



GOING GREEN - THE EASY WAY

The phrase “going green” describes any environmental friendly effort from simple to complex. Everyone wants to be green, or at least be a little more green and it is the small things that can make a big difference...if we all do them. A greener workplace has the potential for a lighter ecological footprint and it also good for the bottom line. However, many of us think that the sacrifices are too great to go green in the office. The good news, it's not as difficult as one might think.

There are 3 areas where businesses can make a significant impact without considerable expense or inconvenience: paper, lights, and electronics.

The average American office worker throws away approximately 150 pounds of paper per year. Paper manufacturing contributes to deforestation all over the globe and the United States is responsible for 35 million tons of CO2 a year.

Chose recycled printer paper that has a high percentage of post-consumer content and minimum chlorine bleaching. Even recycled paper uses a great deal of energy, water, and chemical resources during processing. When using paper, print on both sides of the page if possible and use misprints as scrap paper. Purchase printers and photocopiers that have a double-sided printing option. For companies that ships packages, reuse boxes and use shredded waste paper as a packaging material.

The greenest solution, of course, is no paper at all - try to keep things digital. The more that is done online, the less paper that is needed. Proofread and edit on the computer before printing the final document. Send emails and PDF documents instead of paper.

Another way to go green in the office is as easy as changing a light bulb. Incandescent bulbs use 4 times more energy than is necessary to produce light. Halogen lights can heat up to 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit. Energy Star certified compact fluorescent lights (CFL's) use 75% less energy to produce the

same amount of light, last 10 times longer and produce less heat. CFL's save money over the lifetime of the bulb. Turn off lights when they are not needed, a great way to ensure that this happens is to use motion sensors that automatically turn the lights off when the room is empty.

38% of all of the carbon dioxide emissions comes from electricity. Energy Star certified equipment makes a substantial savings in electricity. For example, an Energy Star certified computer is typically 52% more efficient than a standard one. Laptops consume a lot less energy than desktops. Energy efficient machines also have stand by options that will power down or go into sleep mode to conserve energy when not in use. Optimizing energy settings on computers and other office devices can be more than a modest energy saver. Use energy-saving settings and shut equipment down at the end of the day.

Manufacturing electronics uses a many resources including electricity, raw materials, and water. Electronics account for billions of pounds of municipal waste each year loaded with contaminants such as heavy metals, lead, PCB's, mercury, and various acids. Purchasing all-in-one machines that combine multiple functions will lessen the number of new equipment produced. When possible, eliminate the machine completely. An Internet fax service provides the opportunity to get rid of the fax machine completely, as well as reduce the amount of paper and ink that is consumed. Another way to decrease waste is to recycle machines that are no longer working and donate those that do to charities where they will stay in use. Many companies that sell electronics provide a recycling service when you purchase a new machine.

“Going Green” is not just a catch phrase; it is a necessity and an investment in the future. Take the time to determine a feasible contribution and enact it. There are many ways to *reduce, reuse, recycle* - most of which are low cost to establish and save money in the long run.

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