



EMPIRE SCREEN PRINTING
 2022-2023
 ESG REPORT



ENVIRONMENTAL · SOCIAL · GOVERNANCE · ENVIRONMENTAL · SOCIAL · GOVERNANCE · ENVIRONMENTAL · SOCIAL · GOVERNANCE



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JIM BRUSH

PAVING THE WAY FOR LED IN SCREEN PRINTING

**I have learned a lot from Jim,
both how to do things and
sometimes what not to do.**

John Freismuth, President

”

Empire suffered a great loss on November 22, 2022. Our founder, James A. Brush, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family and close friends. This loss is felt deeply by all who had the opportunity to know Jim as their leader, mentor, and friend. Perseverance, determination, and Jim’s creative nature would start Empire on an award-winning path with LED curing technology.

Jim was born on July 14, 1939. Though Jim did not have a picture-perfect childhood, he became a man destined to impact the lives of many. Jim’s youth built in him a purposefulness that carried with him into adulthood. He was a man resolved to overcome any obstacle in the way of creating the life he wanted to have.

In 1960, Jim started Empire Screen Printing while living in his car. He poured his heart into building his business. Jim’s “never give up” attitude would help Empire to evolve and continuously grow. As Jim navigated the business environment, he surrounded himself with intelligent, devoted people. His approach of fearlessness would inspire his team to constantly push the envelope.

After reading an article about LED curing in digital development, Jim gave his team every resource to move forward with this advancement. His willingness to invest in Empire is the backbone of our continued success.



Breaking ground on Empire's facility

Jim was a constant mentor to Empire's leadership, providing security, perspective, and support. Empire president John Freismuth stated, "I have learned a lot from Jim, both how to do things and sometimes what not to do. I attribute Empire winning the *I Am Not Afraid* Award to Jim because he supported risk-taking." This mindset runs deep at Empire and will always be associated with how Jim started the company.

He was an avid outdoorsman. From a young age, Jim had a passion for fishing and hunting. He respected people with the same love of wildlife he held. Hunting was a hobby Jim immensely enjoyed alone and with others. He married Cindy in 1996, and the two would go on many hunting adventures, which Jim recorded in his book, **The Silent Hunter**. Writing his book gave him an outlet for one of his favorite pastimes: storytelling. Anyone lucky enough to spend time with Jim would inevitably get to share in retelling a good story.

Always determined whenever it concerned family, Jim spent much effort to ensure his people felt included. Jim leaves behind his wife Cindy, ten children, 25 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandson, and two sisters. His upbringing would lend itself to developing a deep love for his growing family. This family would include every employee at Empire. Jim's presence will forever remain legendary at Empire Screen Printing. His "never give up" attitude is the legacy left behind in the Empire he built.



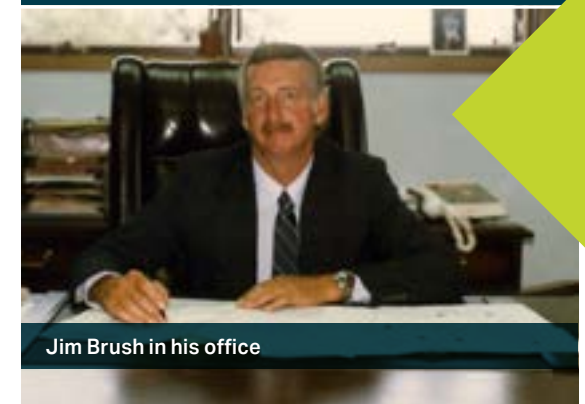
Green Tier Presentation



Jim & Cindy Brush



Empire's first building: Jim's garage



Jim Brush in his office

I attribute Empire winning the *I Am Not Afraid* award to Jim because he supported risk-taking.

John Freismuth, President

”

INTRODUCTION

This is Empire's inaugural ESG Annual Report. This report incorporates our existing Environmental Management System (EMS), while introducing Social and Governance. The timeframe covers October 2022 to December 2023. The EMS Metrics are based on Empire's fiscal year (Oct. 2022 - Sept. 2023).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Company

Empire Screen Printing's 2022-2023 ESG annual report highlights our success as a leading print provider for the OEM and POP markets.

As a family-owned, award-winning business, we take pride in our commitment to sustainable business practices that preserve the natural beauty of our surroundings.

Nestled between the bluffs in Onalaska, Wisconsin, Empire Screen Printing was established in 1960. Our building has 150,000 sq. feet of manufacturing and employs nearly 200 people.

Empire offers a full range of products, including overlays, vinyl decals, nameplates, magnets, and crystal-line domes, produced using UV LED screening, digital and flexographic printing.

With a dedication to excellence and customer satisfaction, we focus on innovative solutions and sustainability that positions Empire Screen Printing for continued success for years to come.



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Dear Fellow Stakeholders

As President of Empire Screen Printing, I am writing to you to highlight our unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability; principles that align with the core of our operations and business principles.

Founded in 1960, Empire Screen Printing has grown from a humble family-owned business in Onalaska, Wisconsin, to a recognized leader in the printing industry. Our journey has been marked by a relentless pursuit of innovation, quality, and sustainability. We are not just printers; we are pioneers in environmentally friendly printing technology.

We have always believed the health of our employees is our responsibility. This belief led us to adopt and perfect revolutionary UV LED ink curing technology. Our investment into this innovation is a testament to our dedication to reducing our environmental footprint. This technology not only enhances the quality of our products but also significantly minimizes energy consumption and eliminates the release of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), ensuring a safer workplace and a cleaner environment.

Being a Wisconsin Green Tier Company is not just a title but a reflection of our daily practices. Our obligation goes beyond compliance with local and EPA environmental standards; it's about setting new benchmarks in sustainable business practices. We continuously invest

in technologies that aim to reduce our impacts on our environment.

Our pledge to sustainability is matched by our commitment to our clients. We understand the value we provide is not just through our products but also through our practices. By choosing Empire Screen Printing, our clients become partners in our sustainability journey, contributing to a greener industry and a healthier planet.

As we look to the future, our focus remains steadfast on innovation, quality, and sustainability. We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and are committed to driving positive change in the printing industry and beyond. We invite you to join us in this journey, to be part of a movement that is not just about doing business but about making a difference.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to the opportunity to work together towards a more sustainable future.

Warm regards.

John Freismuth
President, Empire Screen Printing



OUR STORY



Products and Manufacturing Process

Solutions-based Empire Screen Printing is blazing the trail as the top environmentally-friendly screen print manufacturer of high-quality printed products for the OEM and POP markets.

Empire manufactures a wide range of custom products with minimal impact on the environment:

- » **Overlays**
- » **Crystal-line Domes**
- » **Magnets**
- » **Embossing**
- » **Continuous print**
- » **Decals**
- » **Nameplates**
- » **Serializing**
- » **Roll labels**
- » **POP signage**

With various printing capabilities, Empire’s core niche is screen printing. We offer digital and flexographic printing capabilities to expand our service options, allowing our customers to purchase these products from a supplier they trust without managing multiple vendors.

Screen Printing Standards

To understand Empire’s uniqueness, you must first understand the industry norm. Screen printing makes up roughly 2% of all printed materials. In a niche market, very few equipment manufacturers focus on screen printing, because the industry-standard uses solvent inks, where 60% of the ink sticks to the substrate, while 40% evaporates, producing highly



Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)—used for their durability, fade-resistant, and waterproof nature. However, this ink comes at a cost to the health and safety of the employee. Moreover, large ventilation systems are required to circulate the removal of the VOCs from the environment, and make-up air replacement is necessary.

In this process, screen printers typically use 1-color presses to hold registration between each color and large conveyer ovens to surface-cure the inks; a 24-hour waiting period between applying laminations and adhesive is needed, extending the turnaround time to the customers.

Competing markets, such as digital printing, offer quick turns and compete

with shorter lead times for customers. Because of this advantage, equipment manufacturers are focusing their attention on this growing market.

Cellular Manufacturing

Before 2008, most of Empire’s manufacturing processes fit the standard, with work done departmentally. As work passed between the departments, an accumulation of wasted time, steps, space, and product led to lead times of eight or more weeks. The average number of steps a job traveled was around 11,000. To grow the business, adding equipment resulted in multiple building expansions. Each area was responsible for its operation, but who was responsible for quality? The true answer was everyone and no

one at the same time. Empire was no different from its competitors and used a quality inspection team to make the management decisions if the product was sellable despite minor flaws, making all non-passable flaws waste, and the process started over.

Following an inspiring presentation by a former Toyota employee, John read the book *The Toyota Way: 14 Management Principles from the World's Greatest Manufacturer* written by Jeffrey K. Liker and imagined a version of cellular manufacturing that would make Empire a leader in the printing industry. Not only would it impact lead time and quality, but it would also be the most sustainable screen-printing process available. Using this idea, Empire began organizing what they would need to move forward with this vision. As of 2008, Empire's vision was to create a manufacturing process based on producing products from raw materials to finished goods in one-piece flow.

Our cellular-manufacturing concept took all the equipment necessary to complete a product and aligned it in process order. This alignment allowed the operators to have a finished product within 20 minutes without feeling they were doing more work. John said, "For years, management asked employees to work faster; we just gave them a system to work consistently."

Embracing the Edward Deming quote, "*The average worker is willing to work well and work hard given an environment where they are permitted to think and exercise control over quality.*" Empire has given cell operators total control over its quality by allowing them to become the vendor to the following operation and the customer of the operation proceeding. Communicating quality concerns in real-time, improving

instantaneously to fix the problems and removing defective parts with minimal downtime and material waste.

Improving Conveyance

With conveyance as one of the leading wastes in manufacturing, cellular functionality helps eliminate over 90% of the steps needed to move the product from process to process. The cell's gap is between three to five feet from process to process. This distance is close enough for the operator to communicate immediate feedback between operations. The control of cycle time creates an adequate flow where each employee moves product through the system to meet customer takt time.

With the system defined, Empire was also looking to combine another initiative it was working on that would be the ultimate in screen print sustainability.

UV LED Curing Technology

Around the same time frame, an article about UV-LED curing usage in digital printing sparked the attention of Jim Brush. This article ultimately became the springboard for Empire to build sustainability into the screen print process. The challenge would be convincing the vendors to commit time and resources to create the

” The average worker is competent and willing to work well, given an environment in which they are permitted to think and exercise control over quality.

W. Edwards Deming

ink technology needed to make the technology viable. John would approach Empire's largest ink vendor only to find out they had started work on their own green initiative. This work did not align with where John saw the future going, but he got the buy-in necessary from another ink supplier. Working together, Empire would provide equipment for the supplier to test the curing of the ink using LED lights.

Empire's belief that this would be the future of printing was based on the sustainable advantage of LED curing. Most of our inks at the time were UV. UV inks were first initiated into Empire's manufacturing process in the 1970s but didn't become our norm until the early 2000s. The switch from solvent inks to UV was in direct relation to improving the safety and working environment for

our employees. UV doesn't emit VOCs; 100% of the ink remains on the substrate and offers the same durability and fade-resistents as solvent inks. However, curing UV inks uses mercury vapor bulbs, which produce ozone emissions. Thus, large ventilation systems are required in the process. Mercury bulbs need time to heat up and cool down, so they are always on during production. These bulbs last roughly 1,000 hours, causing downtime for maintenance replacement and particular disposal of the bulbs. Mercury bulbs use heat to cure, causing distortion and limiting the types of material to print on. Heat also causes wait time between operations, similar to solvent inks. All of this comes at an overall energy and process improvement expense.

With LED curing technology, we discovered a 98% reduction in energy use when comparing presses equipped with UV Mercury. LED curing uses light rather than heat and doesn't emit ozone emissions, eliminating the need for large ventilation systems. It's instant on/off and plugs into a standard 120w outlet.

The significant advantage of LED was the elimination of heat from the screening process, which allowed us to print on more substrates and have the ability to complete the product without racking between printing and adding laminations or adhesives. This discovery catapulted our cellular concept into reality.

LED also offered up a smaller footprint for curing space. We could now increase capacity by converting existing equipment to LED without adding more space to our facilities.

As stated earlier, the screen print industry makes up a small percentage of print. This technology was not in

process. Empire was the driver of UV LED ink-curing technology and pioneered the first press equipped with this technology, introducing it to the industry in 2011. Today, we have converted 92% of our screen print presses to LED, and 100% of our inks are UV.

Cellular manufacturing and UV LED have expanded our manufacturing capabilities. We can produce up to 12 colors at a time and finish what we start at the source. Because of our process, Empire is a viable screen print manufacturer that can compete in a digital era with the ability to produce long-lasting quality printed products with quick turn times for our customers.



INTEGRATED ONE-PIECE FLOW CELLULAR MANUFACTURING

Empire's cellular manufacturing process is designed to transform raw materials into finished goods using a one-piece flow system. This approach is ideal for ensuring high-quality, consistent products with on-time delivery. The real-time risk identification and resolution minimizes downtime and defects, providing a reliable and efficient process.

PRECISION AND VERSATILITY IN PRINTING

Our diverse printing and finishing options, complemented by visual registration, allow Empire to cater to our customers' specific needs and unique requirements.

