

Case study

Bretford's commitment to building a sustainable business model

Sector: Furniture manufacturing / **Location:** Global

In 2011, design and furniture manufacturer Bretford® made a commitment to reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) impact to net zero by becoming CarbonNeutral® certified. The leading manufacturer of furniture for both learning and work environments is among the first in the furniture industry to achieve this globally recognized environmental certification.

Bretford consists of nearly 350 employees, 450,000 square feet of production space, and produces thousands of technology-enabled furniture products for learning environments in schools and businesses; setting a goal to reduce its carbon footprint to net zero was a feature of the overall environmental program which fits into its plan to develop the business and drive growth.

Becoming CarbonNeutral® certified

Bretford recognizes robust environmental credentials are integral to businesses going forward. Customers and stakeholders are increasingly expecting a responsible corporate attitude in regards to the environment. Its commitment to building a sustainable business of the future was demonstrated by measuring and setting a target to reduce GHG emissions to net zero.

And, in addition to achieving CarbonNeutral® company certification, Bretford went one step further by achieving CarbonNeutral® product certification for a complete line of furniture products. The EDU 2.0 line comprises tables, desks, seating and many other options to support a more sustainable school supply chain and healthier learning environment for the end users.

How did they achieve their carbon neutral goal?

Bretford reviewed its operations and processes and the business was able to:

- Assess all of its CO₂ emissions at a company and product level by an independent third party. This included the processing and transportation of raw materials; production, packaging and storage within manufacturing facilities; and volume and mode of transport to customers.
- Make modifications internally to help reduce emissions: Bretford replaced HID/sodium vapor fixtures with florescent light fixtures in its production facilities, resulting in an increase in brightness by 75 percent and a reduction in overall kilowatt hours by 40 percent for 2011, when compared to 2010.
- Complete compressor energy efficiency upgrades at both manufacturing facilities.
- Create a closed-loop process so that every Bretford product can be recycled at the end of its lifecycle.
- Measure the emissions of all raw materials and production inputs from cradle to grave, along with inbound deliveries of raw materials and fuel and electricity consumption plus the emissions from the outbound deliveries to customers.

Garcia River Forestry Project, California





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- Integrate sustainability into the corporate culture so that opportunities for change and improvements came from all areas of the business. 'Green Teams' were set up across all departments, with 15 volunteer members to promote the sustainability objectives.
- Initiate knowledge sharing and provide educational resources amongst employees, customers, business partners, and local communities.
- Build a high quality carbon offset plan, investing in renewable energy and forest conservation, and reducing all company emissions to net zero.

Helping finance unique sustainability projects around the world

Bretford chose to work with The CarbonNeutral Company to further its commitment to building a sustainable business and meet its carbon reduction targets. Mark LaCroix, Executive Vice President, The CarbonNeutral Company, remarked, "Bretford has met its carbon reduction goal by providing essential finance to renewable energy and conservation projects around the world. All the projects it supports provide high quality, independently verified and guaranteed carbon emission reductions."

The Garcia River Forest project is a project of particular importance to Bretford, supporting improved forest management in the US, where the company is headquartered. The project is located in the coastal mountain range of Southwestern Mendocino County, California. It uses conservation based forest management to absorb and store carbon emissions while restoring wildlife habitat and protecting water quality.

"We have built a strong sustainable business model we are proud of."
Chris Petrick, CEO, Bretford

Fiscalini Farms Methane Capture, California



Other projects Bretford supports through its carbon neutral program include Fiscalini Farm Methane Capture, an anaerobic digester system capturing methane from cow manure, and the Yinshan Wind Power Project which supplies the north China power grid with 120,000 MWh of clean energy every year.

Bretford's on-going commitment

Bretford is committed to furthering its sustainable business model and setting industry benchmarks by:

- Reviewing and setting back the thermostats, installing motion detector lighting in the manufacturing plants and office buildings and researching the feasibility of installing PVC panels.
- Eliminating waste – setting a target of zero waste to landfill.
- Exploring innovative materials to eliminate hazardous and toxic materials.
- Reviewing their raw materials and publishing an environmental summary for each major product group in their range.

Chris Petrick, CEO, Bretford commented, "We have built a strong sustainable business model we are proud of. We have realized cost savings from cutting down on energy use, and gained competitive edge by providing our customers with sustainable products. We will continue to use our environmental performance metrics as an essential tool for day-to-day and long-term business decision-making. Our partnership with The CarbonNeutral Company has been successful; the knowledge sharing, support and practical execution has meant we are able to offer our customers a unique environmental offering."

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