

1. Reduce Paper Usage

The average US office worker uses 12,000 sheets of paper per year and paper accounts for roughly 40% of all municipal solid waste in the United States. A few simple steps can help you reduce paper usage dramatically in your office.

Read more:

A few ideas include:

- *Set up an intranet that employees can use to access internal documents such as policies and procedures, phone lists etc.*
- *Rely on email for billing, invoices, communication with clients, regular reporting and more.*
- *Offer a direct deposit option to employees for payroll.*
- *Switch to e-marketing including using your website as a sales tool, utilizing email newsletters, and using online advertising.*
- *Use the Microsoft Word "track changes" program for editing documents.*
- *Offer employees personal size dry erase boards for note-taking.*
- *When you need to print, buy only 100% post consumer waste recycled paper.*

2. Encourage Telecommuting, Use of Public Transportation and Carpooling

Save fuel usage, employee expense on gas and office energy usage by offering telecommuting. For employees coming to the office, offer incentives for use of public transportation and carpooling.

Read more:

Advances in workflow tools and technology have made the virtual office easily attainable. According to a Gartner Group survey, telecommuters are 40 percent more productive than office-based workers, and businesses are seeing a connection between telecommuting and increased revenues.

3. Take Small Steps to Reduce Energy Consumption

Implement a few energy-saving measures to help fight air pollution, global warming and to reduce your company's electric or natural gas bill.

Read more:

Invest in energy saving power strips, which can make up for their costs in just a few weeks. Turn off lights when not in use, especially in bathrooms, kitchens and lower use areas. Take advantage of natural daylight and reduce lighting inside the office. Be sure to power down large office equipment (and unplug!) when employees are done working.

4. Support Fair Trade/Local Businesses

Become a fair trade workplace by switching to Fair Trade Certified™ coffees and teas. Go the extra step by looking for Fair Trade Certified™ and organic coffee. Consider local vendors for food and other supplies.

5. Switch All Light Bulbs to Compact Fluorescents

While the initial investment may cost more than conventional bulbs, CFLs last longer-- so over time your office will save money and save energy.

6. Compost When Possible

Keep a sealed compost container in the office kitchen. Use to fertilize office plants or allow employees to take the compost home to their own compost piles. You can also consider getting a worm composter for your office kitchen.

7. Reuse and Recycle

Take every advantage to reuse materials in the office. This can include re-using envelopes for intra-office and postal mail, using rechargeable batteries and buy recycled toner cartridges.

Recycle glass, plastic, metal cans, white paper, and mixed paper and organics.

8. Reduce Computer Energy Consumption

By turning off or at least powering down your PCs during periods of inactivity – such as at night or over the weekend – Energy Star estimates that firms can save anywhere between \$25-\$75 per PC per year. Set computers to switch to a low-power sleep mode after a few minutes of inactivity and make sure to optimize efficiency settings on all newer computers.

9. Become Carbon Neutral

Calculate the carbon emissions of your office (using an online calculator or by contacting your local power company), then purchase carbon offsets. Review a list of vendors here.

10. Reduce Water Usage

Check all office kitchens and bathrooms regularly for leaks and fix immediately. Install low-flow toilets (alternately, you can place a plastic container filled with water in the tank of the toilet). Encourage employees to be conscious of water usage when cooking, making coffee and tea, etc.