



Case Study: Knoll Inc.

Leader in sustainable furniture seeks improvement

Knoll is an established sustainability leader in the furniture industry, having built a LEED Gold-certified plant in East Greenville, Pennsylvania and ten

Knoll

LEED-certified showrooms. Their products have earned third-party certifications for responsible wood sourcing and indoor air quality. Though these were impressive demonstrations of environmental responsibility, Knoll wanted to keep forging the path of sustainability.

Reaching level™ 3

Knoll started its pursuit of level with certification of three product lines: the Antenna™ Workspace, the Generation by Knoll® Chair, and the Dividends Horizon® office system. level certification, founded upon the voluntary furniture sustainability standard developed by the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association (BIFMA), was designed to deliver the most open and transparent means of evaluating and communicating the environmental and social impacts of furniture products. It not only examines the materials that go into the product, but it looks at corporate practices, community benefits, and supply chain.

Knoll hired Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), the number one certifier to the level standard. SCS audited four Knoll facilities, including plants in East Greenville, Toronto, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids. The auditors scored each product, as well as Knoll's corporate and manufacturing practices, on sustainability criteria in four areas—materials, energy and atmosphere, human and ecosystem health, and social responsibility.



Issues Addressed:

- Wanted to strengthen position as a sustainability leader in the furniture industry.
- Sought a way to leverage environmental responsibility as a competitive differentiator.

The Certification Solution:

- Products recognized as level 3, the top tier of level certification.
- First company to earn level 3 in multiple product categories.

“Knoll is taking leadership steps toward sustainability. Their level 3 certification reflects achievements in waste and greenhouse gas emissions reduction, human and ecosystem health, and social responsibility.”

– Stowe Hartridge-Beam,
Scientific Certification Systems



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Providing global leadership in independent, third-party certification, auditing, testing and standards development for more than 25 years.



The Certification Solution

All three of Knoll's products earned the highest award that a product can achieve under the level program, level 3 certification. This made Knoll the first company to earn level 3 for multiple product categories. Moreover, Dividends Horizon was the first office system to earn level 3 Certification and only the second level 3 certificate ever issued.



Leadership in Sustainability

Working towards earning level certification had numerous benefits for Knoll. The process generated greater employee engagement in sustainability efforts and helped the company track sustainability performance metrics like material and energy efficiency.

The design and manufacturing teams worked together to integrate sustainability into their products, which is likely to help streamline the sustainable design process in the future.

"level certification complements our long-standing commitment to pioneering clean manufacturing policies that protect the biosphere and conserve natural resources."

Lou Newett,
Knoll Health and Safety Manager



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