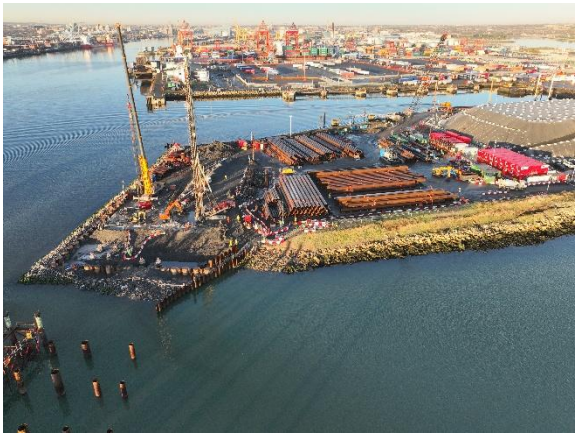
Case Study: Wills Bros Group

Challenges:



The Civil Engineering industry remains heavily reliant on diesel to power vehicles and heavy machinery. Earthworks, cut, and fill operations are energy-intensive, particularly when ground conditions are wet and mucky. Hydrogen-powered vehicles are still in an early stage of development, and electric vehicles struggle for enough reserve battery to complete a full shift and are slow to recharge. Getting mains power connection can be slow and costly for shorter duration contracts, so diesel generators remain the fallback for the industry. There is a lot of interest and enthusiasm within civil engineering to become greener and carbon neutral, but progress will be slow until such time as the technology catches up with the energy demands of the industry. Fleet vehicles like cars and small vans are easier to convert to electric for office staff because they recharge while parked. The limited public charging infrastructure in rural areas remains a barrier to switching staff to electric vehicles if they are working on some of our more remote sites.

Impact:

Wills Bros Group joined the Supply Chain Sustainability School in early 2024. There are approx. 30 staff registered with the school, utilising the resourses, asssessments, action plans and E-Leanring modules the school offers. This engagement has been extremely valuable for Wills Bros Group in bringing companies across the built environment towards the common goal of becoming more sustainable and achieving net-zero. It has been refreshing and comforting to know that every company is facing the same challenges that Wills Bros Group is, and it has been by sharing these challenges that innovative solutions are emerging.

Personally, attending or promoting attendance at any of the Supply Chain School's events has the benefit of standardizing a minimum level of knowledge of a topic across the management team. This is particularly useful for filling knowledge gaps when training new members of staff.

Fact box

Company

Wills Bros Group

No of employees

400+

HQ

Foxford, Co. Mayo

Website

http://willsbros.com

Main contact

Joseph Seery

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Services

Wills Bros Group is a design and Build Company dedicated to building high quality infrastructure throughout the Ireland & UK.

About

Wills Bros is a family-owned business founded in 1974, the company has dedicated itself to delivering high-quality infrastructure on behalf of its clients in the Ireland and UK.

The available resources are wide reaching in terms of assessments, action plans and E-learning modules. These recourses help to identify knowlegde gaps within the different departments of the business. By completing an assessments and an action plan, members have the opportunity to enchance their knowledge within a certain space. These provide stepping stones and progress markers on where Wills Bros Group is currently and where the company wants to get too. The Supply Chain School offers a huge variety of e-learning materials across a wide range of topics. The modules were extremely useful in helping Wills Bros Group to build on their existing knowledge and skills and learning about how best to embed these within the organisation. This included topics ranging from biodiversity, community and social impact, sustainable procurement, and sustainability strategy.

Value gained:

Being part of the school ensures that Wills Bros Group remains at the cutting edge of what is happening in sustainability as well as gaining an increased understanding of the sustainability drivers of other organisations including those of Wills Bros Group clients. The company has also found it very valuable and beneficial that key clients in the built environment sector, such as TII and Uisce Eireann, have utilized the school as a tool for training up their supply chain. In the future, Wills Bros Group can see more major clients choosing the Supply Chain School to develop their supply chain towards their environmental and quality objectives. The website could also be used to deliver client-level inductions to their supply chain rather than incurring the cost of developing a new system from scratch.