

The Impact of Sustainability in Plastic

As the global spotlight intensifies on environmental sustainability, the plastic industry is undergoing a transformative shift towards eco-conscious practises and away from being tarnished as a 'dirty' word.

This all starts from the very beginning of the manufacturing process, with every step of the journey taking responsibility to minimize the effect of the environmental footprint.

It seems businesses are actively seeking ways to reduce the reliance on virgin materials by exploring the use of biodegradable alternatives. This not only lessens the environmental impact of the polymer manufacture, but also aligns with the growing demand for circular economies. These recyclable materials may differ in aesthetics, but generally the end of use quality in term of application look to stand up to the performance test.

Looking past the material and a bit closer to home, here at S&D Solutions we have made significant investment over the past few years so not only help develop us moving forward, but the environment. We have done an overhaul of our premises, including changing the sourcing of energy to optimise our equipment efficiency. We have refurbished all our shopfloor lighting and heating which predated the 1990's, as well as customizing equipment timers to reduce unnecessary waste. Across the industry, this extends beyond mere operational changes, but encompasses a broader commitment to sustainability that permeates the entire supply chain.

Another avenue to explore is the increasing use of incorporating design principles that prioritize longevity, reusability and recyclability. This could be anything from changing the product to be manufactured from a hard wearing material, to adding extra washers to bolted areas, reducing the wear against the virgin material and increasing the life of the product.

The demand for plastic worldwide is exponentially growing as people realise the capabilities that it can offer. Along with this, the need for polymer production is rapidly outweighing the availability of production. Although this is good for industry and trade, the heavily relied on import of polymers from Asia is being stretched, undoubtedly having a huge environmental impact regarding transportation. To counter this, there are a number of polymer plants scheduled to be built in Europe over the coming years, as well as virgin plastic manufacturers plants being re-built for efficiency in the UK, keeping the travelling pollution as minimal as possible.

The plastic industry has a common link with most things in life... it isn't perfect. The word 'Plastic' has been dragged through the thorn bushes and trod upon for decades as a dirty taboo, albeit with good reason. Everything starts with an individual effort to not only improve ourselves as a business, but as a culture as a whole. This unrelenting upgrade that we all must adopt to improve ourselves is sweeping the globe and we are hanging on by the plastic coat tails.