ECO-FRIENDLY SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

Empire's commitment to environmentally friendly UV LED screen printing technology aligns with the growing focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria. By choosing Empire, our award-winning UV LED technology lessens our environmental impacts and supports the need for companies looking to enhance their own ESG credentials.

A HISTORY OF EMPIRE



1960

ORIGINAL LOCATION

Empire's first production facility opens on French Island in La Crosse, WI

Empire moves to its new and current home in Onalaska, WI.

THE MOVE

1967



1970's

APPLIANCES

Empire adds the appliance industry (Speed Queen)

Empire builds its corporate headquarters with 19 additions added since then.

HEADQUARTERS

1975



1985

A NEW FRONTIER

Empire receives its first NASA government contract.

A HISTORY OF EMPIRE



Empire adds doming to its production line.

CRYSTAL-LINE DOMING



Empire organizes its first National Sales Meeting to promote the industry.

PARTNERS IN PRINTING



After years of R&D, Empire introduces the world's first 5-color Roll-to-Roll Screen Printing press using LED Curing Technology.

1987

COMMUNITY

Empire starts printing Children's Miracle Network holiday cards, donating all the labor and material.

1995



CUTTING EDGE

The first Empire Express 3-color press goes into production.
Implemented Direct-to-Screen output.

2007

2010



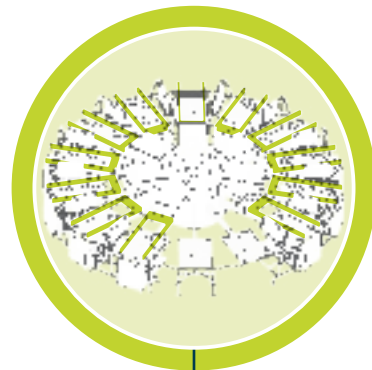
2011

INDUSTRY LEADING

A HISTORY OF EMPIRE



Empire wins the Wisconsin Family Business of the Year Award.



Empire introduces the Graphium, a UV LED roll-to-roll digital, flexo hybrid press.



2013

2016

2017

2019

2023

GREEN TIER

Empire becomes Green Tier 1 certified, and creates an Environment Management System.

AWARD WINNING



LEGACY PRESS

Empire's Machine Shop designs a 12-color press retrofitted from a former 6-color press, utilizing UV LED Technology.

DIGITAL EXPANSION



THE FUTURE

Empire introduces robotics into cellular manufacturing.

OUR COMPANY PHILOSOPHY



Our Mission

At Empire, we are dedicated to being a cutting-edge print supplier. We create custom products that enrich our customers' brand and identity by providing a friendly, knowledgeable customer experience every time.

Our Vision

Empire is customer focused. We listen to both our internal and external customers and look to improve based upon their input. Through relentless pursuit of customer satisfaction, we work to grow our customer base and make our company strong. We develop our people by investing in education and training to empower them to make improvements to the products, services, processes and themselves. We concentrate on implementing sustainable production methods that are environmentally safe to protect our planet for future generations.



Our Core Values

RESPECT

Create a culture that inspires creativity and regard for one another's input and contributions.

INTEGRITY

Demonstrate sound moral and ethical values to instill trust with our employees, customers, suppliers, and within our community.

RESPONSIBILITY

Take the initiative to lead by example and challenge oneself to shape the future.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

Have the ability to not only accept change, but to look for it through strategic goals and teamwork.

KNOWLEDGE

Take every opportunity to learn and share one's expertise.

EXCELLENCE

Never settle for good. Strive for greatness.





DNR GREEN TIER PARTICIPATION



DNR Relationships and Added Value

In July, 2022, Empire was recognized for our 10-year milestone of being a DNR Green Tier participant since 2013. This recognition is a testament to our ongoing commitment to sustainability and accountability for our activities and processes, both internally and within our community.

As a member of Green Tier, we have gained valuable insight on how to be more environmentally responsible every year. The Green Tier guidelines

have helped us develop and implement effective sustainability policies and objectives that align with our organizational values, and gives us a more realistic view of what we are capable of achieving.

We are committed to our sustainability policy and have established our own environmental management system, which is audited both internally and externally.



GREEN MASTERS MATERIALITY ASSESSMENT **E S G**

What is WSBC/Green Masters

The **Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council (WSBC)** is a nonprofit that helps businesses advance sustainability. According to the WSBC website*, “We support businesses and sustainability professionals through programming, education, and with resources and tools.”

The **Green Masters Program** (created by WSBC) is a tool to define, prioritize, measure, and manage your company’s sustainability performance in environmental, social and governance (ESG) topics that are meaningful to your organization and your stakeholders. A materiality matrix is used to help score each section of ESG to help prioritize issues and help create objectives.

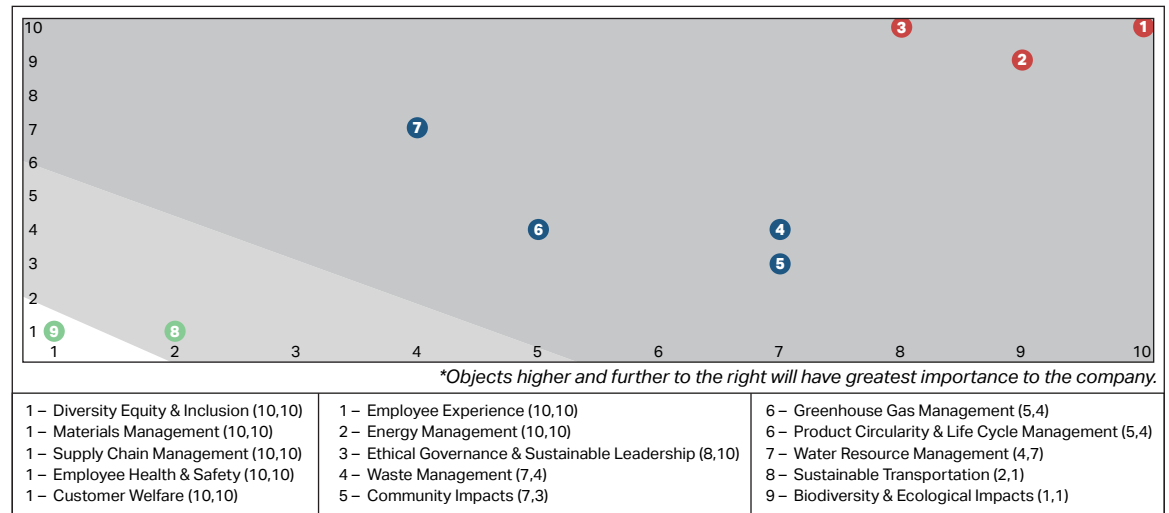
Empire Becomes a WSBC Member

Manufacturing with UV LED technology has put Empire at the forefront of sustainability and is leading the print industry with this technology. It has been our focus to share this technology and our story. Part of this journey is to join associations with like-minded companies to help learn and grow from one another.

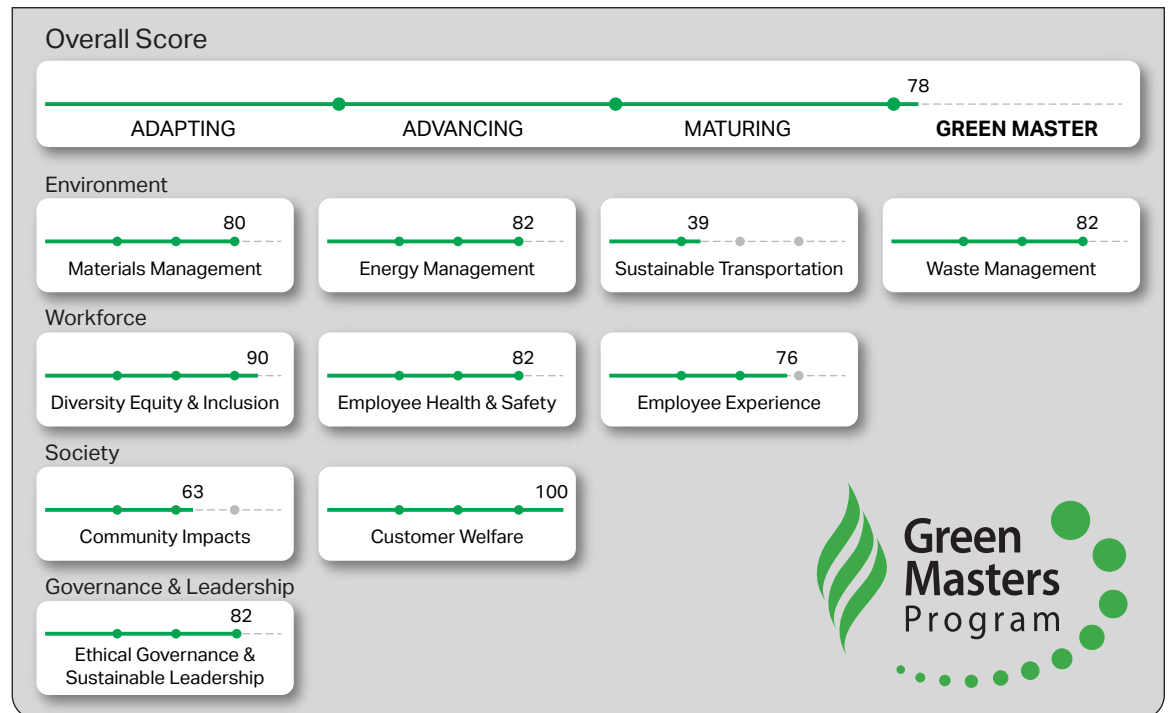
Becoming a WSBC member has helped Empire with our ESG journey. Their tools and resources have helped us personalize needs and objectives that are important to us within the printing industry.

*From WSBC website: <https://www.wisconsinsustainability.com/greenmasters>

Empire Screen Printing, Inc. - Materiality Matrix



Empire Screen Printing, Inc. - Dashboard



EMPIRE'S APPROACH TO ESG



Expanding Our EMS Annual Report

For the last ten years, Empire has been a Green Tier participant through the Wisconsin DNR. Our Environmental Management System requires us to provide an annual report of our company's environmental impact, but with the growing acceptance of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) we were inspired to expand our report.

In the United States, the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) is requiring publicly-traded companies to provide information based on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices that may be important to investors. Although Empire is not a publicly held company and is not required to provide this information, we felt it was important to work towards a functioning ESG report, in conjunction with our Core Values.

In 2023, we took the approach of expanding on our DNR Green Tier Environmental Management System report to incorporate Social and Governance to make this an all-encompassing ESG annual report. This information guides our organization towards the future.

We have organized content in this report based on how subjects primarily affect us as a company. We have included icons on each page, showing what subjects meet our Green Tier guidelines as well as how it also indirectly may influence other aspects of ESG.



THE FULL SCOPE OF THIS ESG REPORT COVERS THE TIME FRAME FROM

OCTOBER 2022 – DECEMBER 2023

THE EMS METRICS ARE BASED ON OUR FISCAL YEAR

OCTOBER 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2023

E ENVIRONMENTAL

S SOCIAL

G GOVERNANCE

..... MEETS GUIDELINES FOR WI DNR GREEN TIER EMS ANNUAL REPORT



ENVIRONMENTAL

Celebrating 10 years as a Green Tier Participant, this EMS annual report covers Empire Screen Printing's fiscal year, October 2022 - September 2023.



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY



FOCUS | Empire's focus is providing our customers with products and services that produce sustainable results and business practices. Through our relentless pursuit of customer satisfaction, we will grow Empire's customer base and strengthen our company. We will strive to improve our process by listening to our customers, collaborating with our business partners and developing our people through education and training. Our employees will be empowered to continually make improvements to the process, their work environment and themselves. We will develop production methods that implement sustainable environmental, health and safety (EHS) practices into all aspects of our operations.

COMMIT | We commit to being compliant with all applicable EHS and labor regulations (federal and state). We will continue to implement programs and procedures in accordance with these requirements.

PLEDGE | We pledge to look for new opportunities and innovations that will help enhance and improve our sustainability program beyond regulatory compliance. We will strive to incorporate activities and procedures that will reduce our impact on the environment as well as improving the quality of health and wellness of the employees. We will measure our progress through regular audits and annual reviews.

STRIVE | Empire will strive to implement procedures to target prevention of activities, services or products that may cause harm to human health, safety, or the environment. These procedures will be designed to affect Empire and/or the surrounding community.

COMMUNICATE | We will communicate our sustainability commitment to our employees, vendors, customers and community through educational training and marketing. We will encourage their input on meeting our goals and improving our procedures.



ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE



Beyond Compliance

ESG FRAMEWORK: Just as we were ahead of the curve with LED Curing Technology in our industry, and being one of the first screen printing companies to join Green Tier, we feel it's important to do things not because we have to, but because we feel it's best for our company, employees, community and the environment. Incorporating Social and Governance with our current Environmental Management System report, we are showing we believe in what we do, as well as holding us responsible for our activities and processes in all aspects of our company.

