

Green Business Tips

Operating a green business is not only good for the environment but good for your business's bottom line because conserving resources and cutting down on waste saves money. The good news is that whether you run a home-based business or an off-site enterprise, there are simple things you can do to run an environmentally friendly business.

Recycling is the first thing that comes to mind when we think of being environmentally friendly and recycling is important. But recycling is only one part of the environmentally friendly business equation. We can also take a large step towards being more environmentally friendly by reducing the amounts of waste in our offices and business operations.

Here are just ten easy-to-implement ideas for running a green business from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Greening Operations guides that you can put into practice right now to make your office a more environmentally friendly place:

1. Turn off equipment when it's not being used. This can reduce the energy used by 25 percent; turning off the computers at the end of the day can save an additional 50 percent.
2. Encourage communications by email, and read email messages onscreen to determine whether it's necessary to print them. If it's not, don't!
3. Reduce fax-related paper waste by using a fax-modem and by using a fax cover sheet only when necessary. Fax-modems allow documents to be sent directly from a computer, without requiring a printed hard copy.
4. Produce double-sided documents whenever possible.
5. Do not leave taps dripping; always close them tightly after use. (One drop wasted per second wastes 10,000 liters per year.)
6. Install displacement toilet dams in toilet reservoirs. Placing one or two plastic containers filled with stones [not bricks] in the toilet's reservoir will displace about 4 liters of water per flush - a huge reduction of water use over the course of a year.
7. Find a supply of paper with maximum available recycled content.
8. Choose suppliers who take back packaging for reuse.
9. Instigate an ongoing search for "greener" products and services in the local community. The further your supplies or service providers have to travel, the more energy will be used to get them to you.
10. Before deciding whether you need to purchase new office furniture, see if your existing office furniture can be refurbished. It's less expensive than buying new and better for the environment.