

Disposing of electronic waste: A social responsibility calendar must

Think Green's Head of Marketing Sivahar Muthumaralingam says his company disposes of electronic waste discreetly at no cost to the environment. As climate change takes a turn for the worse due to environmental factors and protecting the environment plays a more important role in the lives of corporates, the Daily FT posed some questions to this company which features heavily on the corporate responsibility calendar

BY DINALI GOONEWARDENE

Q. What is Think Green's objective?

A. e-waste ends in land filling, which accounts for 70% of toxic waste. We want companies to be more corporate socially responsible with regard to electronic waste. They need to understand that after the usage of electronics, it has an end of life. At that point it is their responsibility to ensure they go for recycling with a professional company, rather than land filling.

Further, companies which are looking at going green, sustainability and looking for ISO 14001 certifications need to take this e-waste seriously. In this respect Think Green merges social responsibility with a professional service-oriented approach which allows companies in disposing electronics that would help them meet growing compliance requirements for greener and more secured environment.

Q. When was your company founded?

A. We have been providing e-waste services to our clients since December 2007.

Q. What is the process when a client walks in?

A. Our clients are met by setting appoint-



ments in our office when they wish to visit us. We have a board room designed to meet our clients and thereafter we listen to their issues and provide free consultation accordingly. Further, we educate them on our environment with facts and figures, and share our experience to help them to gain knowledge on sustainability and going green.

Q. How do you dispose of e-waste without endangering the environment?

A. Electronic waste is hazardous; this is the key that makes them dangerous to our environment. In order to carry out the task of disposing e-waste, we are licensed by the governing body of Sri Lanka, the Central Environment Authority (CEA), and approved under UN Basel conventions for trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste to export e-waste to our recycling partner. Thereby the e-waste handed over to us is accepted for recycling in a safe manner and our environment is protected.

Q. How do you conduct environmental audits for companies?

A. We assess the type of business and model of their business to understand the size and type of e-waste they already have or can be expected in

future. Our audit on broader perspective is conducted by determining whether or not the company is in compliance with applicable regulations or if the company is meeting its stated goals and we also look at the performance of the company in a specific issue area like carbon emissions or waste reduction and recycling.

Our environmental audits are very beneficial in reducing operational inefficiencies and improving the environmental performance of company, and achieving certification requirements, namely ISO 14001.

Q. How big is your existing client base?

A. We service more than 300 companies in Sri Lanka who belong to financial, IT and healthcare sectors and manufacturing industries.

Q. What potential do you forecast for this type of business?

A. We expect e-waste to be a growing problem in our country. Think Green is partnered with many companies which have the branches and the capacity to collect e-waste and hand over them to us for recycling and many corporate social responsible companies have shown lot of interest in working with Think Green.

Q. Do you have any competitors locally?



A. Our competitors are a few who are unauthorised to deal with e-waste. Hence we believe in focusing on environmental centric services, which is very important for a complete solution.

Q. How secure are your systems, given that your waste might contain confidential data?

A. We have the correct solution to solve this problem. We are the first and only company to provide this service. We have our own hard disk destruction policy, whereby we will completely destroy your hard disk using our machine with your presence at our warehouse. This will be carried out on the clients' approval.

Q. Have you got standards certification?

A. Yes, Think Green is an arm which represents the state-of-the-art and is a technology-driven recycling company. Our recycling facility holds ISO 14001, ISO 9001 and OHSAS 18001 certifications of its environmental, quality and safety management systems.

Q. Where are you located?

A. We are located at No. 57/33, Muthuwella Mawatha, Colombo 15.

Q. What types of waste do you dispose of?

A. Types of e-waste include computers and parts, laptops, mobile phones, telecommunication equipment, toners and cartridges and many more.

Q. What advice do you give to people wanting to dispose of waste?

A. e-waste ends in land filling, which accounts for 70% of toxic waste. Electronics contain hazardous and toxic chemicals and when disposed of in landfills, toxic chemicals from the e-waste seep into the ground, contaminating water and soil, endangering human life and other living beings.

Handing over to unauthorised parties or scrapers would end up in only benefitting them by removing the reusable components and the balance ending up in landfills.

Further, health risk and injuries are caused to unauthorised persons or scrapers who haven't the knowledge to deal with e-waste, so please be cautious with your e-waste.