Performance Improvements

COMPUTER REPLACEMENTS: The Art Department replaced five Mac Towers with Mac Minis. This had a 72% reduction in cost and a 77% reduction in energy:

COMPUTER ENERGY COST/ENERGY SAVINGS:	
5 Mac Towers	
Energy Cost per year	\$349
kWh per year	3,880 kWh
6 Mac Minis	
Energy Cost per year	\$80
kWh per year	891 kWh
<i>based on 18 hr/day, 198 days/year</i>	
This is a 77% reduction in cost and a energy usage.	

(Performance Improvements)

COPPER MONITORING: In 2019, we received a non-conformance from the DNR, regarding the lead &/or copper levels in the Clean Room water. This test site previously had a drinking fountain, but it was removed and had not been used for a long period of time. Since lead and copper monitoring pertain to drinking water, the sampling site was changed to a location that employees use, and annual testing was performed, per DNR requirement.

We received a letter in November 2022 lifting our Lead and Copper reporting to normal requirements (once every three years), since our lead/copper levels have met the appropriate requirements after three years of consecutive testing.

AUTO-LAMINATORS: We created two auto-laminators to help reduce the equipment footprint, improve material conveyance, manufacturing efficiency, and automate the process. This project can be found in our 2022-2023 Objectives section.



Significant Aspects/Impacts

SCREEN MAKING AUTOMATION:

At Empire, our journey of continuous improvement is guided by a steadfast commitment to enhancing safety, quality, production, and environmental impact. These principles are integral to our sustainable business operations.

In 2022, we took a significant step forward by integrating a state-of-the-art CST imaging unit coupled with an in-flow Zentner developing unit. This advancement introduced an automated 10-magazine take-up belt system, streamlining the screen imaging process. However, we encountered a challenge: post-wash particles remained on the screens, compromising quality and necessitating manual re-washing, thus adding labor and causing delays in production.



Programming the Screen Making Conveyor

(Significant Aspects/Impacts)

To address this, we developed a plan to implement an innovative solution in July of 2023: an automated conveyor system extending from the developing unit. This system will feature a precision blow-out and drying mechanism, effectively removing any residual debris and instantly drying the screens as they exit the developer. The screens will then be efficiently transported to our pinning and inspection room. Here, we will relocate the 10-magazine take-up belt to facilitate streamlined inspection and preparation processes, including pinning, blocking out, and taping.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

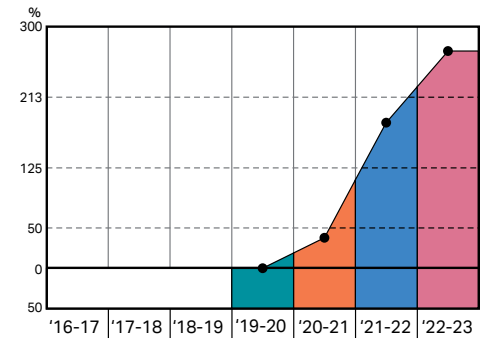


Moreover, to enhance employee safety and reduce physical strain, we will introduce powered equipment for easier screen handling, minimizing the need for manual lifting. This improvement is a testament to our commitment to not only automating the imaging process up to the final preparation stages but also to ensuring the well-being of our employees and maintaining high-quality standards. Our focus remains on sustainable, efficient, and safe production practices, as we continue to innovate and lead in our industry.

This continuing improvement will be added to our 2023-2024 future objectives.

Setbacks or Challenges

WATER USAGE: In 2021, we set out a goal to improve our screen-making by purchasing equipment that automates the screen-making process. We started with a 10-magazine Dane 250 reclaiming unit. This unit is fully enclosed, washes



Water Usage • Screen Making Tanks^s
Gallons per 1,000 Impressions

the ink out, removes the emulsions, and gives a final rinse before releasing it into a clean screen magazine where screens are hazed and degreased for coating and reused. In late 2021, we purchased a 10-magazine CST laser exposure unit with an inline Zetner auto-developer. Automation is now used for both reclaiming and developing screens. Both units and improvements have significantly increased our efficiencies in processing screens. They have also eliminated the heavy lifting for the employees, reducing the number of touches by more than half.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE



(Setbacks or Challenges)

The closed loop systems eliminates the exposure to chemicals, allowing for a work environment that reduces risk to employee health and safety. This also allows us to reclaim and reuse screen mesh.

Going into this implementation, we thought the water would be reduced due to the built-in systems with some level of water and chemical recycling systems. We were hoping for a 2-5% reduction in water usage. However, our results have been steadily increasing. The Dane's recycling of the water never worked as intended. After implementation, the solids built up and backed up the system, so the water, instead of being recycled, was discharged to our holding tanks. The Zetner uses recycled water up to the final rinse, but we're seeing this hasn't helped with water savings either. Based on the numbers, more water is needed to clean and flush the screens than our previous high-pressure manual washing process.

It is still determined that water usage continues to increase in the screen-making area. We have found even though the number of screens has gone down and we moved to a four-day work week, our Tank Water Hauler is still coming out five days a week to empty and

haul our screen-making holding tank. Up to this point, we have not metered our water usage. We have based our reports on our Hauler's bill. Since we didn't have a good way to gauge if this was accurate, we placed meters on our main water line that feeds the equipment used in screen making and then is discharged into the holding tank. This will give us the actual usage.

WATER IMPACTS: Our water is pulled from our onsite wells. This water is utilized to wash and develop screens in our screen-making department. The water is then picked up by the Tank Water Hauler, which hauls it to our locate wastewater treatment facility in La Crosse, WI. Round trip from the Tank Water Hauler, to Empire, to Waste Water Treatment in La Crosse, and then back to the Tank Water Hauler is 34.9 miles. This is being traveled five days a week, which emits approximately 31.08 lbs of CO₂ per trip / 155.4 lbs per week.*

Once at the La Crosse Waste Water Treatment Facility, the water goes through a vigorous treatment process to clean and ultimately is discharged into the Mississippi River.

**Diesel haulers contribute to Greenhouse gas: one gallon of diesel fuel emits 22.44 pounds of CO₂ when combusted and driving one mile on average emits 404 grams of CO₂: <https://impactful.ninja/the-carbon-footprint-of-diesel-fuel/>*



Dane Auto Reclaimer

2022-2023

GOALS & OBJECTIVES OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE #1

Implement Sustainable Print Methods using UV LED Technology by purchasing a new 9-color press and adding UV LED Curing.

OBJECTIVE #2

Implement Sustainable Equipment used in the Manufacturing process by building two auto-laminators.

OBJECTIVE #3

Make Improvements to our EMS Manual with an alignment to ESG Regulations.

OBJECTIVE #4

Map Out Electrical Meters to create a plan for the future energy infrastructure of the plant.



OBJECTIVE #1

IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE PRINT METHODS USING UV LED TECHNOLOGY



Purchase A New 9-Color Press (ROQ) and Add UV LED Curing

This is a continuous objective from last year, due to the late delivery of the press. The ROQ was a T-Shirt press purchased with no lights, which will be converted to LED curing. There is no baseline comparison. This will be a two-year plan.

ACTION ITEMS & RESULTS FOR YEAR #1 (2022-23):

1. Retrofit with UV LED technology by January 2023.

The ROQ press was retrofitted with LED curing units in July 2023.

2. Put press into semi-production, using it as an R&D press, by September 2023.

When we moved the ROQ press out to cell 2 our focus switched to getting the 25x38 up and running in its new spot and integrating the new universal robots in time for the Expo show in July 2023. Since the ROQ was moved it has not been put into production.

Management has put this on hold with no plans for implementation. After retrofitting the LED lights, the tables were not up to our quality standards to perform the work accurately. The LED lights are on the press, but can be used for other improvements if needed. Work and improvements were shifted over to MVS (Middle Value Stream), where we are working on robotic automation using one operator per cell.



9-Color ROQ Press

OBJECTIVE #2

IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE EQUIPMENT USED IN THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS



Build Two Auto-Laminators

The Auto Laminator combines a Laminator and Splitter into one automatic process. Instead of having a person to laminate and another person to split, the person doing the printing will drop the sheet onto the Auto Laminator which will center the sheet, laminate it and split it automatically. The lamination or adhesive that is applied makes the sheets combine end to end like a web. This web can then go directly into a Preco machine to get cut and finished or if there is no Preco in that cell, it can be cut off into sheets and die cut by hand.



1 sheet is placed on the rollers, directly from the press.



2 Clamps guide the part on the rollers



3 The laminator automatically applies lamination / adhesive.



The MVS Auto-laminator puts the parts on a roll, which then goes directly into a Preco machine to get cut and finished.

PROGRESS:

The first one was created for MVS (Middle Value Stream) and was completed and put into production in July 2023. However, we discovered some safety issues and quickly took it out of production to make improvements. Our second version, built for SVS, was completed in August 2023, with significant upgrades and improvements based on the lessons learned from the first version.

Our auto-laminators are designed to streamline the production process, with faster setup times and more options. The printed part is placed on the rollers, and clamps guide it automatically into the laminator, and adhesive is applied.

The MVS Laminator creates rolls to be Preco cut, and the SVS Laminator cuts the parts back into sheets and are die-cut.

One of the significant advantages of our auto-laminators is that they sit next to the presses, allowing one operator to feed both the printing press and the laminator, where previously, we required up to three people. This not only improves the material conveyance and procedure but also reduces handling and increases overall efficiency.

With our new auto-laminators, we are confident that our production process will be more efficient, safer, and more streamlined than ever before.

OBJECTIVE #3

MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR EMS MANUAL WITH AN ALIGNMENT TO ESG REGULATIONS



In order to improve our day-to-day procedures as well as long-term objectives and goals, we will update our EMS to reflect new requirements brought forth by the WI DNR and ISO, including an alignment to the ESG regulations.

ACTION ITEMS & RESULTS

1. **Update the Sustainability Policy by June 2023.**

We were not able to complete this - our focus was put on our Partners in Printing Expo, so this has been moved to 2023-24 objectives.

2. **Update the EMS Manual to ISO 14001_2015 requirements by June 2023.**

This is approximately 50-60% complete. We were not able to finish due to the PIP Expo and reduction in staff. This will carry over for completion in the 2023-2024 objectives.

3. **Apply EMS Audit suggested improvements:**

a. **No VOC air fresheners in bathroom**

VOC air fresheners were removed October 2022 and replaced with product from Fresh Products (freshproducts.com), which uses essential oils instead of sprays.

b. **Create 5S Audit Teams**

Instead of creating designated teams, each cell and value stream works on auditing and cleaning areas of production daily at the end of their shifts. The next shift will verify everything is in its spot at the start of the shift and then ensure items are cleaned up at the end.

c. **Solar Power Training/Assessment to determine if our location would meet the needs of our facility as a supportive use of power.**

Our engineer attended a class on solar training in Feb 2023 - as of July 2023, No assessment has been done at Empire regarding solar opportunities at this time.

4. **Research and incorporate activities that follow ESG (Environmental, Social, Corporate Governance) regulations:**

a. **Research and keep current on the latest ESG regulations - send Management team to at least one ESG seminar and/or webinar on this subject.**

Upper Management, Supervisors, Account Managers, and Outside Reps attended Jessie Ortiz' session on ESG at the PIP Expo in July 2023.

b. **17 Sustainability Goals:** **» Choose one charitable activity for a local non-profit organization, to support local community needs.**

Empire (along with 3M) organized a golf tournament during the PIP Expo in July 2023. Proceeds went to the Boys & Girls Club of the Greater La Crosse Area. The event raised \$5,191.51.

» **Social: Create written policies in our company handbook that incorporates diversity, human trafficking, anticorruption, anti-discrimination, and pay equity.**

Written policies have been completed and are awaiting for approval from upper management before implementing these policies into the Employee Handbook. This will be completed during the 2023-24 year. These policies involve:

- ▶ Equal Opportunity-Updates covers anti-discrimination
- ▶ American's with Disabilities (ADA)-update
- ▶ Commitment to Diversity
- ▶ Added Payscale policy

OBJECTIVE #4 MAP OUT ELECTRICAL METERS



To meet the needs of the future and create a plan for the future energy infrastructure of the plant, we've created an electrical grid outline as a succession plan to identify power sources and activities throughout the production floor.

ACTION ITEMS & RESULTS

1. Create a Line 1 Electrical Diagram by January 2023.

A Line 1 Electrical Diagram was completed in January 2023 and saved to the company network under our Quality Management System (QMS).

They performed an Arc Flash study, which is Phase 2 of the Electrical Line Diagram. The study was evaluated and labels were created to be put on our electrical grid. The label identifies the Arc Flash and proper PPE. These labels will be put on all corresponding electrical units by August 2024.

Phase 3 will be creating an index key for the Electrical Diagram and Arc Label, to be completed by August 2024.

2. Update the Meters Plant map by August 2023.

This is 90% complete.

We are working with the fire department to make sure fire exits and systems are updated and accurate.

Over the last couple of years, we have moved several pieces of equipment to different locations in the plant. The building maps will be updated to correspond to these changes.

