

50 ways to green your business

Achievable and inspiring actions to preserve our planet



Today, “going green” goes beyond altruism. Implementing environmental, social, and governance policies can have a direct impact on your business’s results. Here are 50 ideas and tips to help you inspire action in your organization.

78%

of consumers say that a sustainable lifestyle is important to them.

– Nielsen IQ & McKinsey

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

1. Turn out the lights or use motion-activated lights.
2. Turn the temperature up or down by a degree.
3. Use ceiling fans to help circulate air.
4. Use shades or blinds. Using shades and blinds can help keep natural heat out of the building and minimize cooling costs.
5. Install window tinting to maximize heating and cooling.
6. Replace traditional incandescent or fluorescent lighting with more energy-efficient compact fluorescent (CFL) or LED lights.
7. Use an energy-efficient air purifier to remove pollutants and contaminants from the air.
8. Encourage staff to turn off monitors, computers, printers, and other equipment at night and when away from their desks.
9. Perform an energy audit to identify where you are energy inefficient. In some states, power companies will conduct these at no charge.
10. Update old appliances with more energy-efficient new appliances. Your energy savings may justify the cost of new equipment.
11. Seal gaps, cracks, and holes, especially around windows and doors. This will keep warm and cool air from escaping – and keep pests out.
12. Install door sweeps. Gaps under doors can be a culprit in energy loss.
13. Pursue [LEED](#), [WELL](#), FitWel, or other healthy building certifications. These recognized initiatives can increase energy savings, have a lower environmental impact, and positively benefit occupants.

EXTERIOR LANDSCAPING

14. Use native plants in your landscaping efforts; these plants are adapted to your environment, use less water, and help support local ecosystems and wildlife.
15. Minimize the use of turf grass, which can be a water hog.
16. Be sure that automatic sprinklers or watering systems are not over-watering. A landscaping expert can help you determine the needed frequency.
17. Install a [living green wall](#) on the exterior of buildings to help reduce cooling and heating costs.
18. Design a green roof. When installed properly and carefully maintained, green roofs can help reduce energy costs and boost pollinator health.

USE INDOOR PLANTS

19. Plants improve indoor air quality, which can have an impact on wellness. Plants filter CO2 from the atmosphere, can reduce levels of certain pollutants, and minimize dust – creating healthier air for employees and visitors.
20. [Living green walls](#) and plants serve as acoustic filters to reduce noise.
21. Ask your interior landscaper about using plant containers made from recycled or reusable material.

OFFICE SUPPLIES, PRINTING, AND PAPER USAGE

22. Start a toner cartridge recycling program.
23. To reduce ink usage, use draft settings or consider switching your font (some use more ink than others).
24. Always print double-sided.
25. Decrease page margins to use more of the paper.
26. Utilize digital documents when possible: meetings, sales collateral, and more.
27. Use paper and packaging with 100% post-consumer waste content.
28. Use re-fillable ink pens. The U.S. Environmental protection agency estimates that Americans throw away 1.6 billion disposable pens per year.

TRASH AND WASTE

29. Consider implementing a recycling program. Post clear signage indicating what can and can't be recycled; when incorrect items are sent to recycling centers, it wastes time and resources.
30. Invest in paper shredding and recycling services to reduce landfill waste.
31. Reduce use of single-use items: Styrofoam, plates, utensils, and cups.
32. If you have a contract, consider less frequent waste pickups.

33. Practice e-cycling. Ask your suppliers about ways to recycle electronic equipment to keep this excess waste out of landfills. Indoor water use
34. Install automatic or motion-activated sinks to reduce how long water runs.
35. Install low-flow toilets.
36. With an up-front investment, rainwater or graywater (water that has already been used once and then filtered) can be used to water indoor plants.

FLEET MANAGEMENT

37. Utilize route management software to minimize miles being driven.
38. Institute regular tire pressure checks. Under-inflated tires can increase fuel consumption by up to 2 percent.
39. Go right: Eliminating left turns from its routes in 2007, UPS reduced CO2 emissions by 32,000 metric tons and saved 3 million gallons of gas.
40. Install fleet management software in vehicles to encourage better driving practices. Monitor drivers for behaviors that can decrease efficiency and safety.
41. Slow down. Fuel consumption increases dramatically at speeds over 70 miles per hour (mph) for most vehicles – as much as 25 percent for just 10 mph faster.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

42. Use a green web hosting company. These companies ensure that the power generating their servers comes from a renewable power source.
43. Ask your maintenance/cleaning staff to use environmentally-friendly products.
44. Hire a company to care for plants to ensure plant health and proper watering.

STAFF PROGRAMS

45. Make green part of company culture. Incorporate it into mission statements, applaud efforts, and use signage to encourage actions that help the environment.
46. Provide staff members with their own reusable water bottles to reduce disposable cup usage – consider earth-friendly materials instead of plastic.
47. Coordinate a ride share program in the office to reduce miles being driven.
48. Offer incentives for using public transportation, walking, or biking to work.
49. Provide a potted plant or succulent for each staff member's desk.
50. Cultivate a community garden where staff members and neighbors can care for and pick their own fruits and vegetables.