



Case Study

A healthy world and healthy work environment thanks to clean air



Customer

Salvation Army
ReShare



Location

Deventer (NL)



Sector

Recycling



Dust reduction

Dust levels < WHO
limits of 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

At a glance

“The amount of dust in the air in our sorting hall was causing our employees to struggle with sore throats and other throat problems. Thanks to Zehnder Clean Air Solutions’ air purification systems, our working environment is now safer and healthier. However, these results aren’t just apparent on paper – our employees also have fewer health complaints.”

Thamar Keuning, CSR advisor

Challenges

A lot of clothes and textiles are sorted in the Salvation Army ReShare sorting hall and this process releases a lot of dust. Employees reported that their throats were bothered by the fibres and dust particles in the air.

The Salvation Army ReShare employees tried implementing additional cleaning processes and natural ventilation, but these efforts weren’t enough to improve the air quality. However, the Salvation Army has high standard for its employee welfare, so it was extremely dissatisfied that the working environment in the sorting hall wasn’t as safe and healthy as it could be. In search of a clean air solution, the organisation came across Zehnder Clean Air Solutions.

Over Salvation Army ReShare

Salvation Army ReShare, part of the Salvation Army, collects clothing and textiles. At three locations in the Netherlands, a team of some 80 employees and volunteers sort them for reuse: for their own second-hand clothes shops, emergency aid and recycling. Together with various stakeholders such as municipalities, retailers and recycling companies, they work towards a more sustainable future for people and the environment.

Benefits

Thanks to the air purifiers from Zehnder Clean Air Solutions, the air quality at Salvation Army ReShare has improved significantly. Employees no longer complain of health problems such as headaches and sore throats. In fact, by removing dust from the air, the Salvation Army has been able to turn what was a hazardous environment into a healthy one.

Our measurements also show that the air purifiers are doing their job well. The average dust levels in the sorting hall are now below World Health Organisation (WHO) advisory values for airborne particulate matter.



A sustainable business in all areas

Caring for fellow human beings and the environment. This is the Salvation Army’s biggest driving force. Salvation Army Reshare, part of the organisation, also fights for a sustainable future. They do this by collecting and reusing clothes and textiles: for emergency aid, their own second-hand clothes shops, and recycling. Every day, some 250 employees and volunteers spread over 18 locations in the Netherlands work towards a more sustainable world.

However, decision makers at Salvation Army ReShare know that, even though the work they do is massively beneficial for the external world, it’s what’s on the inside that counts. So, they’ve made taking care of their employees a top priority. And a huge part of this is ensuring that they are working in a healthy working environment – though this wasn’t always the case.

Health complaints due to dust released during sorting of clothes and textiles

Thamar Keuning is the CSR advisor at Salvation Army ReShare and is involved in sustainability policy from the Deventer location. She said: “In our sorting hall, a huge amount of textiles and clothes arrive every day that need to be sorted. But our employees were reporting health problems. At the end of the week, for instance, they were suffering from headaches and sore throats.”

This was due to the dust particles being released during the sorting process. The Salvation Army wanted to provide its employees with a healthy working environment. “So we tried to solve it by extra cleaning and better ventilation. But that did not help,” Thamar continued.

A circular approach

The Salvation Army ReShare spoke to several suppliers about a solution. The choice finally fell on Zehnder Clean Air Solutions’ air purification systems to filter dust particles from the air. **Even during the first meeting, they felt understood. As a result, communication was smooth from the start.** Moreover, Zehnder, like the Salvation Army ReShare, strives for a circular, environmentally friendly approach.



“At Zehnder Clean Air Solutions, they reuse the air cleaners they install at their customers’ premises. That was an important part of why we chose them. Additionally, **the systems are energy-efficient and we can power them from our own solar panels on the roof.** This fits in well with our sustainability policy,” Thamar explains.

Air quality improved noticeably

Three air purification systems are now hanging throughout the ReShare centre in Deventer. On paper, it is easy to see that the air purification systems significantly improve the air quality on site. **Average dust levels are now below World Health Organisation (WHO) advisory values for airborne particulate matter.**

But even without looking at the measurements, it is clear that employees are now working in a much healthier environment. Thamar says she has received fewer complaints from employees. “It’s been a really positive development” she says. “We’re now looking to see how we can improve our working environments even more in the future, with Zehnder alongside as a partner.”



A long-term partnership

As more and more clothes keep arriving to Salvation Army ReShare, the partnership between them and Zehnder Clean Air Solutions is constantly evolving. The production lines have to be adapted accordingly. And thus, the locations of the air purification systems and the filter combinations used also need to be adapted. By continuously monitoring all these factors and responding to changes as they occur, employees can continue to breathe healthy, clean air.

Thamar is already looking ahead to the coming years:

“The experience of working with Zehnder so far has been absolutely brilliant. We’re looking forward to continuing to adapt the solution to fit our changing needs and those of our employees.”

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