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Success Story

Recycled Bottle Glass Centre Ltd

Background

The Recycled Bottle Glass Centre (RBGC) was set up by John Barrett to employ adults with disabilities in producing decorative products made from recycled glass bottles. Recycled Phoenix Glass has been used to refurbish and repair traditional stained glass windows, and in Tiffany-style lamps. RBGC has also promoted recycling and environmental sustainability in schools. The company recently changed direction to concentrate on marketing licenses to use its patented production process to produce flat glass sheets from recycled bottles. RBGC now only processes glass for use in stained glass projects and its demonstration and training unit.

- *"... I was looking at the bottle thinking, 'if that was half the colour it would be the piece of glass that I need' ..."*

Profile

Established	1997
For-profit	No
Turnover	£100,000 *
Employees	13 *
Products	Recycled glass sheets
Recyclates	Bottle glass
Annual volume of recyclates	600 tonnes *
Product recycled content	100%
Post-consumer waste content	100%

** These figures are for 2001/02, before RBGC switched from product manufacture to licensing its production process. The first licensee, EternityGlass, was established in early 2003 with an initial annual production target of 360 tonnes of recycled bottle glass. Additional licenses have since been sold.*

Products

The Recycled Bottle Glass Centre licenses use of its patented glass bottle recycling process to produce flat sheets of Phoenix Glass. These sheets are used in:

- Stained glass decorative panels
- Building & construction
- Lampshades
- Mirrors & interior design
- Refurbishment & repair applications
- Sensory sculptures

RBGC also produces recycled glass particles (cullet) used as an aggregate substitute in landscaping applications, as well as a small range of consumer products including coasters and 'squished bottles'.

- *"The product basically starts as a bottle. ..."*

Recycled materials

The Recycled Bottle Glass Centre's products are all made from 100% recycled post-consumer glass bottle waste.

Marketing & promotion

The Recycled Bottle Glass Centre recently relocated to South Wales. It now concentrates on marketing licenses to use its patented production process to produce flat glass sheets from recycled bottles. RBGC now only processes glass for use in stained glass projects and its demonstration and training unit. The shift to licensing of production was done to meet growing demand for the product. Marketing of licenses is assisted by word-of-mouth recommendations and recycling market development organisations.

- *“... ‘we want a new stained glass window and it must have recycled glass in it,’ and that’s the reason we got the contract ...”*
- *“... what we wanted was for other people that have got different ideas to come up with different ways of using it ...”*

Lessons for success

- Marketability: *“There’s only one bit of advice and that is test the market. ...”*
- Adding value: *“... the glass that we make is very cheap, but of better quality.”*

Current challenges

- Marketing: *“... the fear is not being able to market ourselves, because I know the product works, and I know the franchise model works ...”*

Further issues

- Act locally: *“... recycling centrally is crazy. I’ve always thought that the way to approach that is to do it locally ...”*

Contact

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