3. Create an accountability process that updates the Line 1 map when equipment is moved or added to the grid.

Our on-site electrician will update and maintain the Line 1 Electrical chart. As equipment is added, moved, or removed, the electrician will revise the Line 1 chart. This is necessary to ensure the next generation of electricians will have the knowledge and expertise to maintain and evaluate our electrical systems safely. This document has been saved to our QMS: Resources location.

This aspect of the job requirements has been added to the Electrician's job description and responsibilities.

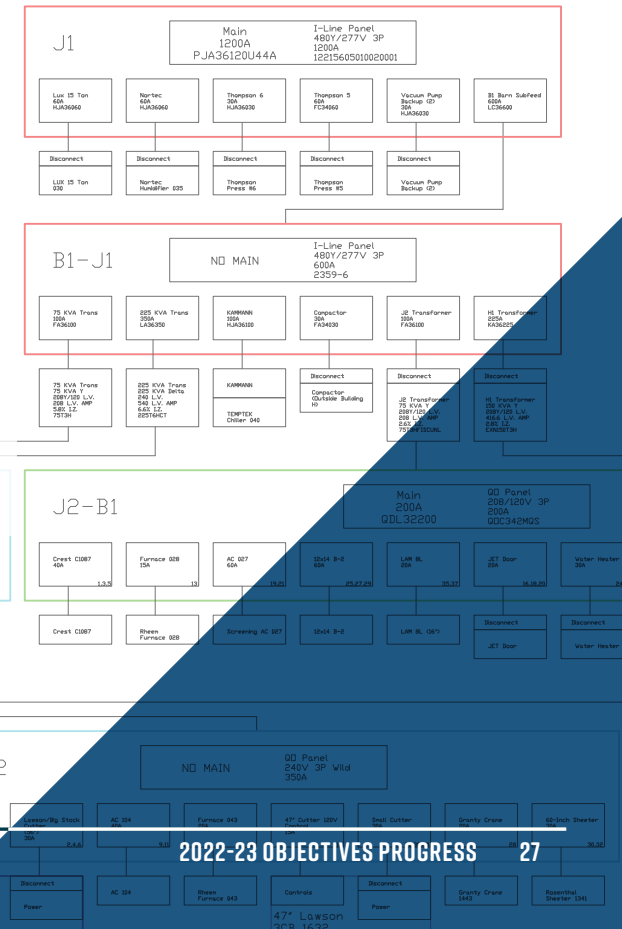
WARNING

**Arc Flash and Shock Hazard
Appropriate PPE Required**

FLASH PROTECTION		SHOCK PROTECTION	
Incident Energy at:	18 in	Shock Risk When Cover is Removed:	240 VAC
Min. Arc Rating:	1.90 cal/cm²	Limited Approach:	42 in
Arc Flash Boundary:	24 in	Restricted Approach:	12 in
Fault Current:	2,601 A	Bus Name:	
Site Specific PPE:	1	Main Vacuum Pump Prot Dev: RK5 Fuse 100 A Fed From: Panel B2	

QMS: Resources: Plant Electrical: Arc Flash Labels

Example of Arc Flash / PPE Labels



ENVIRONMENTAL METRICS AT A GLANCE



11,277,360
annual impressions



3,670 lbs
hazardous waste



11,739 lbs
VOCs



2,732,720 kWh
electricity



45.15 lbs
ozone-depleting substances



5,793,109,320 MMBtus
natural gas



64.87 tons
recycled waste



685 gal
diesel (emergency generator)



191.74 tons
burn-for-energy waste



843,050 gal
water usage



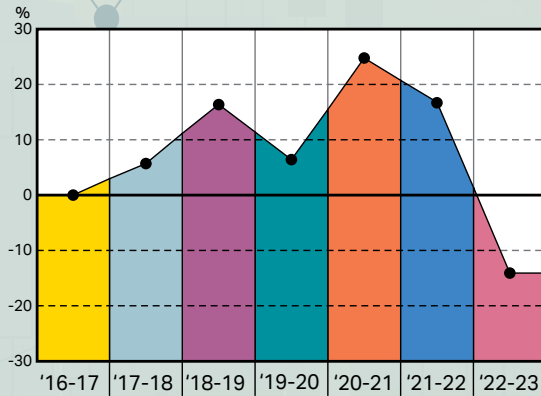
35.82 tons
landfill waste



5 company vehicles
(2) gas vehicles | (1) hybrid vehicle
(1) Gas-run equipment | (1) Diesel-run equipment



Business Index (Impressions)



Business Index Quantity:
1,000 Impressions

● (2016-2017)	13,126,947	Baseline
○ 2017-2018	13,903,316	5.91% ↑
● 2018-2019	15,273,643	16.35% ↑
● 2019-2020	13,964,675	6.38% ↑
● 2020-2021	16,374,440	24.74% ↑
● 2021-2022	15,328,079	16.77% ↑
● 2022-2023	11,277,360	14.09% ↓

ENVIRONMENTAL METRICS

Business Index

As a means of measuring the total throughput of our products, Empire uses IMPRESSIONS as our business index.

Impressions refer to a single sheet or repeat length (if produced on a roll) of material that is used to produce the product. The number of impressions per job determines the set quantity needed to complete the order. This number also includes the setup material.

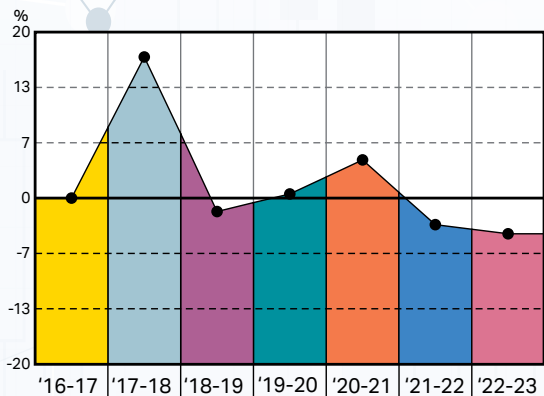
Impressions measure the total throughput of our product, as the equipment needed to produce the product is being measured. This indicator supports increases and decreases in company performance, establishing a bigger picture of the company's sustainable efforts and a testament to our commitment to continuous improvement and innovation.

As a company, we started monitoring Impressions in 2016, which will be our baseline year for most metrics.

%s represent increase/decrease from the baseline (B) year and are formulated using the Business Index (per Green Tier Metrics Form)



Air
VOCs



VOCs:

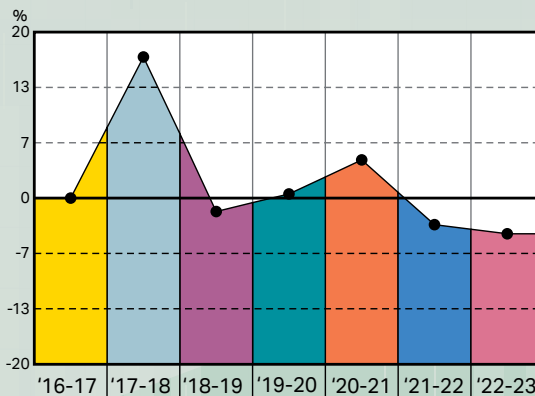
lbs per 1,000 Impressions

● (2016-2017)	1.09 (14,282)	Baseline
● 2017-2018	1.27 (17,702)	17.00% ↑
● 2018-2019	1.07 (16,350)	1.60% ↓
● 2019-2020	1.09 (15,267)	.50% ↑
● 2020-2021	1.14 (18,627)	4.60% ↑
● 2021-2022	1.05 (16,149)	3.20% ↓
● 2022-2023	1.04 (11,739)	4.30% ↓

(Annual Total)



Air
Ozone-Depleting Substances



Ozone-Depleting Substances:

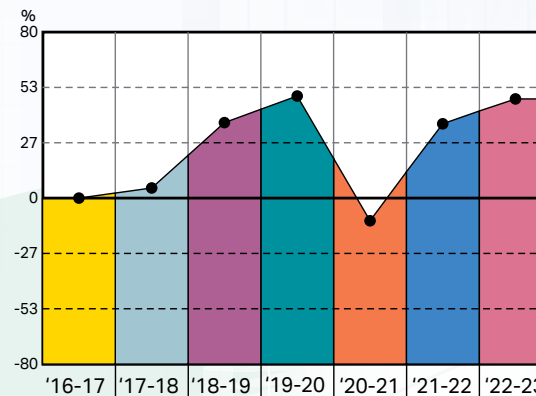
lbs per 1,000 Impressions

● (2016-2017)	.0042 (54.93)	Baseline
● 2017-2018	.0050 (68.09)	17.00% ↑
● 2018-2019	.0041 (62.89)	1.60% ↓
● 2019-2020	.0042 (58.72)	.50% ↑
● 2020-2021	.0044 (71.64)	4.60% ↑
● 2021-2022	.0041 (62.11)	3.20% ↓
● 2022-2023	.0040 (45.15)	4.30% ↓

(Annual Total)



Hazardous Waste



Hazardous Waste

lbs per 1,000 Impressions

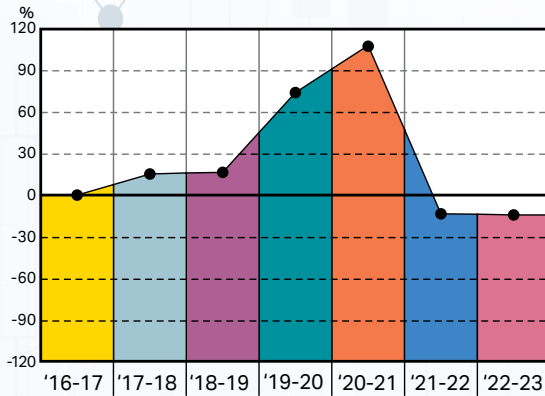
● (2016-2017)	.22 (2,890)	Baseline
● 2017-2018	.231 (3,211)	4.90% ↑
● 2018-2019	.30 (4,587)	36.40% ↑
● 2019-2020	.328 (4,587)	49.20% ↑
● 2020-2021	.196 (3,211)	10.90% ↓
● 2021-2022	.299 (4,587)	35.90% ↑
● 2022-2023	.325 (3,670)	47.80% ↑

(Annual Total)

%s represent increase/decrease from the baseline (B) year and are formulated using the Business Index (per Green Tier Metrics Form)



Solid Waste Recycled



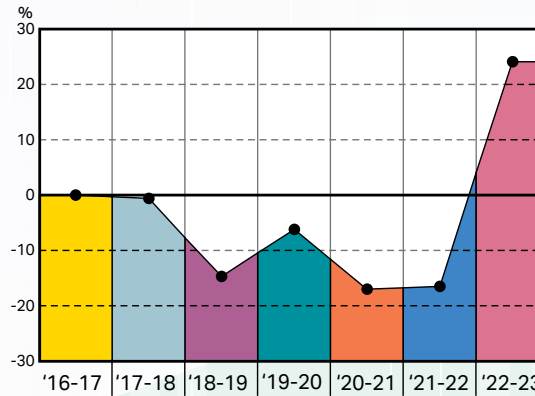
Solid Waste Recycled*
Tons per 1,000 Impressions

● (2016-2017)	.009 (88.04)	— Baseline
● 2017-2018	.008 (107.91)	— 15.70% ↑
● 2018-2019	.008 (119.37)	— 16.60% ↑
● 2019-2020	.012 (163.18)	— 74.30% ↑
● 2020-2021	.014 (228.66)	— 108.30% ↑
● 2021-2022	.006 (88.96)	— 13.40% ↓
● 2022-2023	.006 (64.87)	— 14.20% ↓

(Annual Total)



Solid Waste Waste-To-Energy



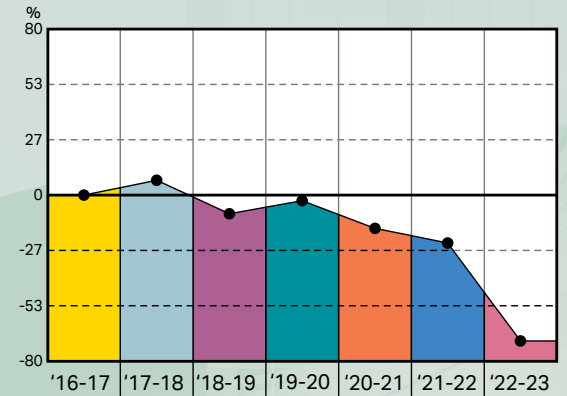
Solid Waste Waste-To-Energy
Tons per 1,000 Impressions

● (2016-2017)	.014 (179.8)	— Baseline
● 2017-2018	.014 (189.4)	— .60% ↓
● 2018-2019	.012 (178.4)	— 14.70% ↓
● 2019-2020	.013 (179.4)	— 6.20% ↓
● 2020-2021	.011 (186.1)	— 17.00% ↓
● 2021-2022	.011 (175.3)	— 16.50% ↓
● 2022-2023	.017 (191.74)	— 24.10% ↑

(Annual Total)



