

Epson Knoware University Podcast
Featuring Epson's Environmental Activities
May, 2008
Transcript

(Jingle music)

Ron: Seiko has a very wonderful, far-reaching history of environmental stewardship and activities.

(Jingle music)

Margaret: By scoring 100% on the Knoware University podcast quiz, you'll receive one entry into the weekly drawing for a \$500 American Express gift card, just for taking this month's podcast quiz on Knoware University.

From Epson Knoware University in Long Beach, California, I'm Margaret with the Knoware University podcast for May, 2008, and on this month's podcast you'll learn all about Epson's environmental activities and learn how you can enter to win a \$500 American Express gift card. That's coming up at the end of today's show, so keep listening for all the details.

(Music ends)

Epson was one of the first manufacturers to begin working to abolish the use of Chlorofluorocarbons from its worldwide manufacturing processes back in 1988. Complete elimination of CFCs was accomplished in 1992, but we haven't rested on our laurels since then. Epson continues to work to be a good steward of the global environment.

To find out more about Epson's environmental initiatives, I spoke to Ron, Epson's environmental expert. Welcome to the Knoware University podcast, Ron!

Ron: Thank you for having me.

Margaret: We're glad to have you here. Now, I know there are kind of a variety of things going on environmentally for Epson and there are some things that the parent

company, Seiko Epson, does that kind of impacts the whole world including, of course, the Americas. What are some of those things?

Ron: Well, you're exactly right, and it's a very exciting time to be here at Epson, and Seiko has a very wonderful, far-reaching history of environmental stewardship and activities.

Margaret: Yes.

Ron: Some of them include, back in 1988, Seiko was one of the first companies to begin working on the elimination of chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs, as we all know them, in their manufacturing process, and finally in 1992, they were actually able to eliminate all CFCs from the manufacturing process.

Margaret: Right. And those deplete the ozone layer, right?

Ron: That's exactly right. It's very damaging to our ozone layer and that was a very important aspect of our business, that we were ahead of the pack, so to speak.

Margaret: Right. And I remember I was at the company at the time and we were very, very proud of that when that happened.

Ron: Very big accomplishment. It was a very difficult feat for many companies, so it was very good for SEC to accomplish that so quickly.

Margaret: Very good. So what else do we do?

Ron: Well, one of the important aspects within the world right now is the reduction or elimination of hazardous substances in products, and a lot of people might know this particular terminology as the RoHS Directive. It's R-O-H-S and it stands for the restriction of hazardous substances. And what it was or what it is was originally a European Union directive that said, "Hey, we want to eliminate eight hazardous substances from our products." And going forward, the rest of the world jumped on the bandwagon and said, "Yes, we love that; we want to do the same thing." So right now the RoHS Directive is very important and far-reaching and all-encompassing for our products.

Margaret: Okay.

Ron: Now, within Epson, Epson being the aggressive and interested party of environmental management and their activities, actually complied with the RoHS

Directive, the European RoHS Directive, eight months ahead of their scheduled deadline.

Margaret: Wow.

Ron: And now, Epson's products on a worldwide basis – so that definitely impacts North America – are RoHS compliant, which means they do not contain any of the original six hazardous substances that were originally in the directive. And we'll see if we can get all six of those, but it's lead, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, mercury, then we have our PBDs which are polybrominated biphenyls and then we have polybrominated diphenyl ethers or eh-thers, however you want to pronounce it.

Margaret: Okay.

Ron: But in any case, all of those substances have been eliminated from our products worldwide and Epson has also taken the additional step of removing many, many others. And ones that I am particularly proud of the company for doing is they have eliminated brominated flame-retardants or BFRs from our products.

Margaret: Great.

Ron: Very, very important and very good.

Margaret: Excellent. It's always nice to know that the company is going further than they are being mandated to on things like this. And what about CO2 emissions?

Ron: Well, CO2 emissions are near and dear to everyone's heart these days. CO2 emissions contribute to global warming, as I'm sure most everyone is familiar with these days, and Seiko Epson has set a target of reducing their CO2 emissions by 50% by the year 2010, which would be a 50% reduction from levels that they had attained in 1990. So they've set very aggressive goals for themselves. Fifty-percent reduction is very, very aggressive and a very important milestone when we reach that in 2010.

