



Embracing Sustainability Can Benefit Your Business

Explore tips for going green in the workplace.

Green life, sustainable mutual funds, buying local, the “buy nothing” movement, plastic-free living, eco-fashion, electric vehicles. You’ve seen all the headlines about reducing your impact on the planet. What “green” steps would we want to incorporate into our businesses?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines sustainability as “creating and maintaining the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations.” The overarching idea is to find ways to do business that have a gentler effect on the Earth.

Fortunately, there are a lot. And companies who are tapping into this zeitgeist could enjoy cost savings over time as they lead the way into the future.

BE AN ENERGY STAR

The Carbon Trust has a wealth of information on how to make your office more energy-friendly, from lightbulbs to heating and cooling systems. The most energy efficient buildings can save a staggering amount by doing very little. Something as little as switching to LEDs from standard lightbulbs can use 90% less energy or simply turning AC settings down by one degree can reduce annual energy bills by 8%.

RECRUIT A TEAM

Create a “green team” responsible for generating new ideas about ways to reduce energy and save costs. Incentivise creative thinking with lunch and learns from a favourite local vendor, gift cards or even offer a bonus based on how much people participate in green initiatives.

GROW SOMETHING

Inside your office, simple desk plants can not only create a Zen and welcoming atmosphere, they also help clean the air. Look for low-water, low-light plants like a pothos that require little maintenance and care. Planting trees is also a great way to reduce CO2 in the air, shade and cool your building, prevent soil erosion and even attract a few birds.

SOURCE IT

Most office supply vendors now offer more environmentally conscious options for everything from paper products to biodegradable packing tape and printer toner. See if buying in large quantities can reduce the price of switching, or work with operational staff to reduce usage.

THINK BIG

Sustainability can encompass so much more than environmental factors. Consider other initiatives that contribute positively to your business and your community, like corporate responsibility and governance as well as diversity and inclusion initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

- Explore the Carbon Trust website and consider downloading some of their useful resources to fast-track saving energy
- Talk to your employees about ways they think you could reduce and recycle
- Reach out to vendors to see what their sustainable product offerings look like

Sources: epa.gov; carbontrust.com raymondjames.com; lovenergysaving.com; energystar.gov; techrepublic.com; arborday.org; Energy Star small business workbook; gep.com; gardeningknowhow.com

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