Solid Waste Landfill



Solid Waste to Landfill
Tons per 1,000 Impressions

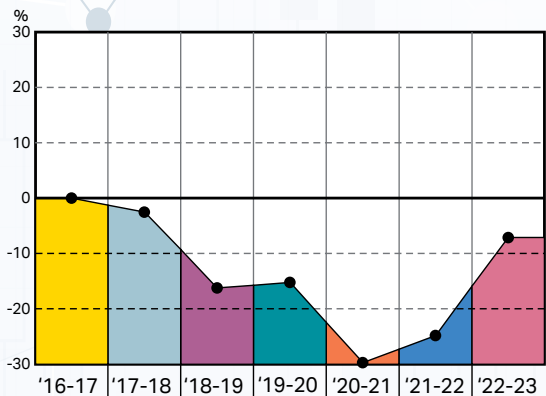
● (2016-2017)	.011 (140.6)	— Baseline
● 2017-2018	.011 (159.7)	— 7.20% ↑
● 2018-2019	.010 (148.9)	— 9.00% ↓
● 2019-2020	.010 (145.6)	— 2.70% ↓
● 2020-2021	.009 (147.4)	— 16.00% ↓
● 2021-2022	.008 (126.3)	— 23.10% ↓
● 2022-2023	.003 (35.82)	— 70.30% ↓

(Annual Total)

%s represent increase/decrease from the baseline (B) year and are formulated using the Business Index (per Green Tier Metrics Form)



Energy: Electricity
(Riverland Energy)

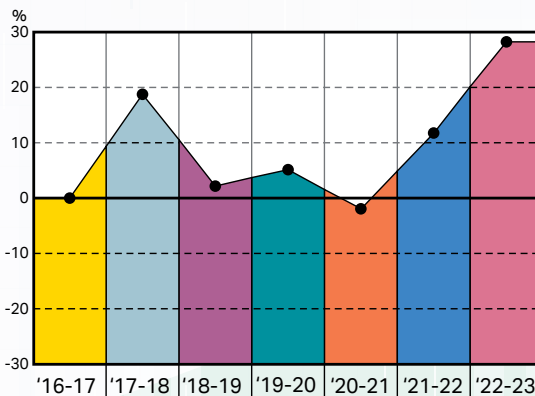


Energy: Electricity (Riverland)
kWh per 1,000 Impressions

● (2016-2017) — 265.5 (3,485,640) — Baseline
● 2017-2018 — 258.9 (3,600,080) — 2.50% ↓
● 2018-2019 — 222.5 (3,399,000) — 16.20% ↓
● 2019-2020 — 225.1 (3,142,880) — 15.20% ↓
● 2020-2021 — 186.7 (3,057,160) — 29.70% ↓
● 2021-2022 — 199.7 (3,061,760) — 24.80% ↓
● 2022-2023 — 246.8 (2,782,720) — 7.10% ↓ (Annual Total)



Energy: Natural Gas
(Xcel Energy)

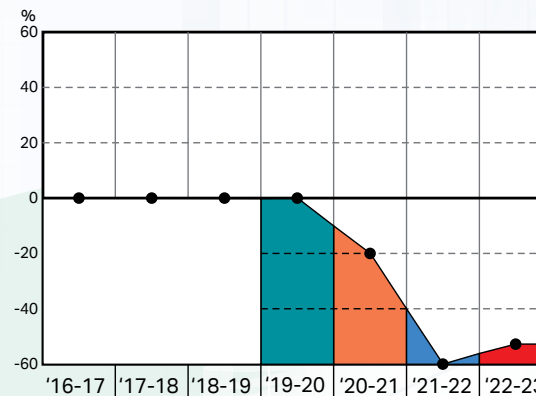


Energy: Natural Gas (Xcel Energy)
MMBTUs per 1,000 Impressions

● (2016-2017) — 399,654.30 (5,246,240,600) — Baseline
● 2017-2018 — 474,945.90 (6,603,314,824) — 18.80% ↑
● 2018-2019 — 408,522.00 (6,239,602,136) — 2.20% ↑
● 2019-2020 — 420,523.90 (5,872,490,264) — 5.20% ↑
● 2020-2021 — 391,505.10 (6,410,661,072) — 2.00% ↑
● 2021-2022 — 446,960.50 (6,851,055,352) — 11.80% ↑
● 2022-2023 — 513,691.90 (5,793,109,320) — 28.50% ↑ (Annual Total)



Energy: Diesel
(Riverland Energy)



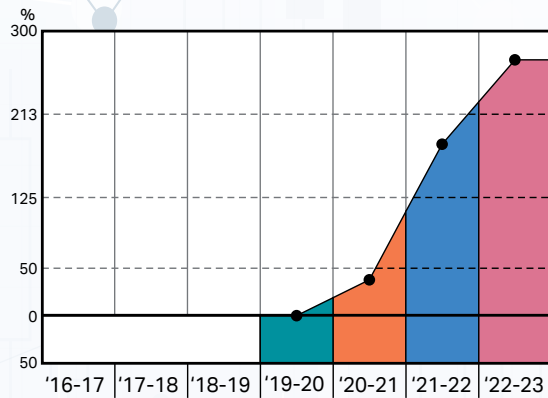
Energy: Diesel (Reliable)
Gallons per 1,000 Impressions

● (2019-2020) — .128 (1789) — Baseline
● 2020-2021 — .103 (1680) — 19.90% ↓
● 2021-2022 — .052 (792) — 59.70% ↓
● 2022-2023 — .061 (685) — 52.60% ↓ (Annual Total)

%s represent increase/decrease from the baseline (B) year and are formulated using the Business Index (per Green Tier Metrics Form)



Water Usage



Water Usage • Screen Making Tanks[§]

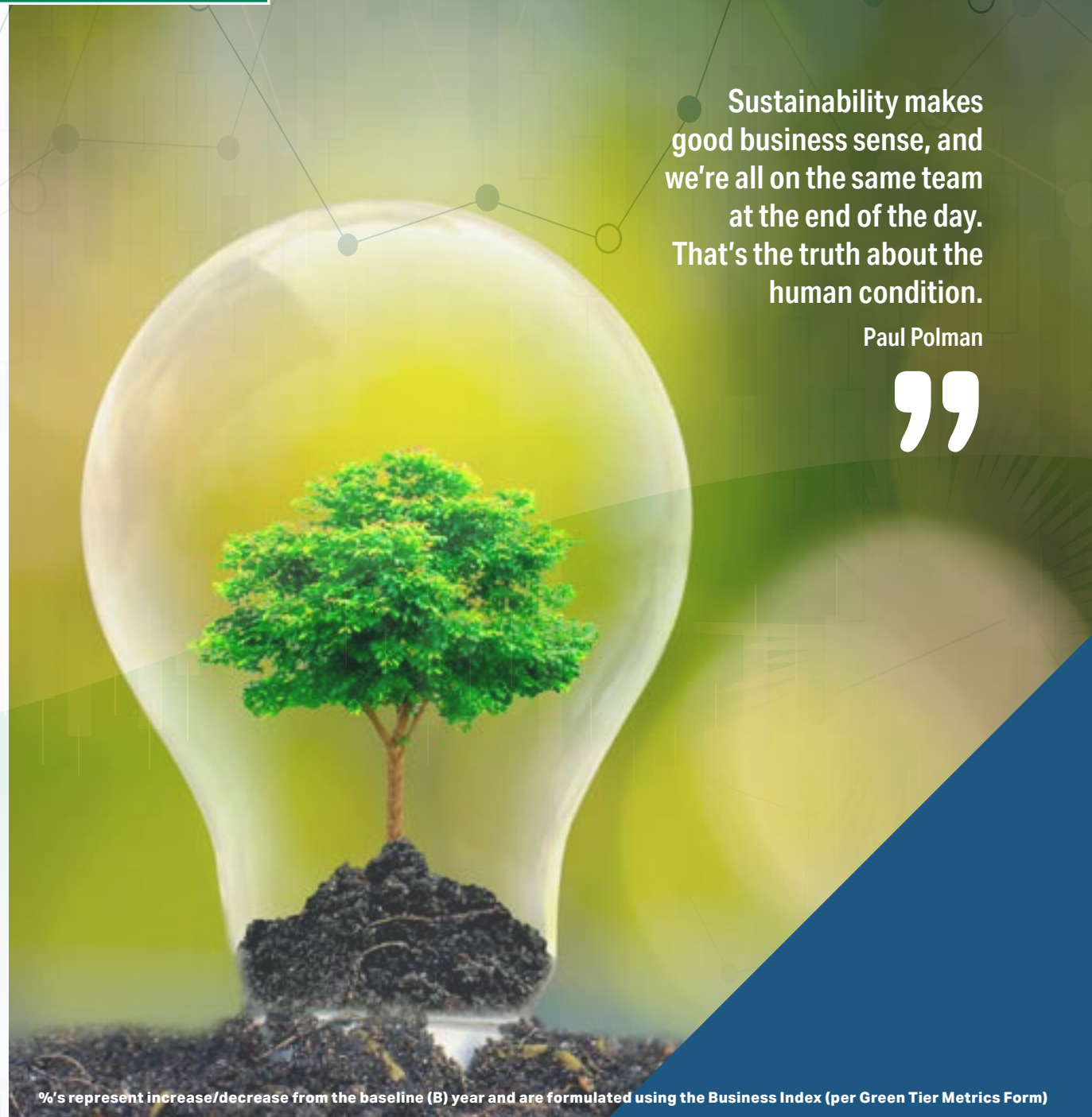
Gallons per 1,000 Impressions

- (2019-2020) — 20.2 (282,400) — Baseline
- 2020-2021 — 27.9 (456,265) — 37.80% ↑
- 2021-2022 — 56.8 (870,420) — 180.80% ↑
- 2022-2023 — 74.8 (843,050) — 269.70% ↑

(Annual Total)

[§]Does not include septic

The Dane Reclaiming Unit was added in 2021, and the Zentner Developer was added in 2022. These two additions have impacted our water usage.



Sustainability makes good business sense, and we're all on the same team at the end of the day. That's the truth about the human condition.

Paul Polman



%'s represent increase/decrease from the baseline (B) year and are formulated using the Business Index (per Green Tier Metrics Form)

2023-2024 FUTURE GOALS



Objective #1

Build two additional Auto-Laminators

Objective #2

Screen Making Automation

Objective #3

Add water meters on equipment that flow into the Screen Making holding tank to monitor accurate water usage

Objective #4

Make Improvements that impact Environment, Social, and Governance.

Objective #5

Two Automated MVS cells running to production rate

Objective #6

Develop new business

Objective #1

Build Two Additional Auto-Laminators

Build two additional auto-laminators, one each for MVS (Middle Value Stream) and SVS (Small Value Stream). As stated in last year's objective, the auto-laminator combines a laminator and splitter into one automatic process, which creates a more efficient process and improves material conveyance. This will be completed by September 2024.

Objective #2

Screen-Making Automation

In July of 2023 we began implementation of an automated conveyor system extending from the developing unit*. The completion of this automation has been added to our 2023-2024 future goals.

Moreover, to enhance employee safety and reduce physical strain, we will introduce powered equipment for easier screen handling, minimizing the need for manual lifting.

This improvement is set to be completed by May 2024.

Objective #3

Add Water Meters to Screen Making Main Water line to monitor accurate usage.

Our water usage has spiked considerably since adding our automated screen making equipment. Since our 2019 baseline, water usage has increased 270%.

When this equipment was added, the thought was to recycle the water back into the unit. However, this never worked as intended. After implementation, the solids built up and backed up the system, so the water, instead of being recycled, was discharged to our holding tanks. Our research has not identified a good alternative for recycling, so no further action is planned.

We currently report on water usage based on our Hauler's billing. To get a more accurate measurement and confirm usage, we are adding meters on our main water line that feeds the equipment used in screen making and then is discharged into the holding tank.

We will reestablish our baseline, based on our measurements and determine if we can reduce the number of pickups.

2023-2024 FUTURE GOALS (CONT.)

Objective #4 **E S G**

Make Improvements that impact Environment, Social, and Governance.

This is a continuation from the previous year.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Update the Sustainability Policy by September 2024.
2. Continue updating EMS Manual to ISO 14001-2015 requirements. Currently we are 50% updated. This will be completed by September 2024.
3. Choose one charitable activity for a local non-profit organization, to support local community needs.
4. Complete Employee Company Handbook to incorporate diversity, human trafficking, anticorruption, anti-discrimination, and pay equity.

Objective #5 **E S G**

Automated Medium Value Stream cells running to production rate

Over the last couple of years, we have been researching and developing cellular manufacturing using robotic automation that combines printing, lamination, and die-cutting in a one-piece flow.

Using Lean principles, these cells can

produce products from start to finish with two employees. This production area is called Medium Value Stream. The technology uses visual registration and modern equipment for manufacturing.

In order to be fully functioning to run rate, we have a few more action items to complete.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Create work instructions for standard work.
2. Implement one automated laminator
3. Incorporate one Preco die cutting press
4. Complete the programming for Cobots* (one press).

