Challenges:

Safelab Systems Ltd faces several sustainability challenges, primarily related to supply chain transparency, engineer fleet emissions, and waste management. The company's diverse supply chain lacks full visibility, complicating efforts to ensure accurate reporting of scope 3 emissions, especially with smaller suppliers who have not yet been subject to environmental scrutiny.

The largest contributor to Safelab Systems Ltd's carbon footprint is the emissions produced by its engineers' vans. These engineers are based across the UK and do not return to a central hub, making the transition to electric vehicles more complex.

Additionally, waste—particularly from product end-of-life disposal and non-recyclable packaging materials—adds to environmental concerns. This includes carbon filters from the company's products, which may contain hazardous materials.

Impact:

Addressing Safelab Systems Ltd's sustainability challenges has led to both operational improvements and increased stakeholder trust. The implementation of energy-efficient technologies has already reduced the company's carbon footprint, while supplier audits have identified areas where focused collaboration with suppliers is needed to form responsible partnerships.

Engagement with the School has been instrumental in driving these positive changes. The School provides access to resources and training that have helped Safelab Systems Ltd identify best practices in sustainable sourcing, supplier management, and, importantly, compliance with UK regulations. As a result, the company has improved supply chain transparency, identified areas for waste reduction, and advanced its sustainability goals.

Engagement events:

Attending online engagement events provided by the Supply Chain Sustainability School has been highly valuable for Safelab Systems Ltd. These sessions offer insights into the latest sustainability trends, best practices in responsible sourcing, and strategies for reducing environmental impacts. One standout event was the School Summit, which connected the company with other organisations facing similar challenges, fostering valuable discussions on common sustainability issues.

Fact box

Company

Safelab Systems Ltd

No of employees

47

HQ

Weston-Super-Mare

Website

www.safelab.co.uk

Main contact

Penny Guess

penny@safelab.co.uk

Services

Manufacturer and servicing of Fume Cupboards and Safety Cabinets.

About

Safelab is a leading UK designer and manufacturer of high-quality fume cupboards and safety cabinets with a rich heritage that stretches back almost 40 years. We install our products for a wide range of clients, from schools and small laboratories to entire university departments and industrial R&D facilities. Additionally, we test and maintain any fume cupboard, whether Safelab's or another manufacturers', to support our customers' ongoing legal compliance requirements under COSHH Regulation 9.

The impact of attending these events has been significant. The practical knowledge gained has enabled Safelab Systems Ltd to approach senior management with informed recommendations, refine sustainability strategies, and implement more effective supplier management processes. Additionally, these events strengthened the company's industry network, opening doors to new partnerships and collaborative opportunities that are essential for advancing sustainability goals. Overall, this engagement has accelerated the company's progress toward a more sustainable and responsible supply chain.

Resources:

Assessments – The assessments provided by the School have been incredibly useful for Safelab Systems Ltd in identifying gaps in its sustainability practices. They offered a clear roadmap for improvement, highlighting areas requiring focus. The tailored feedback helped the company prioritise actions, ensuring meaningful progress toward its sustainability objectives.

Action Plan – The action plan has enabled Safelab Systems Ltd to prioritise key focus areas and break them down into smaller, manageable steps. This approach has made the entire process more efficient, allowing the company to spend more time focusing on aspects that genuinely impact its operations.

E-learning modules – The e-learning modules are easy for Safelab Systems Ltd to access and work through, offering valuable, in-depth learning on key sustainability topics without requiring extensive reading. This resource has enhanced the company's knowledge of sustainable practices, leading to improved decision-making across departments.

Value gained:

The School supported Safelab Systems Ltd in its journey toward achieving ISO14001:2015, which the company has now obtained. This certification has enhanced its competitive advantage, especially when bidding for projects that prioritise sustainable practices. For instance, improved supplier transparency and clear targets for Net Zero have helped Safelab Systems Ltd secure contracts with clients that value responsible sourcing, including numerous governmental projects.

Looking forward, the company views continued membership as essential for staying ahead of evolving sustainability standards, reducing scope 3 emissions, and engaging more deeply with its supply chain. Safelab Systems Ltd also hopes to leverage its knowledge to support other companies within the SDI Group in developing effective sustainability strategies.

Future proofing:

Safelab Systems Ltd's future plans with the School include engaging in more advanced training modules and participating in collaborative projects with other members from similarly sized companies.