Effective Ways to Go Green in the Workplace by George Rebstrum

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Despite the concept of the paperless office, thoughts of the 21st Centaury workplace still bring to mind images of boxes upon boxes of white A4 paper and a seemingly endless need for new ink cartridges.

In these environmentally aware times, the amount of waste paper previously thrown away now seems almost unthinkable and the question of recycling in the office has become a necessity rather than a choice.

Not only is office recycling important for the environment, it can bring significant savings.

The following guide will outline some need-to-know information about office paper recycling and other ways to go Green in the workplace.

Simple Ways to Care for the Environment and Save money

A number of new businesses have seized the opportunities presented by the hot topic of going Green and now offer a number of services to assist you with your office paper recycling.

Commonly, a scheduled collection service can be arranged and colour coded recycling bins will be made available for your various forms of office waste. In addition, consultations are available to maximise the Green potential of your office and many such companies issue award certificates once recycling milestones are reached to encourage continued awareness of recycling goals.

Being mindful of environmental sound recycling issues within the work place is also a great way for companies to save money, with some businesses reporting annual savings of thousands of pounds after installing an effective program.

Even a simple step such as cutting back on the volume of paper used in the workplace will also lower costs for your company and if your discarded material is collected by a refuse contractor then cutting down on your waste will lead to an obvious reduction in these costs.

As well as cost reduction, there are also many recycling companies that will pay for unwanted materials, such as cardboard and used printer ink cartridges. A quick web search should bring up many local companies involved in this and even though the sums of money they offer will not be massive, itâ€™s still good to get something back whilst knowing that your office is doing its bit for the environment.

Shred and Reuse

A recent survey found that itâ€™s not uncommon for a UK office worker to use as much as 50 sheets of paper a day, so itâ€™s no wonder that companies are being urged to find more environmentally sound ways of managing their office paper usage.

The use of closed loop suppliers is a great step towards a Greener office. These companies will collect your waste paper, recycle it into fresh material and deliver it back to your office for continued use.

Paper shredders are also a useful addition to any office - not only does shredding allow for peace of

mind for you and your customers in a time where fraud is unfortunately an ever more common occurrence, but the resulting paper material is perfect for use in the packaging of fragile goods. Whatâ€™s more, shredding also makes waste paper easier to store for collection.

Changing Attitudes for a Greener Future

Changing the attitude of your employees is essential if you want to make successful strides in keeping your company focused on Green issues. Itâ€™s all too easy to throw away and forget about office waste without thinking of the consequences, so incentives, encouragement and where possible a visible difference, will help motivate them towards a common goal.

A single large paper recycling bin will clearly show the sheer amount of waste paper being generated and will help bring home the message of the importance of saving paper. In addition, small measures such as reminders to only print essential emails and to cut down on the length of mail signatures to save on paper waste will also make a difference, as will energy saving reminders to turn off lights, PCâ€™s and other office equipment overnight or when not in use.

Itâ€™s easy to overlook other materials that can be recycled as well. Paper cups, food packaging and other domestic waste used in kitchen and leisure areas all contribute to your officeâ€™s carbon foot print, so schemes need to be put in place to make sure that this waste is disposed of in an efficient and environmentally sound way.

Conclusion

Perhaps most importantly of all, recycling should be made as simple as possible if the entire office is to effectively get on track. Think about locating photocopiers, printers and faxes in one centralised area with a container for waste paper located in the vicinity, making the whole process as easy as possible for your staff and colleagues.

All in all, there really is no excuse now for any office not to go Green, especially when it comes to paper. With so many options and methods available plus such apparent benefits to be had, office paper recycling should be high on the agenda for every workplace.

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