Margaret: Excellent. Very good to hear. Now, I know when I talked our projector expert, Heather, last month, she talked about the fact that our packaging, we're trying to use more and more recycled content in our packaging. What else are we doing with our packaging to make it more environmental?

Ron: Well, one of the important things that we've done is we have reduced the size of our packaging, and by doing that, that allows us to load more boxes, if you will, within a cargo container or a trailer truck.

Margaret: Oh, yeah.

Ron: Put more on a pallet, so therefore we can load more cargo and minimize the environmental impact of the transportation chains that we're utilizing.

Margaret: Oh, that's great.

Ron: In addition to that, we have also reduced the size of our products themselves. The footprint of our products have been reduced – again, minimizing weight, minimizing the cube necessary for the packaging, and again contributing to a reduction in transportation costs and CO2 emissions and all of that nasty stuff that goes along with transporting products.

Margaret: I think that's great. That's something that I don't really even think about. You don't think about the consequences of having large packaging. It adds that much more to the chain of getting in here.

Ron: That's correct.

Margaret: And uses that much more in the way of carbon-based fuels and so on to get it. That's excellent.

Ron: That's very good. You're exactly right.

Margaret: Very, very good. What about the contents of our packaging, what are they made of?

Ron: Well, Epson has done a very good job of working with our suppliers with regard to our packaging and currently the packaging contains no heavy metal content.

Margaret: Okay.

Ron: And that's very, very important because, in the past, packaging would contain such things as lead, chromium, cadmium, things of that nature, and because of that you could not really easily recycle the packaging. It had to be incinerated or had to go to landfill.

Margaret: That makes sense.

Ron: So now that the heavy metals have been removed, we now can recycle our packaging in many cases. Another thing that we're particularly proud of is the fact that Epson has also implemented a sustainability scorecard, if you will, for our packaging, and that means that we purchase all of our packaging material from professionally managed, sustainable forests.

Margaret: Oh, okay.

Ron: So what that means is that the forests where we get our packaging materials from or where our vendors get the packaging material from come from forests that will continue to produce additional forests and trees and what have you over the course of many, many years and we will not deplete the resources of those forests. And we require that they provide certificates of compliance and that they really have come from sustainable and managed forests.

Margaret: Very good. So, Ron, I know we're also reducing energy usage in our products. What are some of the things that Seiko Epson is doing with that?

Ron: Well, Seiko Epson has been a leader in this area. This is one of their top initiatives that they have been involved in for a number of years now, and that is their reduction of energy usage in our products. And what that means to the consumer is that their products will use less energy not only during their active use of the product but also when that product is at rest. So if they leave the product on and they leave for a while, many of our products will use less energy.

In addition to that, we're very excited about our ETORL projector lamps which are employing new heat-reduction technology that eliminates the cool-down cycle of the projector completely, and again, that will save the consumer money from the energy standpoint and is a very interesting and innovative technology that we've come up with.

Margaret: Right. That's a great technology, and I know from my experience with our scanners, we have the ReadyScan technology in that which employs LED lights instead of the fluorescent lights, which is much more energy efficient and, nicely enough, doesn't have mercury in it either.

Ron: Very good; that's right.

Margaret: So it's got kind of a twofold benefit.

Ron: It's always good to get rid of the mercury.

Margaret: Yeah, exactly. We don't want any more mercury than we have to have in the environment.

Ron: No, not at all.

Margaret: (Laughs) Now, what about when a customer gets to the end, they want a new printer so badly that they're going to go out and buy one. What do they do with their old printer?

Ron: Well, generally speaking, again, you know, focusing on Seiko Epson's efforts, they identified early on that when products come to the end of their lifecycle, people are going to want to recycle them and somehow get rid of them without throwing them into the landfill.

Margaret: Right.

Ron: In addition, the world is jumping on the bandwagon of not having technology products go to landfill any longer, so consumers are put in the position of having to recycle their products.

Margaret: Right.

Ron: So Seiko Epson has designed many of their products for easy disassembly and easy recycling at the end of their lifecycle, and this is very good for the consumer, it's very good for the recycling companies because it's easy to disassemble and take out the hazardous substances and hazardous parts and recover those and then send the remaining materials for recycling and reuse.

