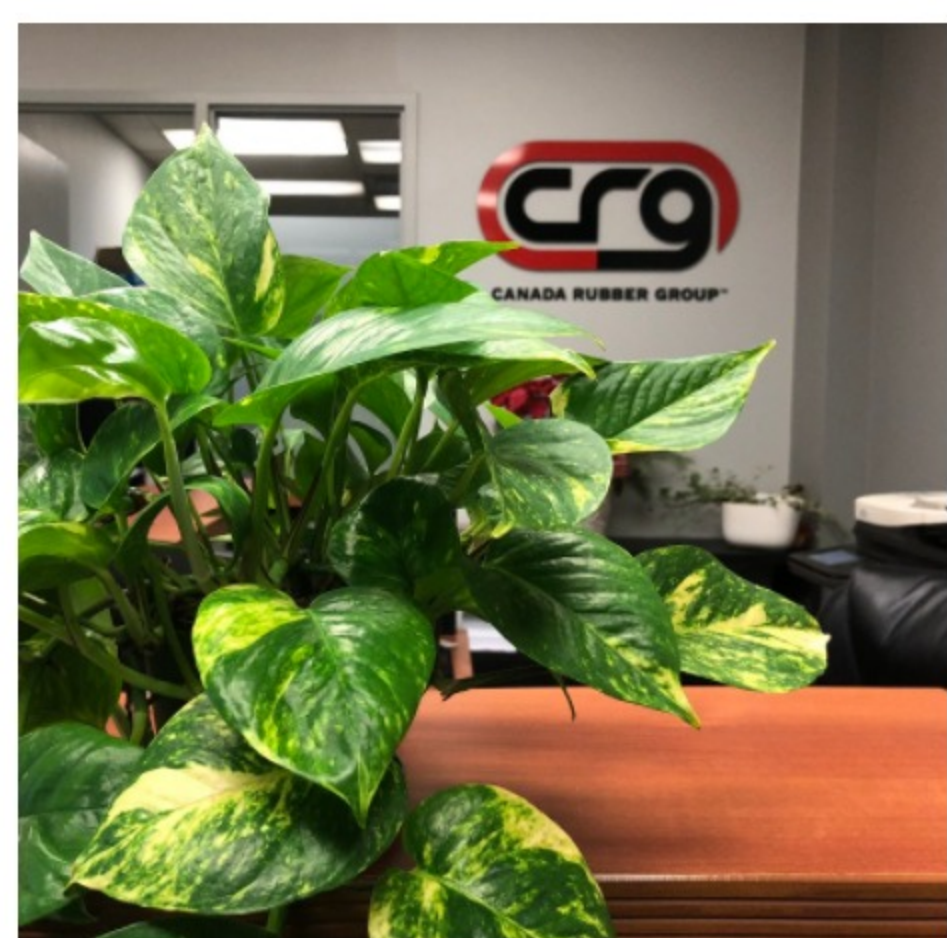


Reporting Initiative Member Case Study



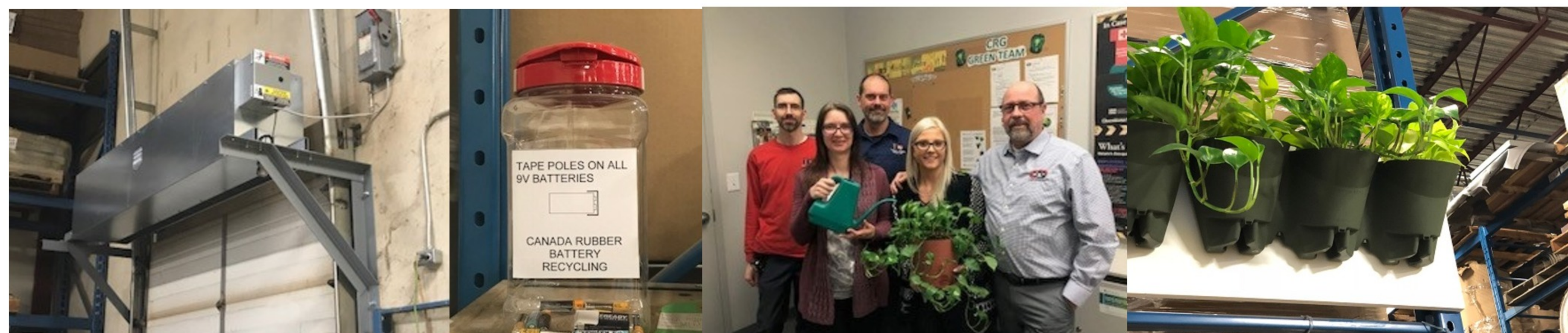
Canada Rubber Group (CRG) has been a manufacturer of Industrial and Automotive parts for North American customers since 1987, utilizing a broad range of advanced converting and fabricating technologies. Through the provision of reliable and responsive products and services, CRG helps bring consistency, performance and peace of mind to their customers.

