

Fab Five

Pedro's USA

Years in Business: 27
Employees: 9
Location: Wilmington, MA

When it comes to going green with its products, Pedro's USA walks the walk. Nowhere is this more evident than during the research and development phase of Pedro's products.

"Sustainability is on every design brief," said Richard Fries, marketing and communications manager at Pedro's USA. "The sustainability objective may vary from product to product, but it is key. It resides on the brief alongside the key performance characteristics.

"We've invested lots of time on projects we had to kill because they failed to meet our environmental criteria," he added. "Sometimes we have to scrap an eco initiative because it

customer comment was digested.

"We learned that our customers were a lot like us and cared about the environment and wanted us to pursue the responsible path," Fries said. "That put our customer feedback in line with our ethos, personally and corporately."

Fries estimates that 30 percent of Pedro's products can be considered green, with only a handful of its tools and accessories. As tough as it is to make low impact tools, Pedro's realizes it can be done. "We are pushing on every front from packaging to material to finishing choices," Fries said.

Many of the company's green efforts go unnoticed, but that doesn't bother Fries. "Many of our efforts are invisible," Fries said. "We are driving hard to complete and deliver corn plastic blisters for our consumer packages that will be the first our industry will see," Fries said. "It costs more, it's invisible, but we aren't confident that our global consumers separate the card from the plastic."

Fries said among Pedro's newest releases, the biodegradable Pro-J degreaser is the one he's most proud of for being eco-friendly. Fries would like manufacturers—including Pedro's—making bicycle care products such as degreasers, cleaners and lubes, to consider where these products ultimately end up.

"One of the biggest problems for water pollution is non-point source runoff," Fries said. "This is all the stuff that washes off roads, parking lots and driveways into the water supply. There's no industrial villain to blame here, just you and me. Too many traditional-bound guys are splashing all sorts of diesel fuel around to clean bikes. That stuff is deadly and it works back up the food chain to our children."

Fries said Pedro's looks up to companies such as Clif Bar, Quality Bicycle Products and Patagonia for their green efforts. Pedro's one day hopes to get to that place.

"We've only just begun," Fries said. "We've built our Restricted Substances List, but add to it daily. We're evaluating our ingredients on existing products to make improvements and approaching new development with an eye on sustainability."



The Pedro's crew learned recently that its customers care as much about the environment as the Massachusetts company does.

simply doesn't hold up to our performance standards."

Whether it was its Milk Levers or the blowout bags from reclaimed inner tubes, Pedro's has had quite a history with environmentally friendly products. But it hasn't been easy being green.

"Like everybody, we have to work at both the sustainable products and the less green ones," Fries said. "I will say that dirty is easier and more profitable, but wickedly shortsighted. We're no different than most cyclists, most humans. We care about our footprint and want to minimize it."

Even with its green history and deep-rooted belief in eco-friendly products, Pedro's is hardly a company to rest on such laurels. Last year Pedro's began the arduous task of "taking apart and rebuilding" the company. Every product went under eco scrutiny and every

Clif Bar & Company

Years in Business: 15 years
Employees: 180
Location: Berkeley, CA

Clif Bar's team director, Dylan Seguin may not be the green spokesperson you'd expect, but he loves talking about environmental sustainability. And he's finding that more people within the competitive sector of cycling are eager to get into the green act.

"I always feel like athletes in this country and worldwide have a strong voice. They can definitely lead by example," Seguin said. "In the big picture, we'd like to see all of the Team Clif Bar athletes, and athletes in general, just be more aware of the global warming issue and realize we can all be part of the solution."

Under Team Clif Bar's Sustainable Sports program, Seguin rides the popularity of the TIAA-CREF cyclocross program to educate more people within the industry about simple measures they can take to demonstrate good stewardship to the environment.

Seguin and his team worked in 2006 to figure out all of their race-related transportation mileage and offset their carbon dioxide emissions through Native Energy. The team also traveled to several USGP cyclocross races with recycling and composting stations in tow, educating everyone who asked what the large bins next to the mechanic stations were.

Seguin, who has been with the company for five years, calls the Sustainable Sports Program one of the first carbon neutral, elite-level cycling programs produced.

