As a consumer products manufacturer, sustainability is crucial to SGW Global. So John Zeng needed little persuasion when BT invited suppliers to join forces to cut carbon emissions, water use and waste, and produce more sustainable products.

SGW teamed up with BT as a founder member of its Better Future Supplier Forum (BFSF). Together, the team took a fresh look at every part of the SGW Global organisation with sustainability front of mind.

Now, that commitment has been rewarded with one of the first BFSF Silver Awards. That’s good for the green credentials of SGW Global, good for BT, and good for the planet too. And John’s already reaching for gold.

The BT BFSF programme is not a traditional sustainability programme that mainly focuses on factory efficiency, but a full package to ensure best-in-class design, a high efficiency supply chain, greater employee engagement, success within the community, and win–wins for all key stakeholders.”

John Zeng, CEO, SGW Global
Sustainability by design
SGW Global designs and manufactures award-winning mobile phones and DECT cordless phones for consumers. It has a major market presence in China, the home of its headquarters and manufacturing plants, and in Europe, where its design centre is located. The company also has principal sales offices and aftersales teams in Germany and the UK.

Wherever in the world it operates, SGW Global is keen to reduce the environmental impact of everything it does, makes, and sells. The company has been a BT supplier for a number of years and some of the most popular phones in the BT range have been produced by SGW Global. Knowing that sustainability is high on the BT agenda, the company was enthusiastic about helping pilot an innovative sustainability programme, the BT Better Future Supplier Forum (BFSF).

John Zeng, CEO of SGW Global, was quick to recognise the advantages. “The BT BFSF programme is by far the most comprehensive programme we have seen to help deliver our sustainability commitment across all aspects of our business,” he says. “It also includes some powerful tools to help multiple parties achieve their goals. We will continue to work closely with BT to drive this programme forward so that we can continue our journey in our quest to be a better consumer electronics supplier.”

Making a measurable difference
With the help of the structured BFSF approach to sustainability and a suite of best practice analysis tools and techniques, SGW Global developed a plan to accelerate its transformation into a more sustainable business.

The company identified and focused on ten priority areas for improvement. These included the need to boost the understanding of sustainability issues by every employee across the company, plus a concerted drive to better educate those involved in product design and development processes. As a direct result, the company is taking a fresh, more eco-friendly approach, both during the generation of new concepts and ideas, and in the review of existing products. At least one product has already been redesigned as a result.

At the end of its first 12 months as a member of the BT Better Future Supplier Forum, SGW Global is forecasting some important sustainability savings. Comparing like-for-like against the previous year, it is on track to cut carbon emissions associated with the manufacture of BT products by four per cent. Water usage will be down by 7.3 per cent, and there will be 15.4 per cent less solid waste to dispose of. In total the company’s annual production volume carbon footprint is set to reduce by almost 10,000 tonnes.

Participation in the BT Better Future Supplier Forum helps SGW Global deliver lasting sustainability benefits across the company.

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John Zeng, CEO, SGW Global
Recognising a greener approach
In recognition of these achievements, BT has presented SGW Global with one of the first-ever BFSF Silver Status Awards. This followed rigorous assessment by BT of the SGW Global sustainability approach. The company was judged against a wide-ranging series of measures to assess and compare its processes and performance levels with known worldwide best practice in sustainability.

Commenting on the award, Erik Raphael, BT Director of Consumer Devices, says: “SGW Global has demonstrated real commitment to the BT BFSF sustainability programme. The progress it has made is demonstrated not only in improved understanding of the key principles of sustainability, but also in the application of these principles in its manufacturing operations, and the development of innovative and attractive sustainable consumer propositions.”

For SGW Global this is only the beginning. With the help of the BFSF and the sustainability advances already made, it is at work to hit new and higher targets in reducing both carbon emissions and its use of natural resources as it develops new and innovative products.

About the BT Better Future Supplier Forum
For BT the BFSF is an essential component in a long term strategy to lead in sustainability by encouraging and helping suppliers do the same. It’s all part of the company’s Net Good vision to help society live within the constraints of our planet’s resources through our people and products, and our associated goal to help customers reduce carbon emissions by at least three times the end-to-end carbon impact of our business by 2020.

BT believes that a product or service can only be truly sustainable if the complete supply chain is too – from one end to the other. So the BFSF gives suppliers an environment in which they can collaborate with BT to identify, collect, share, and implement best practice on sustainability at every point in the lifecycle of a product. That runs from the sourcing of raw materials through the manufacturing process, to the delivery of the finished product to the customer and maximum recyclability when it reaches end of life.