**Cobots are a type of robot that integrates better with humans. We don't need big cages around them, and they will stop if they are bumped.*

Objective #6 **G**

New Business Development

Enhanced Marketing and Sales Process aims to rebound from a sales dip in 2023 by targeting growth to \$27 million in 2024. This objective focuses on capitalizing on market dynamics during economic downturns, where companies seek more competitive pricing and opportunities. Empire plans to boost sales by deepening relationships with existing customers, optimizing processes with outside reps, and expanding in-house accounts.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Develop comprehensive training materials for outside and inside sales representatives.
2. Implement Lead Generation and online marketing campaigns.
3. Upgrade quoting process to four hours for stock materials.

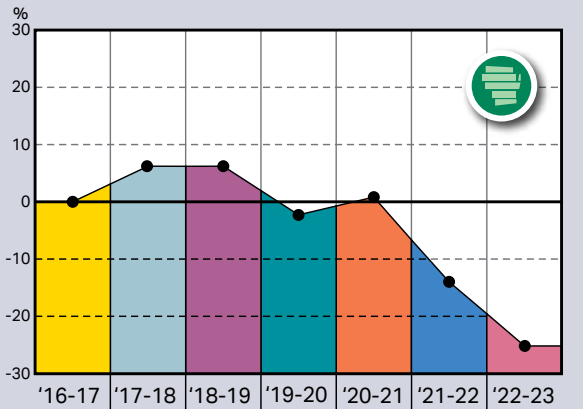


SOCIAL

Empire's commitment to social responsibility shines through in its dedication to employee well-being and community engagement. By prioritizing safe, inclusive, and supportive work environments and engaging in community initiatives, Empire fosters a culture of respect and collaboration. This ESG section covers October 2022 - December 2023.



EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT



Number of Full-Time Employees at End of Fiscal Year

- (2016-2017) — 258 people — Baseline
- 2017-2018 — 274 people — 6.20% ↑
- 2018-2019 — 274 people — 6.20% ↑
- 2019-2020 — 252 people — 2.30% ↓
- 2020-2021 — 260 people — .80% ↑
- 2021-2022 — 222 people — 14.00% ↓
- 2022-2023 — 193 people — 25.20% ↓

Empire also employs approximately 19 part-time employees.

Enhanced Updates to Policy Handbook

Empire is proud to announce significant updates to our Policy Handbook, further solidifying our commitment to an inclusive, equitable, and compliant workplace. Our Equal Opportunity policy has been expanded to include comprehensive anti-discrimination measures, ensuring a respectful and dignified environment for all employees, regardless of their background or identity. In line with this, we have made key updates in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reaffirming our commitment to accessibility and equal opportunities for all employees, irrespective of their abilities.

Additionally, we have formalized our Commitment to Diversity, emphasizing our intention to cultivate a diverse workforce that mirrors the communities we engage with and the values we embody. This includes deliberate efforts to ensure inclusivity and representation at all organizational levels. The introduction of a Payscale policy marks a significant step towards transparency and fairness in compensation, aligning with our

core principles of fairness and respect for every member of our team.

Importantly, these policy enhancements are backed by our leadership’s commitment to ongoing education and compliance. Our Vice President of Operations has participated in two STRT compliance training sessions focused on document control, underscoring our dedication to not only adopting best practices but also ensuring they are effectively implemented and managed. These sessions have equipped our VP with advanced insights and strategies for maintaining the highest standards of policy management and adherence.

Through these updates and proactive leadership training, Empire demonstrates a robust approach to creating a workplace culture that is deeply rooted in legal compliance, equality, diversity, and inclusion.

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT



Health & Benefits

Empire Screen Printing provides health, dental and vision insurance options for all full-time employees, as well as 401K and PTO (Paid Time Off).

In October 2023, Empire took an important step towards prioritizing the health and well-being of our employees and their families by expanding our health care benefits. Understanding the importance of accessible health care, we now offer every employee, along with their dependants, the option to utilize The Neighborhood Family Clinic for non-emergency health care needs, completely free of charge. This initiative reflects our deep commitment to not only the safety but also the overall health of our workforce.

By removing financial barriers to healthcare, we aim to ensure that our team members can access quality medical services whenever needed, fostering a healthier, more productive work environment. This comprehensive approach to health care underscores our belief that the well-being of our employees is fundamental to the success and sustainability of our business. Through this enhanced health care provision, Empire

demonstrates its dedication to nurturing a supportive and caring workplace, where the physical and mental health of every team member is a top priority.

Training & Development

At Empire, our dedication to training and development is a cornerstone of our operational excellence. We employ the Training Within Industry (TWI) methodology, a time-tested approach that ensures our workforce is skilled, efficient, and adaptable. Complementing this is our implementation of LEAN principles, drawing inspiration from the Toyota Production Systems and the Toyota Way. This integration creates a dynamic culture and a cellular manufacturing process grounded in the 14 principles and the philosophy of W. Edwards Deming: *“The average worker is competent and willing to work well, given an environment in which they are permitted to think and exercise control over quality.”*

Our adoption of LEAN principles spans from HR onboarding to the manufacturing floor, fostering a system that inherently builds in quality and consistency. This approach not only identifies risks and defects but also empowers our team to address and rectify

issues in real-time. It’s a strategy that centers on what the customer is willing to pay for, aiming to eliminate waste in all forms.

By investing in our employees’ growth and development, we not only enhance their individual competencies but also bolster our collective ability to meet and exceed customer expectations. Our focus on training and development is more than a process; it’s a commitment to creating a workplace environment where continuous improvement

The average worker is competent and willing to work well, given an environment in which they are permitted to think and exercise control over quality.

W. Edwards Deming



is not just encouraged, but ingrained in every aspect of our operations. This commitment ensures that we remain at the forefront of our industry, setting standards for quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction.

SAFETY



Safety Policies

Safety is incorporated into every aspect of what we do at Empire. We have a Safety Committee that meets monthly to discuss any potential health and safety issues, and each department is regularly audited to make sure everything is organized and OSHA procedures are being followed.

Signs regarding safety and emergency information are posted throughout the plant. Empire has an Emergency Action Plan and a Disaster Recovery Plan, which are available on our network in the QMS (Quality Management System) to all employees.

Incident & Accident Rates

As of August, 2023, Empire celebrated 765 days of no lost time accidents, which is a testament to our safety precautions and implementations.

5S Housekeeping Philosophy

Empire incorporates a daily 5S Philosophy in the workplace. This involves more than just sweeping the floor or picking up trash. It's a way to ensure each department is running efficiently and safely. Important aspects of 5S include:

5S: EMPIRE'S HOUSEKEEPING PHILOSOPHY



At Empire, our housekeeping falls under our **5S Philosophy**. Not only does this help each department stay organized and efficient, it also ensures a safe work environment.

5S is part of the **Lean Manufacturing methodology**, designed to build an optimal working environment, both physically and mentally.

The Five Pillars of 5S are:

- **SORT** (organize) Eliminate unnecessary items not needed for production
 - **SET IN ORDER** (orderliness) A place for everything and everything in its place
 - **SHINE** (cleanliness) Cleaning your area and find ways to stay organized
 - **STANDARDIZE** (adherence) Maintain and monitor the 1st three categories
 - **SUSTAIN** (self-discipline) Stick to the rules
-
- **CLEAR WALKWAYS** | *anything that might become a tripping hazard, like cords, wires, loose flooring or trash, needs to be taken care of immediately.*
 - **SPILLS & LEAKS** | *when a spill is noticed, it's important to find the source and fix it to prevent health and environmental issues. Always check a chemical's safety data sheet (SDS) before touching it and/or disposing of any chemicals .*
 - **STAY SAFE WITH EQUIPMENT** | *It's important to have employees properly trained on the equipment they are using, especially equipment that involves moving heavy objects.*
 - **SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS** | *These are the five types of injuries that occur in a workplace. By making sure everything is in its proper place, and nothing is in walkways, these types of injuries can be prevented.*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CMN

Holiday Cards

OPENING DOORS FOR EDUCATION

High School Tours Facility

BOY SCOUTS

Aluminum Recycling

TOY DONATIONS

Peace Puppies and Hummers Donations





CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK

CMN Holiday Cards

Empire has had a special relationship with the Children's Miracle Network at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The founder of Empire, Jim Brush, wanted to give back to the community and especially children, so for the past 36 years we have been the official printer of the CMN Holiday Cards.

Each year, the card designs are created by a talented group of kids. This adds a special touch to the project, allowing their creativity to shine while supporting a good cause. 100% of the card sales benefit CMN Hospitals, ensuring the funds generated go towards helping those in need.

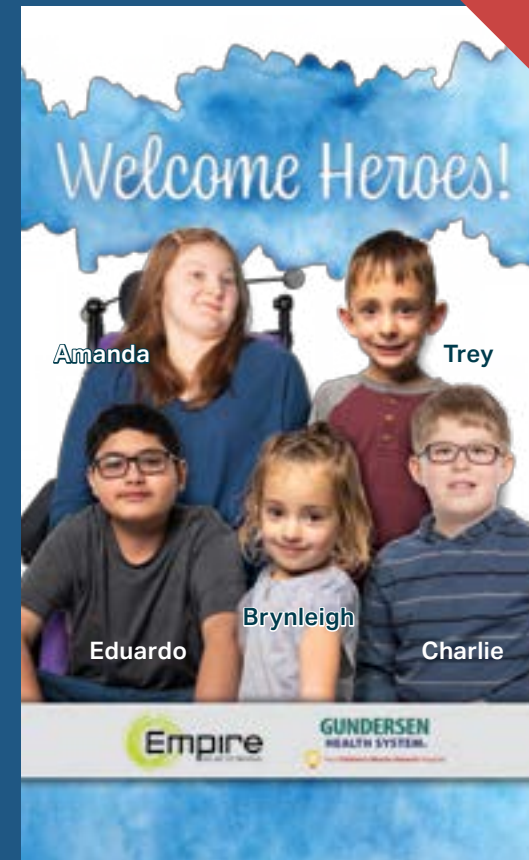
Not only does Empire cover all costs of printing the CMN Holiday cards, the Hero kids and their families get a chance to tour the plant and see their designs coming off the production line. It adds a personal and meaningful connection to the entire process. It's not just about financial support but also about creating memorable experiences for these young individuals and their families.

Programs such as this can contribute significantly to building a positive and caring community.



It was really interesting to see the cards and how the manufacturing process works.

Diane Larson,
Mother of CMN Hero, Amanda Larson



OPENING DOORS TO EDUCATION



Students Tour Facility

Empire is proud to bring in local students for tours, that are seeking out career opportunities. Onalaska HH toured our facility on October 25th, 2023. They came loaded with great questions as they researched their own career paths and received first-hand expertise from Empire management and employees.



DONATING ITEMS TO HELP ORGANIZATIONS



Puppies & Hummers

In January 2023, we did some early spring cleaning and came across these adorable peace puppies and rockin' hummers left over from Jim Brush's World Peace Foundation. We were fortunate to find some local non-profit organizations for donation. Former employee, Amy Bettis, took some for the Boy Scouts of America Gateway Area Council and the remaining went to the Northside Elementary Neighborhood Center. Together, these great non-profits are using them as prizes throughout the year at events. Jim would be proud knowing that these wonderful toys are putting smiles on children's faces.



L-R: Julie Nelson (Community School Coordinator, Northside Elementary School), Cindy Brush (owner, Empire Screen Printing), Amy Bettis (Development Director, The Boy Scouts of America Gateway Area Council)

Boy Scouts Recycling

In September 2023, former Empire employee, Amy Bettis (now the Development Director for the La Crosse area Boy Scouts) approached Empire about starting a recycling partnership with the Boy Scouts. All aluminum cans collected at Empire will be now donated to the Boy Scouts. Their first load came to 160 lbs which totaled \$64.00 for the organization. We will keep track of the usage throughout the year, as well as informing our employees as to where the proceeds are going.



Amy Bettis (L) and volunteers collect aluminum cans from Empire Screen Printing.

RAISING AWARENESS

WEBSITE

Empire's Website

CONSTANT CONTACT

Keeping Customers Informed

SOCIAL MEDIA PUBLICATIONS NEWSLETTERS

Raising Awareness Across Platforms

WEBINAR

How to Build and Leverage Your EMS

PRINTING UNITED

2023 Expo • Las Vegas

PIP EXPO 2023

Partners In Printing Expo



RAISING AWARENESS



Empire's Website

Our website is an integral tool for customers, vendors and suppliers to keep current with our sustainable printing methods, EMS reports, our sustainability policy and Green Tier status. Our blog page features recent publications about Empire, within the industry:

<https://www.empirescreen.com>

Constant Contact

Empire converted to Constant Contact in August 2022, which is a customer relationship management tool. We are able to setup an Empire Contact List, allowing us to streamline more internal communications to our customers, suppliers and employees. We notify them of recent publications, our sustainability efforts, and any information that helps build our internal and external communications.

Publications

In 2021, Empire hired an outside public relations company to help establish it as an industry leader. One of the means is through published articles highlighting our capabilities, products and services, and our sustainable production process. In the last year, we've written 12 articles, which appeared in 84 press appearances and 23 different types of publications. Due

to this activity, we were also sought out directly by **SCREEN PRINT Magazine**, which published *Why Screen Printers Should Invest in UV LED for Ink Curing*, written by **Empire's Creative Director, Jennifer Schloesser**; and **The Business News**, who wrote and published an article about Empire: *Screen Printer has built an Empire in Onalaska*.