"I see it as a program that's really out there to build awareness, and I'd like the athletes on the program to re-

ally start connecting the dots," Seguin said.

"They've worked with us for years in many cases, and they



Clif Bar field marketing manager Kristen Downs (right) presents the 'Big Check' to Boulder Parks & Recreation at the USGP's Boulder Cup.

know that natural and organic Clif Bar energy foods are good for the individual. That's obvious. But the message we're trying to get across is that eating natural and organic foods is good for the planet," he added.

Over the last race season, Clif Bar sponsored numerous high-profile events with its Start Global Cooling program, including the inaugural Amgen Tour of California, the Sea Otter Classic and the Escape from Alcatraz triathlon.

This year Team Clif Bar plans to implement a carbon dioxide offset calculator and a Green Team Tool Kit for people who want to learn more about making a difference in their environment on its Web site's home page.

Last year, Seguin visited Boulder, Colorado, to speak with athletes about ways that they can make a difference. Seguin said that Clif Bar plans to expand these sustainable sports camps to another seven or eight cities this year.

For Seguin, it's a refreshing experience. "For me, it's great to be involved in other aspects of the company. I do a lot of things outside of the Team Clif Bar program. And as a father of a 4-year-old, I definitely think long term."

Chris King Precision Components

Years in Business: 30
Employees: Less than 100
Location: Portland, OR

Chris King has been making headsets for more than 30 years and not only can those early headsets still be serviced, but many are still in service.

The dedication to quality, reliability and serviceability means few King products end up in landfills. But that's only the beginning of the company's sustainability practices.

"One of Chris' fundamental issues is that we do make things, so we use en-

ergy and use resources, which we try to minimize. And the products we make, like our headsets, never need to be replaced, so they can occupy a useful place and stay there," said

Chris DiStefano, King Cycle Group's marketing manager.

Since it's impossible to manufacture solid objects without some form of waste, all of the company's metal scrap gets sent through a puck-making machine to squeeze the oil out. The company reuses the oil and compresses the chips for easy storage and transportation to the recycler. Factory air also is processed to squeeze the oil out.

Paul McKenzie/Clif Bar & Co.

Ellsworth Handcrafted Bicycles

Years in Business: 16

Employees: 16

Location: Ramona, CA

Establishing a sustainable company doesn't necessarily mean more cost, but it does require some research and initiative, according to Tony Ellsworth, president and chief executive officer of Ellsworth.

"Going green is largely an educational effort, not so much an additional cost," Ellsworth said. "We [the United States] represent roughly 20 percent of the world's population, yet consume per capita 80 percent of its resources. If that isn't motivation enough, I don't know what is."

When it came time to build his company's headquarters in Southern California, Ellsworth found that his building could be self-sustaining through use of its surrounding natural environment.

He had solar panels installed on the facility's roof that generate about 90 percent of the building's electricity, reducing its dependence on fossil fuels.

Ellsworth said the cost to implement solar-electric generation was less than \$30,000. "That's half of my magazine ad budget for one year and I'm a small business making product in the United States without the huge margins of bigger companies utilizing less expensive foreign labor and maintaining higher profit margins," he said. "If Ellsworth can do it, any company can do it."

Solar power also offers some financial benefits. "There's some unbelievable tax advantages for businesses," said David Wisenteiner, vice president of Ellsworth. "The way they allow you to depreciate it."

Ellsworth's building was also designed to maintain a steady cooler temperature in the summer, and warmer temperature in the winter through a process called geothermal coupling—eliminating the need for electrically



Tony Ellsworth

powered air conditioners or heaters.

Ellsworth grew up in Eugene, Oregon, and has seen first-hand the devastating effects wood-framed construction has had on local forests. So instead of wood framing, he chose insulated concrete.

"It not only insulates better, but also won't burn if there's fires, and termites and pests have no appetite for concrete," he said.

Other eco-friendly practices at Ellsworth include reusing and recycling materials. Instead of a printed catalog, Ellsworth has an online product catalog. The company also recycles aluminum from damaged frames.

The company reuses much of its shipping materials, and has some shipping materials custom made so that they secure the bikes and maximize payload. Ellsworth said he's looking at how to be more environmentally friendly in manufacturing processes, as well.

