our emissions by 10% (or as close as possible) in 2011	
Reduce fuel consumption on travel for work	
Implement a Green travel to work strategy	
Achieve the Bronze award in the Manchester City Council Environmental Business Pledge and start working towards the Silver award	

<b>ISO14001 Targets</b>	
<b>Target</b>	<b>Progress</b>
ET1 Implement a waste monitoring system related to production levels	Started, some progress made
ET2 Develop a monitoring system of energy usage and compare to relevant influencing factors	Complete
ET3 Develop a system to monitor vehicle fuel usage	Complete
ET4 Develop a list of suppliers of sustainable raw materials, including FSC and PEFC	On going

## ISO14001

Now that our ISO 14001 environmental management system is up and running we are able to monitor and manage our environmental impacts in a more structured way. Having independent ISO 14001 certification also gives our customers the assurance that we are a responsible supplier. We have made significant improvements on our ISO 14001 targets which are detailed throughout this report. We have also undertaken several training sessions, both in-house and externally, to improve our understanding and increase our skills, in relation to sustainability. These are detailed in the Employees section.

We are looking to maintain our certification in May 2011 and set ourselves new targets for 2011/12.



## Eco champions

We have appointed Andy Farnworth (our Health & Safety Officer) as our 'Eco-Champion'. Andy has an overview of all our environmental activities and projects, and has been crucial in driving forward some of the changes and improvements we've been making. We have also identified champions for supply chain, energy and waste and plan to develop these roles further during 2011.



## Transport

In December 2010 we replaced our vehicle fleet with the new EEV (Enhanced Environmentally friendly Vehicle) Crafter Euro V BlueTDI vans. The Crafter is set to become among the cleanest and most refined vehicles in their class. Substantial changes have been made to the drivetrain to make it both quieter and smoother thanks to greater torque. Conversely, fuel economy rises and emissions fall to not only meet but exceed the latest Euro V standards. The Crafter also qualifies for lower road tax for the lifetime of the vehicle saving around £60 per year.

### Eco driving

At the beginning of December 2010, eight people took part in driver efficiency training. There was an average 20% reduction in fuel usage between the 1st and 2nd/3rd runs.

*Golden Rules of eco driving:*

1. Shift up as soon as possible - Shift up between 2.000 and 2.500 revolutions.
2. Maintain a steady speed - Use the highest gear possible and drive with low engine RPM
3. Anticipate traffic flow - Look ahead as far as possible and anticipate to surrounding traffic
4. Decelerate Smoothly - When you have to slow down or to stop, decelerate smoothly by releasing the accelerator in time, leaving the car in gear
5. Check the tyre pressure frequently -25% too low tyre pressure increases rolling resistance by 10% and your fuel consumption by 2%.

Groundwork (an environmental charity helping businesses to be more resource efficient) estimated that Astra could save over £7,000 a year by using efficient driving techniques.

### **Fuel efficiency**

As part of our ISO14001 targets, we are monitoring the fuel efficiency of our vehicles and are hoping that eco driving training will improve this efficiency further.

## Waste

During 2010 we have been looking into options for a new waste contractor. We have engaged various third parties to help us establish our waste streams and then identify the best ways to dispose of the waste, both environmentally and financially i.e. what can be sold on rather than sent straight to landfill. We have made progress and our next step is a 2-day waste audit conducted by Groundwork.

So that we make maximum use of the materials we purchase and minimise our waste right at the beginning of the process, we make sure that we maximise the materials we buy. We also have a system up and running for logging offcuts and storing them in a way which makes them easily accessible. The system has meant that we have reduced costs whilst also reducing our waste.

