



Clean Business

HOW SMALL FIRMS CAN CUT THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT

A small business wants to leave a large mark upon the world, but not in the form of a carbon footprint.

Small changes in the workplace can significantly reduce your carbon footprint and may even save some money, too. The ideas behind creating an environmentally-friendly workplace may even trickle down into employees' homes, making a seemingly small effort have a large-scale impact.

What exactly is a carbon footprint? Simply put, it's the amount of greenhouse gasses (primarily carbon dioxide) that a product or company emits into the atmosphere. Certain products, like soda cans or tires, have a pre-calculated carbon footprint. Driving a car or using electricity has a variable mark on the environment. Recycling soda cans or car-pooling reduces their carbon footprint. This is called carbon offsetting. Carbon offsetting can be implemented in any small business.

Saving on the electric bill will offset your small business's carbon footprint. Making sure lights in bathrooms and break rooms are turned off when not in use can make a huge difference. Be sure the last person to leave at the end of the day shuts off all of the lights. Consider motion sensors for different areas of the workplace. Invest in CFLs (compact fluorescent bulbs), which last much longer than incandescent bulbs and use less heat, saving energy and keeping everyone cooler in the summertime.

Remember that any device that is plugged in is drawing energy, even if it is not in use. Keep printers, copiers and other devices unplugged when not in use. Every employee should turn off their computer at the end of the night.

Hopefully, the copier will not need to be used often; after all, we are in a digital age. Use e-mail as much as possible and make sure company manuals are available to view on the computer. Reduce paper-filing: save whatever files you can on the computer.

Make sure your paper supplier can provide you with at least 30 percent post-consumer-waste recycled paper. Manufacturing recycled paper uses 50 percent less energy than manufacturing regular paper. Remember to use both sides of the paper when printing, and of course, don't forget to place paper in the recycling box when you are finished.

A huge way the entire office can "go green" is to reduce the amount of junk mail it receives. Take a couple of hours to research ways to reduce the constant onslaught of unsolicited mail. Make sure any junk mail you do receive goes into the recycling bin and not the garbage.

Speaking of recycling — let's face it. Most people don't bother to recycle because they are lazy. Make things as simple as possible by labeling recycling bins clearly and putting them front and center. Have a large container for plastic bottles, cans, paper, printer cartridges and glass. Get rid of paper cup and paper plate supplies. Employees should bring in reusable containers. Clean out a cabinet so everyone can keep their own, labeled coffee mug at work.

Finally, one of the biggest ways to reduce your small business's carbon footprint is to reduce gas emissions emitted during the commute. Provide information about how much money a family can save by using alternative methods of transportation. Many companies offer incentives to get employees to walk or ride their bike to work. Make information about public transportation readily available and encourage carpool groups.

Reducing a carbon footprint is really about paying attention to where energy is coming from and where it is going. These simple steps will help the environment, save your small business money, and will encourage a sense of community as everyone work together for a common purpose. It is surprisingly easy to make your office a green office.

It Starts at Home

FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME TO HELP IMPROVE THE PLANET

April 22 will mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. This special occasion presents an opportunity to promote greater awareness and advances towards a healthier and cleaner Earth.

This provides an avenue for businesses, individuals, governments, and countries throughout the world to make a conscious effort to make smarter choices and work together to build a global green world. This is an exciting time in the history of the planet, and everyone can be a part of this important and historic event.

Many people believe that their actions alone cannot make a difference. This is one of the largest misconceptions in our world today. If everyone worked together one by one to help protect the planet, imagine what the results could be!

Often times, people feel that they need to attend rallies, groups, or events in order to help the planet. However, there are numerous simple and almost effortless things that one can do at home to help make the planet healthier and safer.

Recycle

Begin with recycling, which is one of the easiest and most efficient ways to make a significant impact on the Earth. Make recycling as easy as possible by placing a bin, small box or bag in the kitchen. This way, when sorting through junk mail, doing dishes, or discarding items, they can easily be tossed into the recycling holder without having to walk into the garage or outside.

In addition, place a bin or box upstairs. Instead of throwing out recyclables, you can simply toss them into the hallway bin. By placing small bins around the house, recycling is made convenient.

Cut out plastic

You can use regular silverware and dishes rather than paper, plastic, or Styrofoam plates or silverware. It will have a significant impact on our landfills and is a great way to save money.

Food Containers

Rather than storing food in foil or plastic wrap, try reusable containers. They are both better at keeping food fresh and will also save money on



plastic-wrap items. Buy four or five sandwich containers to take lunch in daily rather than sandwich bags, and use small cups with lids for side items and chips. Take a Thermos for liquids rather than buying a juice box or water bottle.

Turn it off

Only turn on lights and keep them on if you need them. Enormous amounts of energy can be saved by only keeping the light on when you are in the room. Turning off lights when you leave a room can make a huge impact on the Earth's energy supplies. Do the same with televisions and radios.

Reduce Water use

Lastly, time your showers. If everyone reduced their shower from 15 minutes to 10 minutes, it could save millions of gallons of water weekly. Furthermore, purchasing a low-flow showerhead can save 14,000 gallons of water every year while still providing adequate water pressure.

These are small and easy steps that can save abundant amounts of energy costs to both the planet and you. By implementing these tips yearly, you can save millions of gallons of water, hundreds of dollars in energy costs, and reduce landfill garbage by thousands of pounds. The small things add up, and what you do does make a difference.

EARTH FACT

Plastic water bottles produce up to 1.5 million tons of waste per year. Not only does that take up a lot of space in landfills, but it also requires up to 47 million gallons of oil per year to produce. That's why reusable water bottles are a much smarter choice for helping the environment.



Riverside Auto Body Is Green! Using PPG High Performance Waterborne Paint

- Collision Repair
- Expert Body Work
- Custom Painting
- Paintless Dent Repair
- Glass Installation
- Frame & Unibody Repair
- Courtesy & Rental Vehicles
- Storage Unit Rentals
- Lifetime Warranty
- Satisfaction Guaranteed
- Work With All Insurance Companies



Just across the New Discovery Bridge on Hwy. 81
www.riversideautobody-gonegreen.com
402.667.3285

hatch
FURNITURE & FLOORING

is proud to offer the following
GREEN furniture, flooring & TV manufacturers in support of Earth Day...

Smartstrand Carpet
by Mohawk & Karastan
WE Cork Flooring
Johnson Hardwood
Best Chairs
Young America
Franklin
Zimmerman Chair

A-America
Aspen
Quickstep Laminate
Bucks County
Anderson Floors
Sharp
And many more.

www.hatchfurniture.com
hatch
FURNITURE & FLOORING

"Your Home's Best Friend"

109 East Third, Yankton, SD
605-665-4416 • 800-798-4663
MF 10-6, Sat. 10-5, Closed Sundays, Evenings by appt.

Get Fuzzy, Yankton Area!

RECYCLE.
It's another way to get that warm, fuzzy feeling.

Start recycling #1 & #2 plastics, corrugated cardboard, tin and aluminum cans and foil, newspaper, magazines and slicks.

Details can be found at www.cityofyankton.org or by calling 668-5211.

Warm Air Heat Pumps, Geothermal and Air to Air

Quieter and 22° warmer than any other.



Available exclusively at... Turn to the Experts

Larry's HEATING & COOLING
920 Broadway • 665-9461



Learn how going green with paint has never been simpler!

Benjamin Moore
Paints



Yankton Paint & Decorating

406 Broadway, Yankton • 665-5032 • www.yanktonpaintanddecorating.com