Margaret: That's great. It's great to know that Seiko Epson, not just Epson America, is looking out for all these things for the environment.

Ron: Yes. They have a very long history of environmental activism. Very good.

(Jingle music)

Margaret: We'll hear more of our interview with Ron telling us about Epson's environmental activities in just a minute. Remember to listen carefully at the end

of this podcast for instructions on how to enter the drawing for a \$500 American Express gift card. And be sure to take the online courses this month on Knoware University. During May you'll learn even more about Epson's environmental activities. Four lucky Knoware University Students will win a \$500 American Express gift card, just by taking the Knoware University course and scoring 100% on the quiz. By taking the five-question podcast quiz and scoring 100% you'll receive an additional entry into the weekly drawing for a \$500 American Express gift card. Stay tuned to the end of this podcast for details on how to enter that drawing.

And now back to our interview with Ron, Epson's environmental expert, at Epson headquarters in Long Beach.

(Music ends)

So, Ron, in the first half of the interview we talked about what Seiko Epson, the international parent company, has been doing. What about Epson America specifically?

Ron: Well, Epson America has been doing a lot of very interesting and exciting things that I think maybe most people know about but aren't really familiar with, so what I'd like to do is maybe talk a little bit about some of the more relevant environmental programs that we do have here.

Margaret: Great!

Ron: The first one is, Epson America does have a hardware recycling program, and what this is, is a recycling program where anyone can go to the Epson Web site under Epson.com/recycle, and there is information on how they can recycle any hardware product with the Epson brand on it. And this goes across the board to anything from scanners to printers to projectors.

Margaret: Wow.

Ron: Even from the old days of computers, televisions and products that are no longer being sold. So we will recycle for a \$10 fee. The consumer will be given instructions on where to send their product and we will then take the product and recycle it appropriately, and the \$10 will be put towards transportation and recycling. And then in turn we will also send the consumer a \$5 coupon to be

used at the Epson Store, so their net out-of-pocket cost is really \$5 to recycle any product with an Epson brand on it.

Margaret: Oh, that's great. So there's a small cost but they can feel good that their product is getting recycled.

Ron: Exactly, and we actually, our program is very, very competitive with most of our competitors as well.

Margaret: Good.

Ron: Many of them charge way more than that. They go by weight. We just go with a flat \$10 fee.

Margaret: Oh, that's excellent.

Ron: So it's very good, very good for the consumer.

Margaret: That's excellent, and I know what I have done in the past when I have wanted a new printer with some new gadget on it or now I want a CD printer and I didn't have one, if that printer is still working, I can't justify just throwing it away or getting rid of it, so I find a way to donate it.

Ron: That's very good. That's one of the pillars of Epson and that's to reduce, reuse or recycle your products.

Margaret: Right.

Ron: And by donate them, you're reusing them and letting other people continue that product's lifecycle for additional time, which is excellent.

Margaret: Right.

Ron: That's an excellent way to do it.

Margaret: I just couldn't live with myself putting a working product in the trash bin.

Ron: No. (Laughs)

Margaret: I just can't do that. (Laughs)

Ron: And you're probably lucky because these days it's against the law to put your technology equipment in the trash bin.

Margaret: Oh, that's true. I hadn't thought of that.

Ron: So you would have to take it to your own waste management recycling center or donate it.

Margaret: Right, the e-cycling places that are all over.

Ron: Exactly, exactly.

Margaret: Great.

Ron: You never want to throw any of this stuff in the trash can.

Margaret: That makes sense.

Ron: Yeah, very good. We also have another recycling program that may or may not be familiar to our folks out there, and that is our toner cartridge recycling program.

Margaret: Okay.

Ron: Again, they can go to the Epson.com/recycle and it will give information on how used, end-of-life ink toners can be sent in for recycling as well and there is no charge for this service and it's a very simple process. The consumer can call our call center or go on the Web site and they'll be sent instructions on where to mail the cartridges to, and we will handle the proper disposal of those cartridges.

Margaret: Excellent

Ron: So another nice program.

Margaret: I'll say! What about – I know more and more I see on TV commercials for appliances and so on saying they're Energy Star compliant. Where is Epson on that?

