Introducing the Sleep Products Sustainability Program (SP2) for California manufacturers. Launched by the Mattress Recycling Council (MRC), SP2 is designed to help reduce waste and energy consumption during the manufacturing process. The best part? You’ll save money while doing your part to help the Earth. To take advantage of the benefits of this no-cost, voluntary program, please visit: www.MattressRecyclingCouncil.org/SP2
Lean and Efficient

There’s something about this time of year that makes decluttering so appealing. The lazy days of summer, when we were outside as much as possible, have slipped by. Now, with autumn here and winter on the horizon, the indoor days are coming. Clutter can create claustrophobia, so, for me, the time to tackle it is now.

For the past month, I’ve taken on one decluttering project at a time. My office, several kitchen cabinets, bathroom cabinets, medicine cabinets and the junk drawer all have received the treatment. A new order has been created. Taking away the old has allowed me to see what I actually have and reorganize it in a way that makes life easier.

Recent books and Netflix shows have fanned these decluttering flames. One of the motivations behind decluttering is to possess only what truly matters. I find it also brings a greater efficiency. I can lay my hands on what I need right away because I know where it is. And it saves money. Previously, I might have purchased something, such as batteries, because I didn’t know whether I already had them.

In the same way, the Mattress Recycling Council’s new Sleep Products Sustainability Program, or SP2, is designed to help manufacturers reduce waste and energy consumption to make their operations more efficient and, ultimately, save them money. (See article on page 13.) While not quite the same as decluttering, SP2 brings about similar end results and employs some of the same thinking. Both require individuals and companies to look at their spaces and processes with new eyes.

Reading about this program inspired me. While SP2 is starting in California with mattress manufacturers, it has the potential to expand to suppliers and retailers and maybe other states. It’s such a good idea. Trainers give manufacturers the tools to evaluate their facilities, looking for areas where they can reduce waste. It might mean asking what else they can recycle. It might mean seeing where energy or water is being wasted. Or the company can look at reducing transportation and fuel costs.

I highly recommend that you read the article. One example in the article prompted me to look at water waste in my home. We have a leak that, now that I look more closely at it, should be an easy fix. If it works, I’m definitely looking forward to a lower water bill.

This article is just the first that will highlight this new program. Look for updates in the months ahead as more manufacturers figure out ways to make themselves leaner and more efficient.

In the meantime, take a look at your facility and even your home and see what changes you can make. It will make a difference to your bottom line and to the environment. Win-win.

Beth English • Managing Editor

The Mattress Recycling Council has launched the Sleep Products Sustainability Program, a new initiative to help mattress manufacturers reduce waste and energy consumption — making their operations more efficient and saving them money. Exemplifying the efficiency principles it promotes, the program is called SP2 for short.

SP2 training and certification is offered at no cost to mattress manufacturers with facilities in California that want to improve operations at their production plants, distribution centers, warehouses and/or offices. Initially available only to California mattress manufacturers, MRC may expand the program to suppliers and retailers in that state and eventually to companies in other states. Pleasant Mattress, based in Fresno, California, was the first manufacturer to undergo the training, and MRC expects two or three other companies to complete the training by the end of the year.

The voluntary program was developed as part of the bedding industry’s commitment to environmental stewardship, says Justine Fallon, MRC director of operations.

“SP2 encourages manufacturers to look at their products and their processes and to determine what they can do within their facility to reduce their environmental impact and create efficiencies that lead to cost savings,” Fallon says. “It helps them create a structure that will lead to continual improvement.”

The program is facility-based, meaning that if a manufacturer has, for example, three production plants and one distribution center in California, each of the four locations could participate. SP2 is largely self-directed, with companies setting their own goals and choosing their own SP2 program manager and team to evaluate current operations at a facility and recommend improvements.

“You want to assemble a team that really knows your facility inside and out,” Fallon says. “That could mean your operations manager and facilities manager but also the person who pays your invoices every month and who knows what your electric bills run.”

MRC provides educational materials and leads the initial daylong training at each participating facility. SP2 trainers also are available to answer questions as manufacturers do internal evaluations and make improvements, a process that typically takes several months.

“It’s up to the manufacturer and the team to decide what they want to focus on and accomplish,” Fallon says. “Rather than telling them what they have to do, our goal is to encourage them to brainstorm and make connections between what they can do to reduce their environmental impact and what they can do to save money.”

After the successful completion of a final audit, the facility earns SP2 certification.

by Julie A. Palm

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SP2 encourages participants like Pleasant Mattress to look at every facet of their operations for waste and potential cost savings.

Beyond the Low-Hanging Fruit

Beyond the Low-Hanging Fruit

The company has two Fresno facilities: a 100,000-square-foot primary mattress manufacturing plant, which includes corporate offices, and a nearby 50,000-square-foot plant that produces mattress components and the McRoskey brand. The 11-person SP2 team Pleasant Mattress has assembled is looking at operations across facilities and is led by plant manager Domingo Urrea.

The team is just now beginning to evaluate Pleasant Mattress’ operations and recommending changes.

“Our approach is going to be to focus on simple changes that will have cumulative impact,” Morgenstern says. “I describe it as we’ve got to look for singles or doubles, not triples or home runs.”

The goal, he says, is to make meaningful and sustainable changes that will build momentum to make more changes in the future.

“We have a mantra here: crawl, walk, run,” Morgenstern explains. “You have to develop skills and discipline before you can be the best at something. If we get people to buy into something simple, like ‘I need to turn my monitor off at the end of each day,’ that becomes part of the culture and we move on from there. I see SP2 as part of our effort of constant improvement.”

operational labor and complexity of the operation,” Little says.

Given that, AAC engineers design machines with reduction of labor costs and material waste, in addition to other factors, in mind. A case in point is AAC’s 1390B Automatic Mattress Packaging machine. The machine allows operators to splice a new roll of film onto an existing coil, eliminating film waste. When the machine is set up with tear-resistant and puncture-resistant AAC MW Film, there is further savings of plastic consumption and waste. Other features of the machine, including a serial bus control system for drivers and motors and automatic monitoring and control of seal bar temperatures, help to save energy.

“The primary concern for our customers is usually to save money and/or improve productivity,” says Paul Jack, president of sales for Global Systems Group, the machinery division of Cartaghe, Missouri-based Leggett & Platt Inc. “Fortunately, one important way to save money in manufacturing is the elimination of waste. If we can show them what the newer equipment’s better efficiencies can also result in sustainability benefits, that’s a bonus for them.”

For instance, the company’s new XT9 Stitch Bridge stitches foam mattress comfort layers together instead of gluing them. “Replacing gallons of glue with a very small amount of thread is a much better alternative for the manufacturer,” Block says. “The XT9 can reduce materials costs in this process by over 95%. It’s a great cost savings for the manufacturer and a more environmentally friendly process, as well.”

Block says GSG’s mattress manufacturing customers typi- cally have three ‘waste reduction priorities’ – reducing material waste, reducing labor waste by increasing automation and produc- ing energy waste. New GSG equipment typically helps companies meet all three goals, he says.
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To stay up to date on the progress of bedding manufacturers participating in the Sleep Products Sustainability Program, check upcoming issues of BedTimes, the BedTimes website (BedTimesMagazine.com) and BedTimes' twice-monthly newsletter (BedTimes in Brief).

Learn More

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