The leadership at Canada Rubber Group has felt a personal commitment to environmental issues for many years. Naturally, this personal commitment now extends to their business. Because Canada Rubber Group is part of a very close knit community in Bowmanville, many of their staff also live in the community, they feel that embedding environmental responsibility into their best practices is an obligation. Additionally, many of their customers are looking for suppliers who engage in environmental best practices so not only is it the right thing to do, it is also good for business.

Canada Rubber Group became part of the EcoBusiness Network in 2017. This decision was made as they were looking for support to further their environmental commitments and formalize their strategy. EcoBusiness Network has worked closely with their green team, helping to create a mission, to complete their carbon inventory, work on action planning and target setting and to assist with community engagement.



Canada Rubber Group had completed energy audits in the past but were not encouraged to move ahead with a conservation strategy. As they are a small user, their energy use was considered to be a simple bi-product of operations. But the management team felt that there was still an opportunity to “do better”. Not only as good stewards of their community, but in an effort to potentially work toward certifications such as ISO 14001, they created an in-house green team. Their green team is comprised of employees from different areas of the business including the manufacturing floor, the management team and members from the administrative team. The goal of this team is to look for opportunities to conserve energy, reduce costs, and implement projects to improve the indoor air quality, efficiency and increase waste diversion.



As part of their environmental best practices, Canada Rubber Group has set a carbon reduction target of 40% over 10 years. To help them achieve this target they have set very specific expectations for the green team.

The green team meets on a weekly basis and their work is included in a report prepared for the regular management meetings. They have delivered a presentation to their staff, ensuring all team members are involved. Their staff is very engaged and utilize a suggestion box allowing the entire team to provide feedback and ideas for the green team to consider.



Canada Rubber Group is working with their Green Team to strategize on projects for 2018 and is planning to complete an air balancing test in their administrative space and will be installing motion detectors to better control light usage in their offices.

While there are big plans in the works for the near future, they have already started to implement some of their projects. Canada Rubber Group is currently working on a waste diversion strategy and have already diverted 45 metric tons of waste in 2017 alone. Their goal is to increase that number year over year as the company continues to grow. They have created a battery recycling program for the team, encouraging staff to not only recycle batteries from their business operations but to also bring in batteries from home to be recycled. They have added carbon reducing plants to their office space and manufacturing floor to help improve the indoor air quality and increase staff productivity, as plants are shown to have a positive impact on staff's overall psychological well-being. They have also installed an air curtain in their shipping department to increase efficiency specifically in the winter months and have taken advantage of incentives from Enbridge to help cover the cost.

“One of the keys to success with your sustainability strategy is to give your green team the autonomy they need to develop ideas. While leadership and support needs to come from management, it is the team who can bring new ideas to the table and really make things happen. This autonomy helps to foster the culture at the organization and gives staff a sense of pride that they are making a difference.”

Gord Sirrs
President, Canada Rubber Group

Canada Rubber Group has learned a lot through this process. There have been a few pitfalls along the way, however they are using these as learning opportunities. One of the challenges they have identified is keeping the energy and enthusiasm high for their sustainability initiatives. After their initial presentation with the team they realized that they should have engaged their volunteers more quickly and have now made engagement a priority. They have identified communication as being an opportunity for improvement and have looked at more ways to communicate their strategy to the team such as creating a communication board, including information in their newsletter and leveraging social media.

An important component to their strategy that they identified from the beginning is having management buy-in and not treating sustainability as an afterthought but as a significant part of their everyday operations and part of their dialogue. This has helped them move more quickly on identified projects and has helped with staff engagement because the leadership is enthusiastic about their strategy.



Canada Rubber Group is one of over 200 businesses in the CoLab Network working to set and achieve sustainability goals. Together, we are demonstrating a more sustainable economy is possible.