Ron: Epson has many, many products that are currently Energy Star compliant through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. What it covers for us, it covers our printers, our scanners and our multi-function devices.

Margaret: Okay.

- Ron: And something that many people don't understand about Energy Star is that Energy Star does not cover all electrical appliances or equipment.
- Margaret: Oh!
- Ron: So someone might say, "Oh, well, gee, why aren't your projectors Energy Star compliant?" Well, the reason is, is that there is no criteria to ensure that those devices meet Energy Star criteria that is set down by the EPA.
- Margaret: Okay.
- Ron: So when you see something, it's not necessarily that Epson isn't doing the Energy Star compliance testing; it's that that particular product line does not fall under criteria that is ready for Energy Star.
- Margaret: So don't necessarily take it as a negative if it's not Energy Star. It might be that there isn't criteria for it to be Energy Star.
- Ron: That's exactly right.
- Margaret: Excellent.
- Ron: That's exactly right. So we're very much in tune to the Energy Star program, we're active members, we have dedicated resources that do nothing but certify our products, and we're actually very proud. We have a gentleman here at Epson America that does all the certification for our products on a worldwide basis.
- Margaret: Oh, great.
- Ron: For actually – it's all of Europe, Canada, Latin America and the United States.
- Margaret: Excellent.
- Ron: So we're very proud of that program and have a lot of our products that are Energy Star compliant.
- Margaret: Very good. And I know, being an Epson corporate employee, every month or two we go through ISO 14001 certification. That's always –
- Ron: Always fun. (Laughs)

Margaret: – a big deal for us. We always strive to make sure we meet that goal every single time. What exactly is the ISO 14001 certification about?

Ron: Well, ISO 14001 is an environmental management system, and companies can choose – it's a voluntary program – but they can choose to obtain certification in the ISO process. And Seiko Epson Corporation as a company on a worldwide basis has said we believe that this is important for our organization to be certified in ISO 14001 because of the environmental importance of our business, so many of our facilities are ISO 14001 certified, and that requires that we have processes in place to monitor our environmental activities. So some of the things that we do here, as an example in Long Beach, is we monitor our recycling efforts, we participate in a ride-share program, and we try and reduce our natural resource usage such as using less copy paper and printing paper and less electricity.

Margaret: Right.

Ron: And water and that type of thing, so it's a very good program. It clearly is very, very important for factories and plants that are manufacturing, but it also has very good applications to our distribution centers and our sales offices as well.

Margaret: Right. It seems like if you implement that across corporate offices and manufacturing and so on, it has the potential to make a really big impact.

Ron: Yes, it does, and it's something that many companies now require of their vendors and suppliers, that they have the ISO certification. Many people might remember that in the beginning there was something called ISO 9001.

Margaret: Right.

Ron: And that was the first steps into quality-type systems and management systems, and ISO 14001 is kind of an offshoot of the original ISO 9000 quality system.

Margaret: And I do remember ISO 9001 myself. That was – we were part of that as well.

Ron: Yes, very much.

Margaret: Excellent. Well, this is great information, Ron, and I really look forward to having you back as a guest again as we implement more and more new things in our environmental programs.

Ron: I would love to come back. We have a lot of things that we're working on. We're very excited about what the future holds for us here in the Americas and hope to have a lot of interesting things to relate to you in a few months.

Margaret: That's great. Thanks so much for your time today, Ron.

Ron: Thanks for having me.

(Jingle music)

Margaret: Remember, you still need to take this month's podcast quiz in order to be entered into the weekly drawing for a \$500 American Express gift card. Every week, each unique Knoware University quiz you take and score 100% on gets you an entry into the weekly drawing.

To find the podcast quiz, visit the final exams section located in the Student Center of Knoware University. On the final exams page you'll see a special quiz listed for the May 2008 podcast, right below the link for the regular Knoware University quiz for May. Score 100% on the podcast quiz and you've got one entry into the weekly drawing. Be sure to take the regular Knoware University quiz to get an additional entry into the weekly \$500 American Express gift card drawing.

Well, that's it for this month's Knoware University podcast. Join us next month for another new Knoware University podcast with another Epson product expert and more chances to win great prizes. Until then, this is Margaret from Epson. Thanks for listening in and thanks for selling Epson.

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