

China

In China, which hosts many of Brother's manufacturing facilities, production lines are being improved in an effort to enhance quality and productivity, and CSR procurement is being promoted in cooperation with suppliers.



Evolved Production Lines to Ensure Stable Running and Improve Productivity

Brother Technology (Shenzhen) (BTSL), the core manufacturing facility of Brother's printing business, is working to enhance productivity and quality by improving production lines from a product design perspective and a production engineering perspective, in order to stably deliver high quality products to customers.

Greatly reduced shipping downtime

Currently BTSL makes products with black-and-white laser engines and products with the color laser engines developed in-house in 2007, but back in 2006, it had suffered time lag to get lines back up and running again once trouble shut down production and shipping. With lessons learnt from the experience, the Technology Development Department that aims for quality improvement from a product design perspective has been placed in charge of analyzing and solving problems since 2007 in order to lessen shipping downtime. Well-versed in product design, the department analyzed the production line, accurately solved the trouble and made it so that production and shipping could be recovered quickly in the event of trouble.

Automation improved quality and reduced the number of working processes

Working with the Technology Development Department, the

Innovation Promotion Department in charge of production engineering has been focusing on automating production processes. One of those results is an automated process for greasing gears surfaces.

In the previous procedure, grease was manually applied, but workmanship varied according to operator skill. Therefore, to eliminate the inconsistencies, processing that would first heavily coat targeted areas and then remove any excess grease was needed. With this in mind, the Innovation Promotion Department developed automated equipment that could apply the appropriate amount of grease to several points on the gear surface at the same time, and introduced more than 200 of them on production lines from 2007 on into 2008. This reduced both the quality inconsistencies and the number of working processes. Moreover, because cloth is not needed to wipe off the excess grease, waste has also been reduced.

Promoting CSR Procurement with Suppliers

The Brother Group places CSR management at the foundation of business activities and, in the interest of getting suppliers to understand and practice CSR concepts, holds explanatory meetings and workshops in each of the regions.

Raising awareness via explanatory meetings and workshops

In order to share a common understanding of CSR procurement with parts and materials suppliers, the Brother Group posted its "Procurement Policy" and "CSR Procurement Standards" on the group's website in May 2008. This is originated from the idea of "Green Procurement Practices" that has been promoted to prioritize procuring environmentally friendly parts and materials since FY2001, and expanded to apply in the fields of human rights, labor, health and safety, fair trade and ethics, quality and safety, information security, and social contributions.

Moreover, the Brother Group has been supporting the efforts

of suppliers to promote CSR activities by staging CSR Procurement Explanatory Meetings and CSR Workshops. Representatives from 250 suppliers attended the CSR Procurement Explanatory Meetings held in FY2007 in Shenzhen, China. In FY2008, CSR Workshops were held for about 40 of those suppliers, with everyone presenting examples of their CSR activities and sharing opinions on ways to deal with major issues.

Also, in FY2008, CSR Procurement Explanatory Meetings were held in Zhuhai and Shanghai, China, Vietnam and Malaysia. Brother continuously promotes these kinds of awareness activities with the objective of building trust and relations with suppliers.



CSR Procurement Explanatory Meeting in Zhuhai

From suppliers

Utilizing the characteristics of each individual group company

I always thought that I was fully aware of the importance of CSR and particularly compliance, but, the CSR Explanatory Meeting that I attended reminded me of the necessity of further corporate efforts. We want to utilize the characteristics of each of our group companies in showing concern for society, the environment and employees, as one of the Brother Group's business partners.



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