Newsletters

Empire's newsletters highlight the activities happening at Empire. The newsletter spotlights our culture and policies, from safety to sustainability; employee engagement and activities; new equipment; new hires and retirees. Employees are encouraged to contribute articles as well. The newsletter is printed quarterly for employees and is shared online with our outside reps, customers, and suppliers.

Social Media Posts



Empire utilizes Facebook, LinkedIn, X and Instagram to post daily messages promoting our brand, bringing awareness to our sustainability efforts, innovations, products, and services. We also post videos on YouTube showing our different presses and processes.

Empire's **T.E.A.M.** Facebook page is an extra resource for employees only. Here they will find information about what's going on at Empire, such as new equipment, department updates, employee events and reminders.

WSBC Webinar Participant

In June, we had the opportunity to be a part of a webinar put on by the Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council. This webinar focused on, "How to Build and Leverage an Environmental Management System (EMS)".

The webinar discussed the development of an environmental management system (EMS) and how to leverage it for continuous improvement. The panelists shared tips and best practices for data collection and management, how to best use that data for decision-making, and how to work across departments to enhance communication and organizational goals.

Participants included Jennifer Birkholz, Environmental Business Support Coordinator for the WI Department of National Resources and representing the Green Tier Program. Jessica Haasser, the Quality and EHS Manager for Inpro Corporation, and **Jennifer Schloesser, Creative Director at Empire Screen Printing**.

SPRING CLEAN DAY AT EMPIRE

Celebrating Earth Week

Every year, we celebrate Earth Week by doing a spring clean-up day. Although Mother Nature had packed in a week of snow, rain, and low temperatures which delayed the clean-up by a week, we were fortunate to have a bright 75° spring day to get out and have some fun, while making an impact. We had representation from customer service, the art department, SVS and LVS screen printing, HR, Digital printing, IT, and R&D. The group collected 37 pounds of waste.





L-R: Alexis Marsh, John Freismuth, Doug Kuehn



PRINTING UNITED EXPO

Las Vegas, NV • October 19-21, 2022

Empire, for the first time, exhibited at last year's **PRINTING United Expo** in Las Vegas, Nevada. PRINTING United is the most dynamic and comprehensive printing event in the world. Bringing together the entire printing industry under one roof is a strategic response to meet the industry's needs. This approach delivers the strongest ROI for printers and attendees by providing one place to access new applications, technology, and products. A booth at this expo is an opportunity to support our current customers and produce new opportunities.

Empire showcased our Medium Value Stream's automation initiatives and UV LED technology, reaching other printers and turn them into customers. The great work that our team accomplished over the last couple of years deserves to be recognized and this event helps support our goals to grow our business. Empire was represented by John Freismuth (President), Alexis Marsh (VP of Operations), Mike Wakeen (Plant Manager), Doug Kuehn (Sales), and Jennifer Schloesser (Creative Director).

EMPIRE'S PARTNERS IN PRINTING EXPO 2023

JULY 25

Tournament Fundraiser

JULY 26

Professional Learning Day
Wisconsin BBQ

JULY 27

Vendor Fair
Breakout Sessions
Plant Tours
Closing Celebration



PARTNERS IN PRINTING EXPO • JULY 25TH CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT



**PARTNERS
IN PRINTING**
EXPO

Boys & Girls Club of Greater La Crosse Fundraiser

As part of the Partners in Printing 2023 Expo, Empire partnered with 3M to host our 3rd charity golf tournament on July 25 at Fox Hollow Golf Course, with proceeds being donated to The Boys and Girls Club of the Greater La Crosse Area.

72 golfers competed in an 18-hole scramble, with prizes and awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place teams. We were able to raise \$5,191.51 for the Boys and Girls Club, which was presented to the organization in November.



PARTNERS IN PRINTING EXPO • JULY 26TH



Professional Learning Day

Our speakers helped navigate the changing landscapes of business culture, marketing, and personal growth. These world-renowned speakers focused on helping our attendees build their brand and transform it into today's needs, offering professional insights and giving tools to improve business.

Amir Ghannad



Amir Ghannad is a frequent and highly sought-after international keynote speaker at leadership summits in the US and abroad, and the founder of The Ghannad Group, which offers speaking, workshop facilitation, executive coaching and consulting services, focused on guiding leaders in creating extraordinary cultures that deliver breakthrough results and unprecedented fulfillment.



Kelly Swanson



Kelly Swanson is an award-winning storyteller, comedian, motivational speaker, Huffington Post Contributor, and cast member of The Fashion Hero television show airing on Amazon Prime. She just launched her one-woman show Who Hijacked My Fairy Tale in theaters and it is being booked all over the country. In July of 2022 she was inducted into the National Speakers Association Speaker Hall of Fame.



Jessy Servi Ortiz



Jessy Servi Ortiz is the managing director of the Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council (WSBC). Her background includes sustainability management, regenerative agriculture, design systems, and business. She has experience in developing and managing sustainability programs, including strategy, engagement, communication, and collaborating across departments to develop, track and oversee KPIs.



Famous Wisconsin BBQ

Following the Professional Learning Day, John Freismuth's Famous Wisconsin BBQ event was held at Castaways on French Island. Everyone who attended enjoyed games, drinks and food, along with plenty of opportunities to network and enjoy the scenic beauty of the Mississippi River.

PARTNERS IN PRINTING EXPO • JULY 27TH



Vendor Fair

Exhibitors filled the Stoney Creek Inn conference room for our Expo's Vendor Fair, highlighting:

- » Printing industry's top suppliers
- » Latest technology advancements for screen, offset, lithography, flexo, and digital printing.
- » One-on-one key business professionals



Breakout Sessions

Speakers held breakout sessions throughout the day:

» **Amir Ghannad**
The Magic of Common Objectives

In this presentation, Amir showed practical application of proven approaches to energize and motivate team members to align the organization behind a common vision.

» **Jessy Ortiz**
Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)

Jessy, key orchestrator of the Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council (WSBC) talked about integrating sustainability and improving business outcomes.



PARTNERS IN PRINTING EXPO • JULY 27TH

Plant Tours

Visitors learned first-hand knowledge and more about Empire Screen Printing's latest technology and production process.



Closing Celebration

A closing celebration was held at Castaways on French Island after all the events. Everyone was able to unwind and enjoy live music to end the productive day.



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



Celebrating 10 Years as a DNR Green Tier participant

Empire is proudly marking its 10th anniversary as a Green Tier 1 participant, a milestone that underscores its longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship. This achievement highlights Empire's dedication to sustainable practices and continuous improvement in environmental performance, setting a benchmark for responsible manufacturing within the industry. WI Green Tier celebrated Empire's achievements, along with several other companies and municipalities who have been in the program for five, ten, or more years. This event took place at their Green Tier Connections event in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on October 24th, 2023.



Empire Recognized as a Green Master

The Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council (WSBC) recognized Empire Screen Printing as a GREEN MASTER through its new Materiality Matrix Green Masters Program on November 15th, 2023. Awards were presented at their WSBC Annual Conference, located in Madison, WI. At this event, Empire sponsored a booth and had opportunities to collaborate with like-minded businesses. This is the first year that Empire has reached the level of MASTERS.

We were also recognized in the following categories:



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



WSBC Innovative Service of the Year

The Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council (WSBC) Awards celebrate recipients who demonstrate cutting-edge environmental, social, and governance leadership and recognize them for being pioneers in their industry and community. The winners exhibit leadership, initiative, and innovation and make measurable impacts across their businesses and the communities they serve. Empire was selected as the **INNOVATIVE SERVICE OF THE YEAR**, highlighting UV LED ink curing technology for screen printing. The two other companies were SolarShare WI Coop with Cooperative Solar Investment Service and Legacy Solar Coop with Tax Sponsorship. The award was presented at the WSBC Sustainable Business Awards Reception on November 15th, 2022.



Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Nomination

M3 Insurance nominated Empire in September of 2023 for the prestigious award of Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Award. This event is hosted by WMC, with the winners announced on February 22, 2024. Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year finalists showcase the strength and vibrancy of the manufacturing sector that sustains high-wage, family-supporting careers. The MOTY program recognizes the state's top manufacturers of all sectors and sizes for their commitment to quality careers, good business practices, financial growth, innovative processes, and reinvestment into local communities.



3M Recognizes Empire as a Preferred Converter

Empire has been recognized by 3M, a prominent American multinational conglomerate that applies science in collaborative ways to improve lives daily, as a Preferred Converter. After being a Select Converter for many years, Empire is honored now to receive 3M's highest level of recognition. Empire's continuous growth in OEM markets has led to this unique printer and material supplier relationship. This partnership in process improvement means customers can receive custom solutions to meet their specialized labeling needs.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS TIMELINE



2023:

- WSBC Green Masters*-first time as a Master

2023, 2022, 2019, 2018, 2016, 2014, 2013:

- Nominee for Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year

2022:

- 10-year milestone of being a DNR Green Tier participant
- Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council Innovative Service of the Year

2021, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2013:

- PrUA Sustainability Recognition Award

2020:

- "Gold" SGIA Sustainability Business Recognition Award

2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2016:

- WSBC Green Masters-Professional

2019:

- SGIA Golden Image Awards; 1 gold and 1 bronze
- La Crosse Area Development Corporation Diamond Recognition

2019, 2018, 2017, 2016:

- SGIA Safety Recognition Award

2019, 2016:

- WMC Business Friend of the Environment

2018:

- Sustainability Institute: Inspiring Sustainability Award

2016:

- WI Sustainable Business Council Earth Day Award - Sustainable Process of the Year
- SGIA Golden Image Award Category 30: Dials, Gauges, Panels



GOVERNANCE

This section highlights our governing body relating to our operational controls, policies, and procedures on how we conduct business with our external stakeholders, management, customers, suppliers, employees, and the community.





WORKING TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED ESG E S G

In an era where sustainability and responsible governance are not just ideals but imperatives, Empire is proud to announce a significant stride in our journey toward comprehensive corporate responsibility. Building on the robust foundation of our existing Environmental Management System (EMS), we are now evolving toward a holistic Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework. This transition marks a pivotal moment in our commitment to integrating sustainability into every aspect of our operations.

Our EMS has been the cornerstone of our environmental stewardship, driving us to minimize our ecological footprint while enhancing operational efficiency. The lessons learned and successes garnered from this system provide us with a unique vantage point to expand our focus. By incorporating these insights into a broader ESG framework, we are not just adhering to global standards but also setting new benchmarks in sustainable

business practices.

The development of our ESG manual report is a testament to this commitment. It will serve as a comprehensive guide, outlining our strategies and objectives in managing environmental risks, fostering social responsibility, and ensuring robust governance. This report reflects our dedication to sustainability but will also articulate our approach to addressing the intricate challenges of the modern business landscape.

As we embark on this journey, our goal is to create a framework that resonates with all our stakeholders – from employees and customers to suppliers and the broader community. We believe that by integrating our EMS into a full-fledged ESG report, we are taking a significant step forward in aligning our business operations with the broader societal goals of sustainable development and responsible corporate citizenship.

MANAGEMENT



Structure and Engagement

At the start of each year, Empire's management team convenes to assess the previous year's strategic objectives and formulate goals for the upcoming year, aligning with our 3-year business vision. Using the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) Traction organizer, the team reviews the previous year's outcomes, with each member giving a thorough management review of their designated areas of expertise., including a dedicated session with our EMS management and Green Team stakeholders, encompasses evaluations of environmental legal updates, audit results, and the achievement of fiscal objectives. This week-long strategic planning meeting

OWNERS
80% FEMALE
20% MALE (Veteran)

TRACTION
29% FEMALE
71% MALE
2 VETERANS

sets the stage for establishing forward-looking environmental and organizational goals, ensuring continuous improvement and strategic alignment.

Once the 3-year vision is set, we establish 1-year goals, and then from there, each manager selects



rocks that support the 1-year plan. These rocks are carried out throughout middle management and discussed with employees so that the organization is all working towards the common goal and vision of the company.

Daily Sunrise meetings at the supervisor level discuss safety, quality, and production. Any issues or concerns are discussed and either put on the Issues list for discussion in Traction or are assigned out to make the improvement. Supervisors will then carry out the discussions with departmental meetings, where employees can bring up concerns, improvements, or needs as they relate to

safety, quality, and production. This is an open means of communication between employees, supervisors, and upper management.

Upper Management holds weekly, level 10 meetings to discuss every aspect of the company, from sales, quality, safety, and environment, to customer and employee relations. This meeting goes over rock review and discusses areas of concern in our IDS (Identify, discuss, solve) segment of the meeting. The EOS Traction model creates a circular form of communication that works throughout the company and allows engagement at every level of the organization.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS



Employees

At Empire, we value our employees immensely, prioritizing safety above all in our daily operations and embedding it within our culture to foster mutual accountability. We address challenges in employee retention and labor shortages by promoting work-life balance, enhancing health care benefits, offering training opportunities, and maintaining a clean, climate-controlled environment. Our management encourages open communication, allowing for free expression and trust-building across the organization.

