

ECO-CENTRIC ALTRUISTS

Lebanon Chemicals



– Want to boost your employees’ morale? Go green, as a study from the Charlton College of Business at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth revealed that employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs if they work for an eco-friendly firm – not one with deeper pockets. Under this section, we feature several enterprises making us proud with their corporate social responsibility, starting off with **LEBANON CHEMICALS**.



Lebanon Chemicals with Lebanese President Michel Suleiman, flanked by caretaker Minister of Environment Mohammad Rahal and caretaker Minister of Agriculture Hussein Haj Hassan during a reforestation event.

The life of a high achiever is one of give-and-receive. Lebanon Chemicals s.a.l., international manufacturer of chemical fertilizers, is aware of that and has for years been giving back to the community on various levels. “We feel we have to be socially responsible for Batroun and its environs,” argues Antoine Aoun, quality, environment, and health and safety manager, Lebanon Chemicals. “We are caring about our immediate environment as well as getting involved in events that would benefit the whole of Lebanon.” The company has always been active, working with the Municipality of Batroun and Silaata. Fresh after the fires that ravished the nation late last year, Lebanon Chemicals replanted with Lebanon Green Again Organization 400,000 square meters of land in Batroun by dropping seedlings from a helicopter. “We have repeatedly helped the Science Village Middle East in Dbayeh,” Aoun adds, having built the Chemistry section and sponsored an onsite two-day environmental show a few months ago. The event comprised an eco-show and competition for kids.

Environmental shows are not new to Lebanon Chemicals, having sponsored in November 2009 The Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED), which focused of the impact of climate change on the Arab world. In April, Lebanon Chemicals will start working on obtaining the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System, “which will take us to the next level of green thinking and attitude,” according to Aoun. The company already has the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System and OHSAS 18001 for Health and Safety. “That means we will have a full system.” The conglomerate is also keen on preserving heritage. In 2005, it worked on paving the roads with traditional tiles in the old town of Batroun and renovated a church in the town a year later. “Mr. Antoine Doumit gives special attention

to these things,” explains Aoun, referring to the company’s general manager. In line with its heritage preserving policy, Lebanon Chemicals will start in the summer watering the green areas in the Msyelha Castle, the recently restored and replanted small fortress near the village of Hamat, north of Beirut. “We are entrusted with watering it every year,” Aoun says. The company has also renovated a public garden in Batroun with the Rotary Club. Aoun goes on to elaborate about the ethical side of Lebanon Chemicals. “We have sponsored the renovation of Beit Al Raha retirement home in Batroun with the Rotary Club and bought a medical scanner for Batroun Hospital in collaboration with the municipality,” he says. In a bid to help Batroun’s struggling fishermen, the company has also revamped the decaying port to help maintain the fishermen’s sustainable source of income.

“We are part of such things because it is the responsibility of a big company like Lebanon Chemicals to be involved,” says Aoun, “we cannot turn down someone in our community when they ask for help.” In that framework, the company helped the Batroun sports youth club get a brand new green stadium. Aoun adds, “Mr. Doumit is involved in everything. He is a big heart and helps everyone who approaches him.” He gesticulates to the many awards and certificates of appreciation laid out on the table and lining the walls, which the general manager has accumulated over the years for all his humanitarian, development, and charitable work. “For the past two years, we have also been sponsoring the Batroun summer festivals. This promotes tourism and the economy of Batroun,” Aoun points out. “We can’t just be a big production company oblivious to our surroundings. We have to be responsible. These actions made us on excellent terms with everyone in Batroun and the neighboring areas. They count on us.” ○