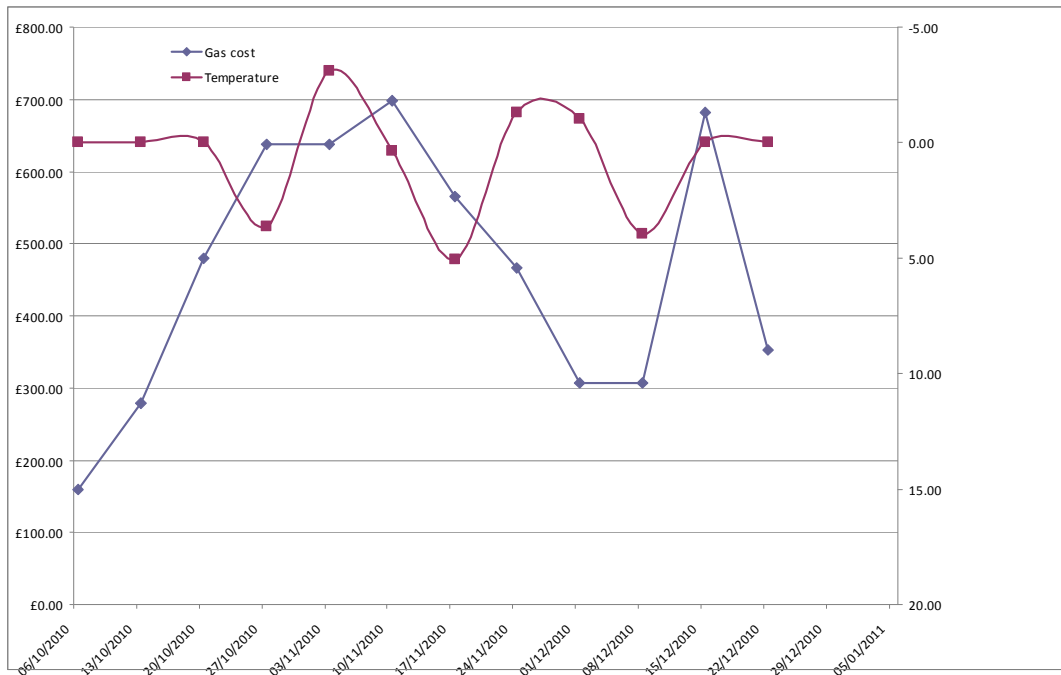
### **End of product life**

We are also thinking about the end of life options for the signs we make so that we can offer our customers the best advice on what to do with their signs once they become redundant. More information can be found in the customers section.

## Energy

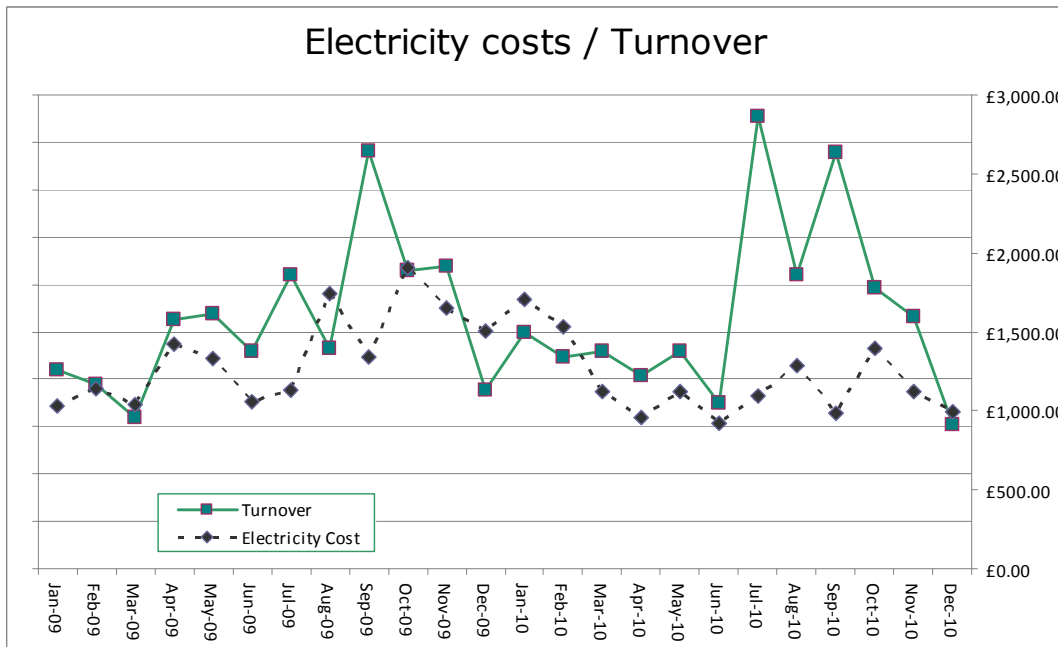
### **Gas**

We benchmark our gas usage against outside temperature. We have only just started recording outside temperature (since October 2010) so only have a few months worth of data available.



### Electricity

We benchmark our electricity consumption against turnover.



