



## Trailblazer Large and Corporate Business Award - Judges Commendation

### Criterion Furniture



*Left to right - Ben Smaill, Brian Smaill, Manuel Seidel*

#### **Background:**

Criterion is New Zealand's largest locally owned manufacturer of ready-to-assemble furniture. The East Tamaki company was established in 1964 by Walter Smaill and is still owned and managed by the Smaill family today. The company focuses on the production of home entertainment and living furniture, office furniture, kitchen and storage systems, which is sold throughout Australasia, the US and in parts of Europe.

#### **The challenge:**

To minimise and mitigate the impact of the company's business activities, while adopting sustainability as a business opportunity and point of difference in the market.

#### **Some responses:**

Criterion continuously looks for ways to further improve its procurement, manufacturing and distribution systems in order to achieve the most sustainable outcomes. In April 2008, Criterion achieved Landcare Research's Diamond level Enviro-mark NZ certification.

Criterion has embarked on an Environmental Manufacturing programme that encompasses business process and supply chain reviews to seek the best available suppliers. The benefits of ongoing stakeholder engagement and investment in R&D are now paying off, as evidenced by the





company's win at the recent Sustainable Business Network Northern Regional Awards where they were recognised as the region's Sustainable Business of the Year.

Criterion has adopted a 'reduce, reuse, recycle' philosophy and is actively integrating environmental criteria into their purchasing decisions. The company is also working closely with suppliers to ensure the raw materials used for manufacturing has a low environmental impact.

The company's commitment to designing and manufacturing in New Zealand is admirable in the current climate and provides local employment and export earnings, despite numerous incentives to manufacture overseas. As part of their manufacturing efficiency, Criterion is implementing a number of initiatives to optimise their processes and is working on an ongoing project with The University of Auckland to help move the company towards its target of zero waste sent to landfill.

The business has adopted the use of an eight point "barometer" to measure progress in different areas, and keep staff informed of where improvement is needed.

**Judges comments from the National awards:**

- The company has adopted sustainability throughout their business ethic and operations, pioneering a shift towards sustainability within the manufacturing industry
- As part of this they have worked proactively with their supply chain to ensure they understand sustainability requirements of all raw materials
- Criterion has invested heavily in finding non-toxic, renewable raw materials and has developed successful strategies to minimise waste generated in the production and distribution of its furniture range
- The ongoing challenge for Criterion is to formalise and document their processes so they are able to withstand risk over the long term.

**Judges comments from the SBN Northern regional awards:**

- Criterion is committed to sustainable practices that will see them as a leading New Zealand manufacturer in environmental stewardship.

