

Supply chain manager targets increase in recycling

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When Brad VanGelder joined Bell, the company already had a good reputation for sustainability.

But since coming on as the paperboard packaging manufacturer's supply chain manager, VanGelder has made it his mission to increase the number of products the company is recycling.

Q: What are your goals at the company?

A: Besides the obvious ones of getting good suppliers and good prices, there's a couple areas on the supplier management side, one on the warehouse side.

On the supplier management side, one of my most

important goals is setting standards for our suppliers' performance and then holding them accountable to meet or exceed those. ... My past experience has kind of shown that if you sit down with suppliers regularly and review the data, review their performance and set specific measurable goals, you can get them to perform and improve. What we measure and how we measure it is kind of the key piece of all this and kind of the holy grail of supply chain management these days.

One of my goals is to come up with smart and efficient ways in measuring how they're doing. Those four areas are their quality performance, delivery, ... responsiveness ... and then cost control. A key piece of that is how do we get to the data so that we can sit down and intelligently speak to them about their performance and our goals.

On the warehouse management piece of it, at Bell we're continuing to grow. Kind of an obvious piece of that is I've got to find more efficient ways to store and handle our products and materials. ... As an example, I'm currently looking into new types of racking systems that are basically higher capacity so you can fit more product in the same amount of square footage in a warehouse.

Q: One of your objectives seems to be making Bell sustainable more so than it already is. Why is that important to the company?

A: I think everyone is kind of aware Bell is already a leader in sustainability. ... Being we're paper based, in the printing process we do accumulate paper scrap. Our goal is really to sell 100 percent of that stuff back to paper mills. It's kind of interesting to think of we're selling our scrap to the paper mills and they turn it back into paper and then we buy it back in paper again. ... In order to do that we have to have some pretty sophisticated systems and processes to gather all that up and send it off. ... Part of how I can kind of help improve that is working to improve our process in sorting because there's different grades of paper. Just keeping the same grades of paper together, it makes it a lot easier for the paper mills that we sell to to get consistent product, and we can also get a better price. ...



Brad VanGelder is the new supply chain manager at Bell Inc., 609 W. Algonquin St. (lloyd b. cunningham / argus leader)

One of the things, when I first came on, I discovered some of our papers, when it comes in from our paper mills it has to have a protective device to keep the integrity of the paper roll. ... We had plastic cores that were building up. In doing a lot of bids and calling, we found a home for it, and ... nearly 20,000 pounds of these plastic cores have now been reused and been turned into new plastic products or whatever they turned it into. But it was reused, which is good so we didn't put them in landfill. We got them sold.