### Carbon footprint

The Carbon Trust has helped us to calculate our carbon footprint for the last year. Our Carbon Footprint for our buildings (Green House Gas Protocol scope 1 (partial) & 2) i.e. the energy we use excluding transport, was 169 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over the year. 57% of our energy use was natural gas and the remaining 43% was electricity from the grid. Now that we have this baseline data we want to reduce our emissions by 10% in 2011 and have formalised this by signing up to the 10:10 campaign.

<http://www.1010global.org/uk/business/learn>

### Resource efficiency audit

Following a Groundwork Efficiency audit we identified 12 air leaks in our compressed air system, which were then repaired. An ongoing maintenance programme has also been put in place to improve the monitoring of any air leaks in the future.

Groundwork estimates that we will save £3,000 a year from fixing and monitoring compressed air leaks. To read an article about the Groundwork Efficiency audit see:

<http://www.greenintelligence.org.uk/read/509>

## Awards

### Manchester City Council Environmental Business Pledge



The Environmental Business Pledge is a scheme organised by Manchester City Council and is designed to reward and recognise those companies doing their bit to increase their green credentials and improve the city's environment. Astra is being assessed on things like understanding environmental legislation, recycling, energy consumption and waste management. There is the opportunity to gain Bronze, Silver or Gold award in recognition of our achievement. Astra is hoping to achieve the Bronze award during 2011 and then start working towards the Silver Award. To find out more visit:

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200019/commercial\\_waste\\_and\\_recycling/3076/environmental\\_business\\_pledge/7](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200019/commercial_waste_and_recycling/3076/environmental_business_pledge/7)

## Products

Targets	
<b>2010</b>	
Target	Progress
Ensure our customers are aware of the environmentally friendly alternatives we offer	Updated our website with more information about our environmentally friendly products.  Tharstens coding system allows us to offer eco options easily and clearly.
<b>2011</b>	
Develop more sustainable products	
Continue to develop ways to ensure our customers are aware of the environmentally friendly alternatives we offer	

We have updated our website so that the information about our environmentally friendly materials and products is clearer and more straightforward for our customers. More information about how we communicate with our customers about our environmentally friendly range can be found in the customers section of this report.

### Supplier database

We have been working hard to update our supplier database so that it now includes information about the eco and environmentally friendly products that our suppliers can offer. This will help us to give our customers up to date and accurate information about the environmentally friendly alternatives we can offer. The system works as follows:

- EE = Energy Efficient e.g. reduced travelling time to receive, less energy used to produce it, etc
- EF = Eco/environmentally Friendly , e.g. sustainably resourced, efficiently made, carbon footprint friendly
- R = Recyclable, either fully or part
- FR = Fire Rated. Has a fire rating relating the material to British Standards

We've currently worked on products from our top suppliers but are working through our whole supplier database so that we can offer our customers the best value and most environmentally friendly products.

## Suppliers

Targets	
<b>2010</b>	
Target	Progress
Key supplier audit (linked to ISO 14001)	<p>Produced a Sustainable Procurement Policy.</p> <p>Generated a list of environmental credentials of our suppliers and the materials they offer – see the products section.</p> <p>Questionnaire produced for a more in-depth key supplier audit.</p>
<b>2011</b>	
Send out supplier questionnaire to our key suppliers	
Investigate acquiring a sustainable procurement standard eg BS8903	

### Sustainable procurement

This year we have created a new sustainable procurement policy which sets out what we look for in our suppliers and how we want to work with them to improve our environmental performance. Our suppliers are an important part of our sustainability strategy and can help us in many ways from reducing packaging and waste to identifying new, more sustainable technologies. We have produced a key supplier questionnaire which looks at sustainability issues in more depth. This is aligned to our own environmental policy and the requirements of ISO 14001 and 9001. We hope to put this in place during 2011 without first tier suppliers.

During 2011, in order to cement our sustainable procurement activities well into the business we are also planning to investigate implementing a sustainable procurement standard, eg BS8903.

