

## Case Study



# How ECO Stars can help small businesses

**Small businesses sometimes miss out on opportunities – thinking only bigger companies will benefit – find out how a small fleet operator in Essex has taken ECO Stars advice to make practical changes to run its fleet more efficiently.**



Construction company HW Wilson Limited has a proud history of serving the public and not-for-profit sectors throughout Essex, Hertfordshire, London and the South East.

Their team of experienced tradesmen provides a variety of services including design and build as well as refurbishment. The company's very first client was Barnado's and 80 years on, they are still working for the charity along with local councils and the NHS.

## Joining ECO Stars - A 'No Brainer'

Director Philip Pearson said the company's green aspirations were only one reason why HW Wilson was attracted to the ECO Stars Fleet recognition scheme when they were approached in October 2012. "We have a small fleet of 13 vans and were interested in being greener but also how we could be more efficient. Joining ECO Stars seemed a bit of a no-brainer. We would get our vans and fleet management methods assessed by specialists and told how we could potentially reduce carbon emissions and save money. Plus it was totally free."

HW Wilson supplied a full fleet listing to the ECO Stars team – this was followed with an on-site visit to discuss their fleet and fuel management practices to complete the application form. Philip said, "The process was straightforward and Jim Chappell, our ECO Stars assessor provided guidance at every step of the way."

Jim then rated each individual vehicle and the overall fleet and awarded a one star rating. He said, " This was due to relatively poor vehicle performance but also a simple lack of records. We recommended that HW Wilson immediately started to monitor their fleet more closely. "

## ECO Stars - What is it?

The free ECO Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme recognises and advises any business that operates a fleet of vehicles – from heavy goods, buses, coaches or vans to improve efficiency and reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Industry experts rate vehicles and overall fleet management performance - both operational and environmental –and award members an ECO Stars rating between 1 and 5.

Each member receives a tailored Road Map – an action plan designed to help members progress to higher rating levels by improving their fleet profile through key measures including fuel management, developing driver skills, vehicle specification and maintenance, performance monitoring and use of IT support systems.

## The Road Map

As part of HW Wilson's Road Map, the ECO Stars team provided a spreadsheet to monitor fuel usage for 6 months. This also allowed the company to identify vehicles which could be compared and understand why some vehicles were performing badly.

It emerged fairly quickly that there were two key issues which needed to be resolved:

- **Driving style** - this contributed to poor fuel efficiency.
- **Vehicle loading** – Vans were often loaded to full capacity rather than just carrying what tools and equipment were needed for that day – increasing fuel consumption unnecessarily.



Philip admitted, "It was a bit of an eye-opener when we were first started monitoring our vehicles. We hadn't realized how much our own actions impacted on fuel consumption. ECO Stars helped us by providing data to use as a baseline – using the spreadsheet gives us vital information to help improve efficiency. It will also assist with buying decisions of vehicles due for renewal"

**"We would recommend ECO Stars to any small business that operates vehicles"**

**Phillip Pearson, HW Wilson**

## Change for the better

The company has embarked on a more rigorous approach to fleet management with all vehicles fitted with trackers to ensure direct routes are taken. This has led to improvements in fuel efficiency.

It has also led to changes across the firm – one unexpected but welcome improvement is better quotes for customers as mileage and fuel usage can now more accurately gauged.

Philip Pearson said HW Wilson were pleased with the progress they've made since joining ECO Stars, "Our one star rating is just a start – the support we've received has been fantastic and helped us begin to make improvements – we are already seeing reductions in fuel costs - but we've got a long way to go. "

"We would recommend ECO Stars to any small business that operates vehicles. Getting free advice from the industry experts will give you access to some of the fleet management techniques that the big boys use – you'll definitely reduce your fuel consumption and save money."



## Interested?

*It couldn't be easier!*

**To join ECO Stars**

**call: 01543 416 416**

**email: [ecostars@ttr-ltd.com](mailto:ecostars@ttr-ltd.com)**

HW Wilson is a member of Thurrock ECO Stars which is part of Travel Thurrock Smarter Choices which in turn has been facilitated by the council's successful bid for funding under the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund. The ECO Stars team is managed by transport consultants Transport & Travel Research Ltd [www.ttr-ltd.com](http://www.ttr-ltd.com)