

10 Ways to Green your Office

Samantha Mickan – Environmental Specialist

The typical office provides lots of opportunities to go green. This can range from changing out your light globes to adding a small plant to your desk to improve air quality. There are literally hundreds of things you can do to make your office more environmentally friendly. I have had a great time researching this topic; there are so many ways to go green in your office, including cost saving, innovative and creative ideas; these are my top 10 favourites.

Go Green

Use 100% Recycled Paper - Try as we may go digital, we still need paper, so try to go with the least of the evils. Insist on chlorine-free paper, and look for high amounts of post-consumer recycled content. You can also look for paper that has been made with more sustainable substances like bamboo, hemp, or organic cotton. It

takes a lot of resources to cut, produce and bleach virgin wood for paper. The recycled paper takes postconsumer waste and recycles it into the paper to conserve resources and make use of materials that would have otherwise been wasted in a landfill.

Use Indoor Plants to Improve Air Quality - Make your office literally green with plants! They absorb airborne pollutants and emit healthy negative ions and oxygen into the air. Having some green plants in the office also reduces that "sterile" look, making it more comfortable for everybody.

Out with the Disposable and in with the Reusable – Go Plastic-free in your workplace today, Reusing more durable containers to store food and beverages that you can take to work is a great way to reduce how much plastic is used. Reusable items that are nontoxic can easily replace plastics. Use things such as Tupperware (plastic or glass) containers for storing food or reusable canvas bags for shopping. You can even reuse bottles of water at work. If you use a bottle-less water dispenser in your office, you'll even be able to fill that bottle with filtered water that is as high quality and great tasting as what you can buy in a bottle originally.

Make the "Switch" - Try replacing all of your old light globes with newer, more efficient LED light globes or other power saving globes, the fluorescent globes in your office may, or may not be energy saving globes, depending on what type they are. Upgrade to better energy efficient globes or LED lights saves both energy and money.

Go Digital - Go as paperless as possible. Do not print an email if you don't have to: instead, archive and save it. Send contracts via email and electronically sign them if possible instead of printing and faxing. Print to PDF to read digitally instead of paper printing. While few offices can go totally paperless, most can cut down a majority of their printing projects to just the essentials.



These may seem like small, baby steps, but incremental changes go a long way in fighting the good fight on behalf of our planet.





Green your Lunch! - Bringing food prepared at home cuts down on the tremendous amounts of waste and packaging that restaurants produce daily. Lunch brought from home also tends to be healthier, have a more realistic serving size and is a better value. Take it a step further and make your lunch from fresh, local ingredients purchased from a farmers' market. Wash down your lunch with a cup of fair trade, organic coffee or water from the water filter, not from a disposable water bottle.

Use Green Cleaning Supplies - Use eco-friendly products to clean the office. Many of the toxins people are exposed to regularly come from the toxic cleaners sold to clean, sanitize and deodorize homes and businesses. With so many brands now offering effective and affordable non-toxic, eco-friendly cleaners, cleaning green is a viable option. These products will be hard on germs, but easy on the environment.

Reduce over Reuse - Office paper is highly recyclable, but a lot gets wasted. Waste reduction is often more cost-effective than recycling because it reduces the amount of material that needs to be collected, transported and processed. If you have to print, try double-sided printing. You can also use any old single sided print pages as scribble/notebooks for staff.

Forget the screensaver - Removing your screen saver is a simple way to be sustainable. Screensavers use excess energy when you are away from your desk. Change your screen settings to "hibernate" or "sleep" when you're away from your computer for more than 10 minutes.

Support Local Businesses - Shift as many of your business purchases as possible to support local vendors. Whether it's your office purchases, your business cards, or the caterer that you use for business lunches, supporting local vendors is an important way to keep money circulating within the local economy.

These may seem like small, baby steps, but incremental changes go a long way in fighting the good fight on behalf of our planet. They are simple to implement and can make a big impression on customers and clients too.

If you or your organisations are interested in learning more or would like to discuss ways in which you can actively green your workspace or just need a hand, please give Integrate Sustainability a call on 08 9468 0338 or email us at enquiries@integratesustainability.com.au.



Integrate Sustainability

Primary Business Address
Unit 6 11 Colin Grove
West Perth, 6005
Western Australia

Phone: (+618) 9468 0338
E-mail: enquiries@integratesustainability.com.au



■ environment ■ safety ■ community