## Employees

Targets	
2010	
Target	Progress
Engage staff in our sustainability activities	<p>We produce a sustainability newsletter twice a year – see below.</p> <p>Suggestions box available for staff</p> <p>We have appointed four Eco Champions – one with overall responsibility, and one each for waste, energy and procurement.</p>
Provide training for staff on sustainability issues in their area of work	Several events and training sessions have been held around sustainability for all our staff.
2011	
Training for sales staff on sustainability and our sustainable products	
Continue to produce newsletters twice a year	
Eco champions to attend training to further enhance their environmental awareness which can then be passed on to others within the business	

### Engagement

At the beginning of 2010 we held a one day 'Sustainability Roadshow' to engage our staff in our sustainability programme and to get ideas and feedback from them about what they think is important. The day was split into three with workshops for office and management, shop floor, and installation staff. The three sessions all worked really well and the different groups had some great ideas about how we could improve sustainability in their area.



We also have a suggestions box in the communal kitchen / break out area for suggestions or feedback about how we can improve sustainability at Astra. So far

we've had some really good suggestions, such as purchasing inverters for the vans to charge equipment, and putting some information up in reception about our environmental activities.

We also produce 'Sustainability at Astra' newsletters every 6 months which are a great way of thanking people for their ideas and involvement as well as spreading the word about what we are doing.

**Training**

We have regular 'Tool box' talks for shop floor and installation staff and some of these include environmental information as well as good working practices and health & safety.

Andy Farnworth, our Eco Champion, has taken part in several training courses related to sustainability. These include energy efficiency and waste awareness. He is also due to attend an ISO 14001 internal auditing course in January 2011.



At the beginning of December 2010, eight people took part in driver efficiency training. There was an average 20% reduction in fuel usage between the 1st and 2nd/3rd runs. More information can be found in the environment section.

**Health & Safety**

We are *SAFEContractor* and *ContractorPlus* approved contractors. This means that we have been rigorously vetted to ensure our health and safety standards are of the highest quality.



## Customers

Targets	
<b>2010</b>	
Target	Progress
Implement ISO9001	In May 2010 we achieved ISO 9001 certification. This formalises our existing environmental procedures and commits us to managing and improving our performance in the future.
<b>2011</b>	
Communicate with our customers about our sustainability activities	
Reduce, reuse and use more sustainable packaging	
Investigate offering a 'take back' scheme for customers at the end of a products life	

In May 2010, we achieved ISO 9001 certification. Having a structured quality management system in place gives our customers the assurance of our service and end product.



The environmental coding system we have implemented on our supplier database (see the products section) means we can easily offer our customers more environmental friendly alternatives to traditional materials.

**“Client couldn’t speak highly enough of the Blue Energy signs and the lads that attended site, she went as far as to say she “highly commended” them for their help on site.”**  
*Blue Energy*

We also have details on our website about the environmentally friendly products we offer. The example in the box on the right, 'Greyboard', shows which traditional, less environmentally friendly products it can be used as an alternative to, the product spec, and the environmental benefits of using this product. Communicating this information in a simple format like this means it's easy for our customers to see if this product can meet their needs. The environmental benefits are also laid out so that they can communicate this to their own customers.

**Greyboard** Grey finish board is made entirely of recycled fibre.

Alternative to: White Boards End uses: Interior displays, POS and cartons

Printing processes: Screen and Digital UV cure

Thicknesses stocked: From 500 to 2900 microns

Sizes stocked: From 450 x 640mm to 760 x 1020mm

Environmental benefits: Contains no plastic, made of 100% recycled fibre, easily recycled as paper, made in Europe, safe to burn

We include information about our ISO 14001 and 9001 certification on all our documentation and marketing materials. We also have a ...



**Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail**

...notice on all our email signatures as well as the ISO certification logos.

### End of product life

We have been looking into providing our customers with information about end of life options once their signs have become redundant. We have information on our website about places and ways to recycle PVC banners.

## Community

Targets	
<b>2010</b>	
Target	Progress
Implement a more strategic approach to charitable giving	No progress
<b>2011</b>	
Implement a community engagement/development strategy	

### Community involvement - Sharp Futures

Developing talent and supporting young people with an interest in the digital print and media industry is important to us. In 2009 we were part of Sharp Project’s local partnership with schools ‘Sharp Futures’ - a digital media initiative that saw Year 9 students design a mural to wrap the Sharp building in East Manchester. The aim of initiative was to inspire and educate young people and the wider community on the exciting future of the digital industry and the building's unique position as a digital grow bag. In 2010 Astra worked with the winning team to develop the design which has been wrapped around the building. The Team had a tour of the factory and saw their design being produced. They were treated to a limousine ride for the unveiling of their design on the Sharp Building.



Sharp Futures winning design