

Making your business more Eco friendly

Traditionally, businesses were the one place you did not think 'Green'. You could buy eco friendly cleaning products for your home and empathize with the 'tree huggers', but your office still consumed tons of paper, your cleaning service business still used non biodegradable cleaners and your company car was left running on the kerb while your colleague collected the mail.

However, more and more offices are turning towards sustainable practices, and a decade from now, an eco friendly business will not be in the minority. Large conglomerates such as Wal-Mart's have already jumped onto the bandwagon. Smaller businesses may find that it's the fear of expenses and unknown procedures that are keeping them from adopting greener practices. Yet, going green is not an expensive option. In fact, it's one that can increase profit margins and give your company that much needed boost!

So, where does one start? A new business has the advantage of being able to enforce eco friendly procedures right at the start. However, a long established business can go eco-friendly with just a little effort.

Check to see if your business can adopt one or more of the following practices:

Avoid wastage: Find ways to follow the 3 R's of going green – reduce, recycle and reuse. Look for office supply vendors who sell recycled office products and supplies. Refill ink cartridges and donate any old computers, cell phones or office products to charities that will be thankful to receive them. Apply the 3R's to just about any aspect of your business.

Cut back on paper: Switch to inter office online communication so as to reduce paper usage. If you must print, try and use both sides of the paper to print on. Recheck the document and printer before hitting the print button. Place a bin for unwanted flyers and mail, which can be recycled.

Review your energy usage: Can you switch to solar panels for your motel? Can you set up timed sprinklers for your yard? If that's too expensive, then think smaller- Just switching off lights and electric appliances when not in use will help conserve energy.

Go organic: Can you serve organic coffee to your clients? Can your Bed and Breakfast serve an organic meal option? Can part of your clothing line be organic? When thinking organic, also try and think local. By consuming and serving local organic produce, you are maintaining that extra green patch in your country, along with giving the local economy a boost.

Change your packaging: Make the switch to packaging that can be recycled and is bio degradable. Better yet, see if your packaging can be made from the waste contents of your business- extra cloth to create bags or banners which can be recycled into envelopes.

Conserve water: Install low flow shower heads in your motel's bathrooms. Set up a filtration system to provide clean drinking water to employees and clients. Install low flush toilets in your office and stock up on recycled toilet paper.

Go hybrid: If your company uses a company vehicle, then consider going hybrid, or purchase vehicles that are fuel efficient and non polluting.

Relook at your cleaning and kitchen usage: Install an energy efficient dishwasher to conserve water. Supply your cleaners with bio degradable cleaning products. Using just 1-3 green products will make a big difference to the environment.

Educate your employees: This is probably the biggest change you can make. Talk to your employees about your new practices, give them incentives, and encourage new eco friendly ideas such as car pooling to work or telecommuting from home once a week. Start from within and see how it grows.

And finally, spread the word: Let your clients know that your business is going green. Inform them of the new recycled packaging you'll be using or the low flow shower heads installed. Let them celebrate your new 'greenness' with you.

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