Customer Satisfaction

We understand the critical importance of customer satisfaction in driving our business success. We conduct annual customer satisfaction surveys to gauge our performance and identify improvement areas. These surveys are meticulously designed to cover a comprehensive range of topics, including pricing, delivery efficiency, customer service quality, product quality, frequency of orders, and the role of sustainability in our customers' purchasing decisions. Moreover, the survey includes open-ended questions, inviting candid feedback on our services and any challenges or pain points experienced with our services.

This customer feedback is invaluable; it provides us with direct insights into our customers' needs and expectations, allowing us to tailor our services and product offerings effectively. The survey also plays a crucial role in helping us refine our strategies and operational processes, ensuring we consistently align with our customers' evolving preferences.

In 2023, Empire recorded only 0.48% of sales in returned goods that did not meet customer requirements

Additionally, we closely monitor our Return Authorization (RA) satisfaction rates as a key indicator of product compliance and customer contentment. In 2023, Empire recorded a mere 0.48% of sales in returned goods that did not meet customer requirements, reflecting our high standards and

commitment to quality. This metric not only underscores our dedication to delivering excellence but also helps us pinpoint specific areas for product improvement. By continually assessing and responding to customer feedback, we reinforce our commitment to maintaining and enhancing customer satisfaction, thereby fostering long-term relationships and driving sustainable growth for Empire.

Outside Reps

Empire works with independent sales rep agencies to sell our product. These sales representatives are positioned throughout the United States. Monthly Group meetings and one-on-one meetings are held with each rep agency to help build the relationship between Empire and the Reps. These meetings focus on marketing strategies, market leads, and new process improvements that Empire has undertaken. These meetings also address any issues or concerns. Empire provides our reps with leads and marketing materials to help support our mutual business strategies and environmental goals.



STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

DNR Relationship

Our Green Tier 1 status with the Wisconsin DNR holds us accountable and provides validation for our efforts. To promote this environmentally-friendly means of printing, we as a company share our technology.

Green Tier provides a third-party platform so we can spread our message and build awareness.

Suppliers

Suppliers are an intricate part of our business and can make or break the end product. We vet and send yearly scorecard evaluations to maintain continuous improvement with our suppliers. This ensures quality and builds partnerships with our supply chain. Upon delivery of our materials, we have an inspection process and test for ink adhesion. If the material is defective, the material is quarantined, and the supplier is notified of the non-conforming product.

In 2023, Empire was recognized by 3M as a Preferred Converter. After being a Select Converter for many years, Empire’s commitments to process improvement, customer satisfaction, environmental stewardship, and continuous growth in the OEM markets led to this unique printer and material supplier relationship.



Memberships

Manufacturing with UV LED technology has put Empire at the forefront of sustainability and is leading the print industry with this technology. It has been our focus to share this technology and our story. We are members of a variety of associations. To be part of an industry, we believe you must fully embrace and develop through like-minded associations, businesses, and organizations to understand your company philosophy better and improve through others.



Some of our memberships include:

- » **PRINTING United Alliance**
- » **Great Lakes Graphics Association (GLGA)**
- » **National Association of Graphic and Production Identification Manufacturers (GPI)**
- » **Printing Industry Midwest (PIM)**
- » **Manufacturers' Agents National Association (MANA)**
- » **Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council**

- » Increased efficiency
- » Lower costs and shorter cycle times through effective use of resources
- » Enhanced customer satisfaction
- » Consistency in the delivery of your product or service
- » Improved communication, planning and administration processes
- » Stronger supplier relationships
- » Controlled and documented processes

REGULATORY CERTIFICATION



ISO 9001



Empire Screen Printing has maintained ISO 9001 certification since 2006 and is currently certified under the ISO 9001:2015 standard. ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental membership organization and the world's largest developer of voluntary International Standards. ISO does not direct how the company is managed but rather requires that the company define how it will address the ISO requirements as described in the ISO standard.

Certification is maintained through third-party audits two times a year. The audits require evidence to show that the processes and procedures exist and are carried out as intended.

Green Tier EMS



Empire recognizes the importance of reducing our carbon footprint, and we have made a documented decision

to implement processes that reduce environmental impacts. As a Wisconsin Green Tier 1 company since 2013, Empire is committed to going above and beyond local, state, and EPA environmental standards. Our Environmental Management System (EMS) is designed to meet the ISO 14001:2004 equivalency requirements set forth by the Wisconsin DNR [Wis.Stats. §299.83(1)(dg)]. The EMS is audited by an external auditor every three years and is required to be internally audited annually.

Empire QMS

Empire uses the guidelines set forth in the ISO 9001 system to create our documented control process, which we call our **Quality Management System (QMS)**. The QMS is broken into Policies, Processes, and Resources. Within this structure, all of our policies, documented processes, procedures, work instructions, and job breakdowns are stored, evaluated, and maintained.

COMPLIANCE REPORTING



Adhering to agency regulations and maintaining compliance is critical to fulfilling our customer requirements. Our team collaborates with suppliers and compliance bodies to ensure that all materials and processes meet the specific needs of each order from start to finish, guaranteeing product integrity and customer satisfaction.

Marking and labeling (decals) usage for UL may be referred to as UL 969. Empire Screen Printing is an authorized label supplier for UL (File #MH9996). As authorization from UL to print Type R marks, suppliers (Empire) must obtain from the UL customer a copy of the Listing Mark Data page, Classification Mark Data Page, or a copy of the UL Mark stamped artwork that was submitted to UL by the manufacturer.

Third-Party Audits

ISO-9001 Audits

To maintain certification for our ISO-9001, Empire is audited every six months through a third-party auditor. During this process, the audits require evidence to show that the processes and procedures exist and are carried out as intended.

EMS Audits

Our Environmental Management System (EMS) ensures that Empire integrates procedures and processes to help our company reduce environmental impacts and increase operating efficiency. This includes training employees, defining and monitoring operational controls, maintaining all legal and other requirements, and determining environmental objectives, targets, and programs. Our EMS is internally audited annually and externally audited every three years by a WI DNR-certified auditor. Our next external audit will be in 2025.

Non-Conformance

We had one non-conformance this year. Removal of doming liquid from discarded barrels was not following the procedure:

Doming Liquid Hazardous Waste.

Too much time accumulated before cleaning the barrels which caused the residual doming liquid to gel, making it harder to remove.

The procedure has been reviewed and updated, as well as retraining all involved.

A follow-up indicated that the procedure is being followed.



Meeting the International Standards means that you can have confidence that your products are safe, reliable and of good quality.

PRODUCT RESPONSIBILITY



First Articles Inspection (FAI)

Empire offers customers requiring First Article Inspection Reports for the management of their quality system. The purpose of the FAI is to provide objective evidence that all engineering design specifications, such as blueprints, artwork, and specification requirements found on the purchase order or indicated by the customer, are properly understood, accounted for, verified, documented, and manifested in the manufactured part. FAI reports are done when the product is first manufactured, revised, or indicated by the customer on the purchase order.

Non-Conforming Product

Empire Screen Printing, Inc. has a procedure to manage and rectify any products that don't meet quality standards, preventing their unintended use or delivery. This includes products identified at any stage or returned by customers. Nonconformance reports help track and analyze these issues to prevent recurrence, with department managers responsible for root cause analysis and corrective actions. The goal is to uphold quality and ensure products meet both customer's and Empire's specifications.

Customer Complaints

When a customer raises a concern with their Account Manager regarding our products or services, the manager gathers all pertinent details, like part and job numbers, and customer communications, to thoroughly investigate the issue. Depending on the nature of the complaint - be it shipping, product quality, or customer service - the Account Manager either resolves minor issues directly or includes the Customer Service Manager or the Director of Quality for more complex issues.

For product returns, the Director of Quality issues return instructions or approves replacements, with all actions recorded in an NCR (Form 8.3_1) report and communicated back to the customer for resolution.



APPENDIX

DNR Green Tier Metrics Form Results





**GREEN TIER
DNR GREEN TIER
METRICS FORM
RESULTS**

Participant Name	Empire Screen Printing
Reporting Year Start	10/1/2022
Reporting Year End	9/30/2023

IMPRESSIONS	-14.09%
Base 2016-17	13,126,947
Fiscal Year	11,277,360

Did you enter your data in the raw format (not normalized)?
Type Yes or No

Yes

GENERAL INFO				
Metric	% Change	% Change	Current	Baseline
# of Employees	-25.20%	-25.20%	193	258
Primary NAICS Code			323113	
Secondary NAICS Code			323111	
% Local Purchases	#VALUE!	0.00%	UNK	UNK
% In-State Purchases	#VALUE!	0.00%	UNK	UNK

WASTE					
Metric	% Change	% Change	Current	Baseline	Units
Solid Waste Reused	UNK	UNK	UNK	UNK	US tons / 1000 impressions
Solid Waste Recycled	-14.20%	-14.20%	0.006	0.009	US tons / 1000 impressions
Solid Waste Composted	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	US tons / 1000 impressions
Solid Waste-to-Energy	24.10%	24.10%	0.017	0.014	US tons / 1000 impressions
Solid Waste to Landfill	-70.30%	-70.30%	0.003	0.011	US tons / 1000 impressions
Solid Waste to Incinerator	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	US tons / 1000 impressions
Universal Waste	UNK	UNK	UNK	UNK	lbs / 1000 impressions
Hazardous Waste Generated	47.80%	47.80%	0.325	0.22	lbs / 1000 impressions

WATER					
Metric	% Change	% Change	Current	Baseline	Units
Water used	269.70%	269.70%	74.756	20.222	gallons / 1000 impressions
Water recycled/reused	UNK	UNK	UNK	UNK	gallons / 1000 impressions
Wastewater Discharged	#VALUE!	0.00%	UNK	20.2	gallons / 1000 impressions



**GREEN TIER
DNR GREEN TIER
METRICS FORM
RESULTS**

ENERGY USE AND GENERATION

Metric	% Change	% Change	Current	Baseline	Units
Electricity from utility	-7.10%	-7.10%	246.752	265.533	kWh / 1000 impressions
Natural Gas	28.50%	28.50%	513,691.90	399,654.30	MMBtus / 1000 impressions
Coal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	US tons / 1000 impressions
Propane (LP)	UNK	UNK	UNK	UNK	gallons / 1000 impressions
Diesel (#2 Fuel Oil)	-52.60%	-52.60%	0.061	0.128	auto-fills
Biodiesel	UNK	UNK	UNK	UNK	gallons / 1000 impressions
Residual Fuel Oil (#4-6)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	gallons / 1000 impressions
Wind	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	kWh / 1000 impressions
Hydro	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	kWh / 1000 impressions
Solar Photovoltaic (PV)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	kWh / 1000 impressions
Solar Thermal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	MMBtus / 1000 impressions
Geothermal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	MMBtus / 1000 impressions
Biomass	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	US tons / 1000 impressions
Biogas	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	MMBtus / 1000 impressions
Other (quantity)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	/ 1000 impressions
Other (fuel type)			N/A		

ON-SITE RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPACITY

Metric	% Change	% Change	Current	Baseline	Units
Wind	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	kW
Hydro	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	kW
Solar Photovoltaic (PV)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	kW
Solar Thermal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	MMBtus
Geothermal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	MMBtus
Biomass	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	US tons
Biodigester	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	US tons
Other (quantity)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Energy Type			N/A	N/A	
REC Amount Purchased	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	kW
REC Energy Source			N/A		



**GREEN TIER
DNR GREEN TIER
METRICS FORM
RESULTS**

AIR					
Metric	% Change	% Change	Current	Baseline	Units
Volatile Organic Compounds	-4.30%	-4.30%	1.041	1.088	lbs / 1000 impressions
Ozone-depleting Substances	-4.30%	-4.30%	0.004	0.0042	lbs / 1000 impressions
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	lbs / 1000 impressions
Hazardous Air Pollutants	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	lbs / 1000 impressions

TRANSPORTATION Totals of each fuel type				
Metric - Fleet	% Change	% Change	Current	Baseline
Gasoline	200.00%	200.00%	2	2
Diesel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Electric - plugin	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Electric - hybrid	-50.00%	-50.00%	1	2
CNG	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Propane	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Biodiesel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
RNG/BioGas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other (quantity)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other (fuel type)			N/A	N/A
Total	-25.00%	-25.00%	3	4
METRIC - Equipment		% Change	Current	Baseline
Gasoline	100.00%	100.00%	1	1
Diesel	100.00%	100.00%	1	1
Electric - plugin	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	
CNG	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	
Propane	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	
Biodiesel	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	
RNG/BioGas	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	
Other (quantity)	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	
Other Fuel Type (enter fuel type used for "other" above)			N/A	
Total Equipment	200.00%	200.00%	2	2

PROVEN PROCESS

Empire's Proven Process combines advanced printing technologies, integrated cellular manufacturing, and a commitment to versatility and eco-friendly practices.

With real-time risk identification and process improvement, Empire aligns efficiency with environmental responsibility to deliver high-quality, consistent, custom products that meet our customers' desired needs.



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