



The Venus Company is a highly successful tourism enterprise which has embedded sustainability into all aspect of its business.

The Company operates beach cafes and beach shops in Devon and Cornwall. The Venus business mission is “to be the greenest beach café and shop operator”; helping to look after the beaches it serves.

Keeping the Visitor Pounds in the Local Economy

Venus demonstrates how tourism businesses can have a huge impact on the local economy and environment. It serves local and organic produce to over 500,000 customers a year, spending approximately £500,000 per annum on local goods and services. This is money that goes back into the local economy and supports rural enterprises that keeps the landscape of Devon and Cornwall so special.

The company uses 56 local suppliers (81% of total supplies) from Devon and Cornwall. For example Venus offer its customers fresh locally caught sea foods such as gurnard, crab and lobster and a wide range of local, organic and fair-trade produced ingredients.

Asked how the Company has managed to source so much of its products locally, Michael Smith, Venus managing director explained
“Venus has found that it is important to spend quality time with local suppliers (within 20 miles).

“What is often needed is for both parties to identify any obstacles – it is remarkable how often solutions can be easily found by thinking outside the box. So listening is hugely important and retaining some flexibility in what and how the product is produced/ delivered. Delivery is probably the biggest obstacle and Venus is using its newly established central distribution facility to enable some 46 local suppliers to deliver to one point rather than all 4 cafes.”

In 2007, Venus centralized its storage, distribution, catering production and administration operations saving 900 local supplier miles weekly. The energy and resource efficient building enables bulk purchase, reduced wastage, better provenance and distribution control.

The family run company also provides employment to 14 full time and 38 seasonal staff.

The Positive Knock On

Venus’ growing purchasing power has allowed it to positively influence it’s suppliers for example in requesting reduced packaging. An annual supplier survey asks, amongst other things, for green credentials and for suggestions on how the relationship can be improved for both parties.

Engaging Customers and Visitors

In 2003 research showed 99% of customers viewed the Venus Café experience as outstanding or above average. Clearly Venus is doing something right. The Company puts thought and energy into it's communications with its customers, all communication opportunities from the company website to site information, highlight the company's good sustainable practice and green credentials adding to the 'feel good' factor experienced by customers.

For example display maps at each site show where the ingredients for the day's menus are sourced.

The company also provide a Venus Box meal which comes with a free activity book on local beach and marine wildlife and gives environmental awareness messages to 10,000 children annually.

The Company has received several national and international awards in recognition of its good sustainable practice, please see below for details. The company seeks to make all aspects of the business sustainable. It has reduced packaging through packaging specifications with suppliers, increased recycling and aims in the long term to make all Venus packaging 100% compostable.

The company also uses environmentally friendly cleaning products and reduces its energy use through installing energy efficiency measures including solar panels and buys green tariff electricity.

Working with the Community

Venus has ensured its business has a positive impact on the local community, and a positive profile with visitors and locals alike. It supports a number of local initiatives which protect and support the local environment.

It has teamed up with the Devon & Cornwall Wildlife Trusts to establish The Venus Beach Wildlife Fund. The 5 year programme will develop educational materials and programmes to educate beach visitors on how to enjoy the beach without doing damage to the environment. Venus expects to raise over £30,000 from a 5p contribution from each cup of tea and flake sold over the next 5 years to support the programme. The Wildlife Trusts will initiate and action management plans for each beach and take programmes into local primary schools to improve the knowledge levels of our future generations.

The Venus Company has also already raised over £30,000 for the South Hams 'On The Right Tracks' programme that helps conserve the area's historic green lanes. Green lanes are unsurfaced, deep, steep sided tracks that offer an 'off the beaten track' experience. The money raised through the scheme helps to clear and maintain these unique green lanes and provides a huge asset to South Hams providing some of Britain's most interesting and accessible, networks of green lanes and paths.

Venus Success

- Business in the Community Big Tick Impact on Society for Small Companies Award 2008
- The Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development in 2005
- First Choice Responsible Tourism Award for Best in a Marine Environment Category 2005
- Gold Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation in 2001 with 10 Gold GTBS awards to date. Venus was a "pilot" business in England for this award

Further awards: Taste of the West Food & Drink Awards (Tea Room/Café Class) – Gold in Devon; Silver in Cornwall (2006); Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Sustainability Awards - Overall Winner & Best Small Business (2005); Business Commitment to the Environment Award (2004); Devon Environmental Business Initiative Overall Winner (2003).

Venus is an active member of Food and Drink Devon (Michael Smith Director of the Venus Company is currently Chairman) and a champion of the Love the Flavour brand. Michael is also a Board member of SW Tourism, Devon Renaissance and a Coast ambassador to help promote Green Tourism in Cornwall

For more information please visit the Venus website www.venuscompany.co.uk