

We are part of the environment

Traditionally, economics largely determined whether a company was considered healthy. Today, there are debates about whether other metrics should be taken into account. People are beginning to ask whether a company is environmentally sound. That is, whether production is sustainable and responsible.

For quite some time, the environment has been one of the hottest topics in the public debate. This is not without reason. Environmental threats are numerous. They range from the depletion of natural resources, to regions becoming uninhabitable due to toxic waste, to the depletion of the ozone layer.



Nature is under threat.

It doesn't require much imagination to deduce that in the future, a substantial proportion of society's resources will be allocated towards environmental sustainability. This applies to society as a whole, individual citizens and to industry.

In the case of industry, such a shift will occur at the same time that

competition becomes increasingly globalised and, therefore, more intense. It places considerable demand on a modern business to act responsibly towards the environment. This also applies to us at the VKR Group.

A possible model

These days, environmental problems must be seen in context. It is not the individual source of pollution that is most interesting, but the interplay between resource extraction, production, consumption and disposal/recycling. We have attempted to illustrate the context in the model below:



The most significant problems can be found in this interaction – and, thus, also the solution.

In the model, **sustainability** becomes a benchmark for all production. Sustainability means using the Earth in a way that preserves it for future generations. We must be mindful not to deplete resources that are also necessary for the future, and we must avoid dispersing excessive amounts of toxic waste that impede the way future generations live.

Environmentally sound production

When a company is viewed in this light, it becomes clear that all production affects the environment. What matters is that the impact on the environment is minimised as much as possible.

Broadly speaking, production involves the processing of raw materials. This can be achieved with the help of additional resources, which in turn, can result in harmful waste.

Thus from an environmental perspective, it is important that:

- The procurement of raw materials has the least possible impact on the environment;
- The efficient use of raw materials is maximised; and
- The least possible amount of waste is generated.

This approach is equally important from an economic point of view – so here is an area in which economic and environmental interests harmoniously align.

Raw materials are not unlimited. For a business such as ours, which uses wood in most products, this entails a commitment to only source wood from countries with viable reforestation policies. This means that new trees are planted in country to replace those that are harvested.

Equally vital is the need to economise on the consumption of wood and all other materials, thereby reducing waste and saving energy. Wherever economically viable and feasible, waste should be sold for recycling – or otherwise disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.



VELUX Roof windows provide a comfortable living environment. Photo from the Faroe Islands.

A good work environment

So far, we have explored what might be called the external environment. But the internal work environment is also important.

In this area, there are certain problems with noise, heavy lifting, inadequate ventilation, drafts, etc., that should be addressed.

Noise can be managed through the use of sound enclosures and the acquisition of quieter machines. In other words, by reducing noise at its source.

Heavy lifting can be avoided by installing lift platforms and other lifting equipment, and, overall, by improving a factory's internal transport system to minimise heavy physical work.

Ventilation can be enhanced where necessary, and where there is access to the outdoors, draft nuisances can be minimised. In addition, job rotation can be introduced to mitigate monotony in the workplace.

Healthy production - healthy environment

As already mentioned, it is inevitable that industrial production affects the environment around us.

That said, it is through industrial production that we most effectively create the products necessary for modern society to function.

For us at the VKR Group, this means manufacturing components for beneficial, healthy buildings. The goal is to minimise the impact of production on the environment and to ensure the best possible work environment.

Ra+MEA