While he considers his company's ecologic impact small compared to the big picture, he hopes that by setting an example, other companies will follow. "I'm hoping we'll create a ripple effect that will have a far bigger impact than just what we do day by day," he said.

In rebuilding its manufacturing space—a 50-year-old building in Portland, Oregon—the company improved insulation to reduce energy consumption, used green building materials and added sky lights. It also uses green or recycled office, packaging and kitchen supplies whenever possible.

But pride of place goes to the company's new anodized line. By keeping this typically dirty step in-house the company is assured the process remains up to its standards. Its system releases no water waste and minimal solid waste.

"And many of the manufacturing practices we have in place not only minimize our energy and resource

use, but also make the lives of people working here better," he added.

Employee health and pride in fine-tuning the company's green practices is a very important component in the company's philosophy.

"Chris gets very long-term commitments from the people working here because the company focuses on employee wellness from a total environmental perspective," DiStefano said.

This is more than just creating a clean physical environment that promotes health, he said. People feel like they are making a difference in minimizing the footprint of a manufacturing business, he added.

And what better way to promote health than to enjoy a gourmet meal

Outdoor Gear Canada

Years in Business: 30

Employees: Approximately 75

Location: St. Laurent, Quebec, Canada

A friend's casual remark veered David Bowman, Outdoor Gear Canada's founder and president, away from traditional toward green construction for the company's new headquarters.

Exploring the possibilities convinced him that environmentally friendly construction was simply the right thing to do. "We're in the bicycle business, after all, a business that's all about good health and clean air," Bowman said.

Environmentally friendly buildings also make good business sense, he learned. "The more we looked at this, the more it became evident that there is a payoff financially," Bowman said.

With bikes and parts scattered in five warehouses in the Montreal area, Outdoor Gear Canada needed to consolidate operations. The company

With groundbreaking anticipated around the end of March, Bowman, his architect, contractor and green building consultant are still in the middle of designing and planning, working through the environmental design group's recommendations.

Lighting, insulation, flooring, glazing—even landscaping—are all important components.

A geothermal heating and cooling system will be an integral part of its environmental certification.

"You drill pipes into the earth, draw heat up from it, and re-circulate the heat through the building. You still need electricity to run the system, but our best estimate is that it will cut heating costs by about two-thirds, and that's a lot in this climate," Bowman said.

Although geothermal's initial capital costs are higher, the system will pay for itself in three to seven years.

The building's resale value should also be higher, and Bowman's environmental consultant, as part of his contract, will also do the paperwork to reap the harvest of governmental and utility company incentives and tax breaks that accrue to green building projects.

OGC will also try for LEED certification for the existing building, but retrofitting a 30-year-old warehouse presents challenges.

"We're hoping to do that, but we don't know for certain we'll be able to. We'll certainly get part of the way there," Bowman said. Retrofitting the sprawling building's concrete floor with geothermal heating won't be feasible, but upgraded insulation, a new roof and more environmentally friendly lighting will give the building at least a green tinge.

"I'd encourage anyone building or expanding their facilities to look seriously at green buildings as an option. It's the direction we're all going to go in the future," Bowman said.



OGC's David Bowman, second from left, heads up a manager's meeting.

bought an existing 75,000-square-foot warehouse, built in about 1975, to which it will attach a new administrative office building of around 10,000 square feet.

After deciding to go green, Bowman found out about the U.S. Green Building Council, which has a branch in Canada, and its environmental LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) system, which offers guidance, checklists and three-tiered certification—gold, silver and bronze—for green construction.

"The current plan is to try for silver certification on the new office, which our LEED consultant feels we can reasonably attain," Bowman said.

at the company's in-house restaurant, which serves enticing meals made of local organic produce. Employees stay onsite for meals, which in turn reduces fossil fuel consumption and also gives everyone a chance to hang out together.

Café credits are given to employees who ride to work, carpool or walk.

Commuters over 15 miles or after dark get extra credit.

"These changes don't have to be radical. It doesn't have to be difficult; you just need a long-term view. There are so many little things that are easy to start, and quite frankly some of them actually cut costs as well," DiStefano said.