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### Success Story

## Cutouts Ltd

### Background

Cutouts Ltd is a small family-run company specialising in the manufacture and sale of recycled gift and stationery products. As Wooden Cutouts, the company was originally set up to produce toys for children. In the late-1990s Graham and Carol Noble became concerned about the amount of waste their business was creating, and investigated recycling. Cutouts now produce a wide range of stationery and giftware from reused Printed Circuit Boards and various recycled plastics.

- *“... it was a case of 3 o'clock in the morning you think to yourself, 'I wonder what happens to all dead computers?' ...”*

### Profile

Established	1996
For-profit	Yes
Turnover	Unknown
Employees	4 full-time + seasonal
Products	Stationery and giftware
Recyclates	Printed circuit boards and various plastics
Annual volume of recyclates	Unknown
Product recycled content	High to 100%
Post-consumer waste content	Various

### Products

Cutouts Ltd produce a wide range of recycled giftware and stationery products. The reused printed circuit board range (including mouse mat, personal organiser, notebook, clipboard, credit card holder, ruler, CD holder, coaster, key ring) is the most popular. Similar products are also made from various recycled plastics.

### Recycled materials

Cutouts predominantly use pre-consumer waste in the form of manufacturers' rejects. They also use some post-consumer waste, such as plastic carrier bags and vending cups.

#### *Reprocessed materials:*

- HDPE bottles
- Juice cartons (paper, polyethylene & aluminium foil)
- Polyethylene carrier bags
- Polystyrene vending cups (HIPS)
- Polystyrene yoghurt pots (HIPS)
- Rubber wellington boots
- Toothbrush handles (acrylic & rubber)
- Paper

#### *Reused materials:*

- Printed circuit boards
- Liquid Crystal Displays

## Marketing & promotion

Cutouts products command a high price, and serve niche recycled giftware and stationery markets. They rely on their website, word of mouth and trade shows for promotion. Trade and direct customer sales are made via a website catalogue and ordering procedure. Retail sales come mainly through small independent gift shops.

- *"... You have the ecological customer ... then you have the other customer, who simply likes the product because of the product's value. ..."*

## Lessons for success

- Adding value: *"Although our products are recycled it does not mean to say that they're going to sell just because they are recycled. ..."*
- Adding value: *"... A lot of our products have, we feel, the 'wow' factor ..."*
- Production: *"... We have to outsource some of our production ..."*

## Current challenges

- Finance: *"... to build a brand like the mass-market brands, it could be done, but quite frankly we don't have the finance to do it."*

## Further issues

- Specific advice: *"... there's an awful lot of issues to be addressed there, and without addressing any one of those you could come unstuck."*
- Market niche: *"... We are so small that we could never compete within the mass market, and we don't really want to do that because we feel that would water down what we are trying to do. ..."*
- Production: *"... We have to outsource some of our production ..."*

## Contact

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